



# SUCCESSION TO THE IMPERIAL THRONE OF RUSSIA

Edited under the supervision of  
the Most Reverend Antony, Archbishop of Los Angeles and South California

## FOREWORD

Monarchy, if it is true monarchy and not a caricature, is inseparable from Legitimacy. Legitimacy, in turn, means Legality, the faithful observance of both the spirit and the letter of the Law. Law, finally, is above and independent of human practice. Thus, Monarchical Legitimism must survive historical adversities, and the inalienable rights of a dynasty must continue to exist irrespective of whether that dynasty actually rules or has been forcibly prevented by historical circumstances from holding power.

The present volume contains the principal legal texts, as well as legal and historical arguments derived from them, relative to the position of the present Head of the Imperial House of Russia and to the rightful succession. This compilation is timely. At present when everything monarchist and traditional is under attack we are not surprised to find that there are those who dare to question and dispute the principle of legitimate succession and the right of the Head of Russia's Imperial House. This attack, like all such attacks on the obvious and the absolute, wields primarily the weapon of quotation out of context. When faced, however, with the full context, i.e. all the texts taken together and in light of the ascertainable intentions of the lawgivers, this weapon is revealed as totally deficient.

As a corollary to the principal thesis presented in this volume, the reader will find a penetrating and historically essential discussion of the position of the eldest surviving line of the Royal House of the Bagratids. This dynasty reigned in the Kingdom of Georgia and Imeretia prior to its incorporation into the Russian Empire at the dawn of the nineteenth century. Here a telling parallel is drawn between the House of Bagration and that of the Two Sicilies which reigned in an Italian kingdom prior to its annexation by the House of Savoy. Today both this royal Dynasty of Italy and the Bourbons of the Two Sicilies hold a similar status, in that they are both formerly reigning houses.

One hopes to see this study translated into other European languages.

Prince Cyril Toumanoff,  
Professor of History,  
Emeritus Georgetown University  
Washington, D.C.

## **INTRODUCTION**

This work includes two parts with an appendix to the second part.

Part One comprises (A) a list of the composition of the Imperial House of Russia in 1917, taken from the Court Calendar of that year (the last such calendar to have been published before the revolution) and (B) a list of the now living members of the Imperial House of Russia.

Part Two contains a memorandum on the Russian laws on Succession to the Throne and on the present position of the dynasty in exile.

The Appendix to Part Two contains texts of the documents on the basis of which the analyses put forward in the memorandum have been made.

# PART ONE

## THE IMPERIAL HOUSE OF RUSSIA

### A) COMPOSITION OF THE IMPERIAL HOUSE OF RUSSIA IN 1917, TAKEN FROM THE COURT CALENDAR OF THAT YEAR.

- \*1. His Imperial Majesty the Lord Emperor NIKOLAY ALEKSANDROVICH (NICHOLAS II), Sovereign Lord of All the Russias, born on 6th May 1868.
2. Her Imperial Majesty the Lady Empress MARIYA FEODOROVNA (MARIE), born on 14th November 1847.
3. Her Imperial Majesty the Lady Empress ALEKSANDRA FEODOROVNA (ALEXANDRA), born on 25th May 1872.
4. His Imperial Highness the Heir Caesarevich and Grand Duke ALEKSEY NIKOLAYEVICH (ALEXIS), born on 30th July 1904.
5. His Imperial Highness the Grand Duke Mikhail Aleksandrovich (Michael), born on 22nd November 1878.
6. Her Imperial Highness the Grand Duchess Mariya (Marie) Pavlovna, born on 2nd May 1854. (Translator's Note: widow of the Grand Duke Vladimir Aleksandrovich.)
7. His Imperial Highness the Grand Duke Kirill (Kirill) Vladimirovich, born on 30th September 1876.
8. Her Imperial Highness the Grand Duchess Viktoriya (Victoria) Feodorovna, born on 12th November 1876.
9. His Imperial Highness the Grand Duke Boris Vladimirovich, born on 12th November 1877.
10. His Imperial Highness the Grand Duke Andrey (Andrew) Vladimirovich, born on 2nd May 1879.
11. Her Imperial Highness the Grand Duchess Yelisaveta (Elizabeth) Feodorovna, born on 20th October 1864. (Translator's note: widow of the Grand Duke Sergey Aleksandrovich).
12. His Imperial Highness the Grand Duke Pavel (Paul) Aleksandrovich, born on 21st September 1860.
13. His Imperial Highness the Grand Duke Dimitriy (Dimitry) Pavlovich, born on 6th September 1861.
14. His Imperial Highness the Grand Duke Nikolay (Nicholas) Konstantinovich, born on 2nd February 1850.
15. Her Imperial Highness the Grand Duchess Yelisaveta (Elizabeth) Mavrikiyevna, born on 12th January 1865. (Translator's Note: widow of the Grand Duke Konstantin Konstantinovich).
16. His Highness Prince Ioann (John) Konstantinovich, born on 23rd June 1886.
17. Her Royal Highness Princess Yelena (Helen) Petrovna, born on 23rd October 1884.
18. His Highness Prince Vsevolod Ioannovich, born on 7th January 1914.
19. His Highness Prince Gavriil (Gabriel) Konstantinovich, born on 3rd July 1887.
20. His Highness Prince Konstantin Konstantinovich, born on 20th December 1890.
21. His Highness Prince Igor Konstantinovich, born on 29th May 1894.
22. His Highness Prince Georgiy (George) Konstantinovich, born on 23rd April 1903.
23. His Imperial Highness the Grand Duke Dimitriy Konstantinovich, born on 1st June 1860.

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*\*Numbers correspond to seniority of succession.*

24. His Imperial Highness the Grand Duke Nikolay (Nicholas) Nikolayevich, born on 6th November 1856.
25. Her Imperial Highness the Grand Duchess Anastasiya Nikolayevna, born on 23rd December 1867.
26. His Imperial Highness the Grand Duke Petr (Peter) Nikolayevich, born on 10th January 1864.
27. Her Imperial Highness the Grand Duchess Militsa Nikolayevna, born on 13th July 1866.
28. His Highness Prince Roman Petrovich, born on 5th October 1896.
29. His Imperial Highness the Grand Duke Nikolay (Nicholas) Mikhaylovich, born on 14th April 1859.
30. His Imperial Highness the Grand Duke Mikhail (Michael) Mikhailovich, born on 4th October 1861.
31. His Imperial Highness the Grand Duke Georgiy Mikhailovich, born on 11th August 1863.
32. Her Imperial Highness the Grand Duchess Mariya Georgiyevna, born on 20th February 1876.
33. His Imperial Highness the Grand Duke Aleksandr (Alexander) Mikhailovich, born on 1st April 1866.
34. Her Imperial Highness the Grand Duchess Kseniya (Xenia) Aleksandrovna, born on 25th March 1865.
35. His Highness Prince Andrey (Andrew) Aleksandrovich, born on 12th January 1897.
36. His Highness Prince Feodor (Theodore) Aleksandrovich, born on 11th December 1898.
37. His Highness Prince Nikita Aleksandrovich, born on 4th January 1900.
38. His Highness Prince Dimitriy (Dimitry) Aleksandrovich, born on 2nd August 1901.
39. His Highness Prince Rostislav Aleksandrovich, born on 11th November 1902.
40. His Highness Prince Vasiliy (Vasily) Aleksandrovich, born on 24th June 1907.
41. His Imperial Highness the Grand Duke Sergiy (Serge) Mikhailovich, born on 25th September 1869.
42. Her Imperial Highness the Grand Duchess Olga Nikolayevna, born on 3rd November 1895.
43. Her Imperial Highness the Grand Duchess Tatiana Nikolayevna, born on 29th May 1897.
44. Her Imperial Highness the Grand Duchess Mariya Nikolayevna, born on 14th June 1899.
45. Her Imperial Highness the Grand Duchess Anastasiya Nikolayevna, born on 5th June 1901.
46. Her Imperial Highness the Grand Duchess Olga Aleksandrovna, born on 1st June 1882.
47. Her Imperial Highness the Grand Duchess Mariya Pavlovna Junior, born on 6th April 1890.
48. Her Highness Princess Mariya Kirillovna, born on 20th January 1907.
49. Her Highness Princess Kira Kirillovna, born on 26th April 1909.
50. Her Highness Princess Vera Konstantinovna, born on 11th April 1906.
51. Her Highness Princess Marina Petrovna, born on 28th February 1892.
52. Her Highness Princess Nadezhda Petrovna, born on 3rd March 1898.
53. Her Highness Princess Nina Georgiyevna, born on 7th June 1901.
54. Her Highness Princess Kseniya Georgiyevna, born on 9th August 1903.
55. Her Serene Highness Princess Yekaterina (Catherine) Ioannovna, born on 12th July 1915.
56. Her Imperial Highness the Grand Duchess Mariya Aleksandrovna, born on 5th October 1853; was married to Alfred Ernest Albert, Prince of Great Britain, Duke of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha.
57. Her Royal Majesty Olga Konstantinovna, Dowager Queen of the Hellenes, born on 22nd August 1851; was married to George I, King of the Hellenes.
58. Her Imperial Highness the Grand Duchess Anastasiya Mikhailovna, born on 16th June 1860; was married to Friederich-Franz, Grand Duke of Mecklenburg-Schwerin.
59. Her Imperial Highness the Grand Duchess Yelena (Helen) Vladimirovna. born on 17th January 1882; was married to Nikolay Georgiyevich (Nicholas), Prince of Greece.
60. Her Highness Princess Tatiana Konstantinovna, born on 11th January 1890; was married to Prince Bagration of Mukhrani.
61. Her Highness Princess Irina Aleksandrovna, born on 3rd July 1895; is married to Prince Yusupov, Count Sumarokov-Elston.

Issue of the marriage of the Grand Duchess MARIYA NIKOLAYEVNA (dec. 9th February 1876) with Maximilian, Duke of Leuchtenberg (dec. 20th February 1852).

Prince Georgiy Maksimilianovich Romanovskiy (Romanovsky), Duke of Leuchtenberg (dec. 20th August 1912). Issue; His Imperial Highness Prince Aleksandr Georgiyevich Romanovskiy, Duke of Leuchtenberg, born on 1st November 1881 (by first marriage with Princess Theresie of Oldenburg, dec. 7th April 1883), His Highness Prince Sergiy Georgiyevich Romanovskiy, Duke of Leuchtenberg, born on 4th July 1890, and Her Highness Princess Yelena Georgiyevna Romanovskaya, Duchess of Leuchtenberg, born on 3rd January 1892 (by marriage with ANASTASIYA NIKOLAYEVNA, daughter of His Royal Majesty the King of Montenegro).

Her Imperial Highness Yevgeniya (Eugenie) Maksimilianovna, born on 20th March 1845; is married to His Imperial Highness Aleksandr Petrovich Prince of Oldenburg.

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(Note. The order in which the Members of the Imperial House are entered in this list is as follows:

(a) Male members in order of succession, with their consorts immediately following the corresponding male member and with living widows of deceased male members, entered in the place held by the deceased husband in order of succession.

(b) Female members in order of seniority. This order should not be taken as indicating the order in which they would succeed to the throne if the succession were to pass to the female line. According to the Russian law of succession, male members succeed by right of primogeniture and the female members by right of substitution. Here they are entered in order of the seniority of the branches of which they are the issue, except that Imperial Highnesses have precedence over Highnesses and Highnesses over Serene Highnesses.

(c) Female members married outside the Imperial House of Russia. In some cases in the past, at the discretion of the reigning Emperor, female members of the Imperial House, on marrying foreign princes, renounced their own right of succession to the Russian throne. This happened in the case of the Grand Duchess Olga, daughter of Nicholas I, who became Queen of Wurttemberg. In this case such renunciations were made by Princess Tatiana Konstantinovna, who married Prince Bagration of Mukhrani, of the Royal House of Georgia, and by Princess Irina Aleksandrovna, who married Prince Youssoupoff.

(d) The Princes Romanovsky (origin explained in opening paragraph).

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**System of transliteration.** As the above was translated from an official document, it seemed best to use a system of transliteration of Christian names and patronymics which would make it possible to convert them back into Cyrillic. For this reason the system followed was the one used in the majority of institutions in Great Britain engaged in the study of Russian affairs. This system has disadvantages in that familiar English names sometimes appear in forms which may appear odd or sometimes even unrecognizable to English speakers: for instance "Yelisaveta" for "Elizabeth", "Yelena" for "Helen", "Pavel" for "Paul". To prevent misunderstandings, the more familiar form has been given in parentheses. In passages where the same name appears a number of times, the familiar name in parentheses is dropped, unless it is useful to retain it for later reference.

In the material that follows preference was given to the more familiar form of Christian names and patronymics, with the less familiar form given in parentheses in cases where it was desirable to indicate the form used in Russian.

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## **B) COMPOSITION OF THE IMPERIAL HOUSE OF RUSSIA TODAY**

### **(1) Family of the Head of the Imperial House;**

His Imperial Highness the Grand Duke Wladimir Kirillovich, Head of the Imperial House of Russia, son of the Grand Duke Kirill Vladimirovich (seventh in the 1917 list), born 17/30 August 1917.

His Consort, Her Imperial Highness the Grand Duchess Leonida Georgiyevna, born 23 September/6 October 1914.

Their Daughter, Her Imperial Highness the Grand Duchess Maria Vladimirovna, born 10/23 December 1953.

Her Consort, His Imperial Highness the Grand Duke Mikhail Pavlovich (Michael), born 21 August/3 September 1943.

Their Son, the Grand Duke Georgiy Mikhaylovich, born 28 February/ 13 March 1981.

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**(2) The other Members of the Imperial House.**

His Highness Prince Vasilii Aleksandrovich, (40th in the 1917 list), born 24 June / 7 July 1907.

Her Highness Princess Vera Constantinovna, born 11/24 April 1906 (50th in the 1917 list).

Her Highness Princess Nadezhda Petrovna, born 3/16 March 1898 (52nd in the 1917 list).

Her Serene Highness Princess Yekaterina Ioannovna (Catherine), born 12/25 July 1915 (55th in 1917 list).

## PART TWO

### MEMORANDUM ON THE RUSSIAN LAWS OF SUCCESSION TO THE THRONE AND ON THE POSITION OF THE DYNASTY IN EXILE

#### Introduction

A book by Senator N. Korevo, "Succession to the Throne in Accordance with the Fundamental State Laws", appeared in Paris in 1922. The publication of this work, described by its author as a "reference manual", was very timely. The consequences of the tragic events of February 1917 had already come full circle. The dynasty thus faced the problem of maintaining its position in the circumstances of long-term exile. In such conditions it became imperative that the Russian people be informed authoritatively about the principles underlying the laws of succession. Senator Korevo fulfilled this task admirably.

His manual moreover has lost none of its value over time. Since its publication, however, further questions have arisen, which were dealt with only indirectly in the manual. In 1922, for instance, there was a considerable number of young unmarried male members of the Imperial House, so that succession passing to the female line seemed unlikely. The manual does contain the relevant articles of the law providing for such an eventuality, but there is no detailed discussion or interpretation of them. And yet it is precisely this question that has today become so important.

The present memorandum reviews the bases of the Russian laws on succession to the throne and their relation to the position of the dynasty in exile. Attention is drawn to a number of misconceptions and misinterpretations prevalent in certain circles of the Russian emigration which damage the cause of the monarchy.

In recent years one notices a growing interest in the monarchy as a result of the political, economic, and moral crises into which our country has been dragged by over half a century of communist domination. During this time also, the present Head of the Imperial House of Russia, the Grand Duke Wladimir, has taken a number of measures for ensuring the readiness of the dynasty to resume its historical task. More recently there have taken place the important events of the marriage of his daughter and the birth of her son.

In such circumstances it is essential that the Russian people, both at home and abroad, be correctly informed about the basic principles underlying the Russian laws on succession to the throne and that they should have access to the text of those laws. To this end an Appendix has been added to the present memorandum containing texts of the articles of the Fundamental Laws referring to the succession to the throne, as well as texts of certain other documents illuminating this question. These will enable the reader to assess the arguments put forward here on the basis of their original sources.

#### BASES OF THE RUSSIAN LAWS ON SUCCESSION TO THE THRONE

The right of succession to the Russian throne was, by act of the Great All-Russian Assembly of 1613, vested for all time in the descendants of the Tsar Michael Romanov. The Russian laws of succession to the throne which remain in force today are based on legislation promulgated by the Emperor Paul I in 1797, at the beginning of his reign.

Let us begin by saying a few words about the calling of Michael Feodorovich Romanov to the throne. Today this act is sometimes incorrectly interpreted as the "election" of an acceptable candidate for the throne by popular suffrage. From this interpretation deductions are made and applied to the question of a restoration of the monarchy in our days. The fact is that the Great All-Russian Assembly in 1613 set itself the task of calling to the throne the nearest next of kin to the extinct dynasty, and none other. According to the views on succession to the throne which were then held in Muscovite Russia and which were based on the Byzantine Nomocanon, close connection had an advantage over distant blood kinship. Boris Godunov, for instance, as brother-in-law of the deceased Tsar Feodor Ivanovich, was not regarded as a usurper (he was accused of other things) while Vasiliy Shuyskiy, a Rurikid, was considered a usurper. The persons who in 1613 were regarded as the rightful heirs were the descendants of Nikita Romanovich, brother of Ivan IV's first wife Anastasia Romanovna. The senior among them, Feodor Nikitich, the future Patriarch Philaret, was at that time already in monastic orders and for that reason could not accede to the throne. After him the heir was his son Michael. He it was who was called to the throne.\*

In the seventeenth century, long before the Emperor Paul I promulgated legislation on the royal succession, the Emperor Peter the Great's Statute on the Succession of 5th February, 1722, was in force in Russia. This statute gave the reigning sovereign the discretionary right both to appoint an heir and to bar an heir already appointed from succeeding to the throne. In practice this statute was not always applied. Neither Peter the Great himself nor his grandson Peter II appointed their heirs. Changes of reign were sometimes attended by palace coups, the result of factious struggles of family and class groupings. Whatever were the motives that prompted Peter the Great to promulgate this statute, whether or not he was convinced that this was the only way to ensure survival of his reforms, there can be no doubt that this statute had unhealthy consequences, depriving hereditary monarchy of its most precious advantage over other forms of government, namely independence from the influences of party interests and pressure groups.

This was clearly realized by the Caesarevich Paul before his accession, since he was himself under constant threat of being barred from succession. On 4th January, 1788, eight years before he became emperor, Paul drew up an Act or declaration of succession to the throne on behalf of himself and his consort, the Grand Duchess Maria, which was signed by both of them. The expected barring of the Caesarevich Paul did not in fact take place and in 1796 he succeeded his mother, the Empress Catherine the Great. This act (declaration) which he had drawn up in 1788 was confirmed into law on the day of his coronation in 1797.

Here is how Senator Korevo describes this event: "...after the conclusion of the coronation service the newly crowned Emperor Paul I, standing by the throne, read out the law on succession to the throne which he had drawn up, and which henceforward became a Fundamental State law. Descending from the throne, he entered the sanctuary and placed this act in a silver box especially made for it and laid it on the altar of the Cathedral of the Assumption...'Having established the regulations for the succession, I must explain the motives which prompted them,' writes Paul in the Act of 1797. They are the following: That the State should never be without an Heir. That the Heir should be determined by the law itself. That there should never be the least doubt as to who is to succeed. That the rights of the branches to the succession should be maintained without violation of natural right and that difficulties which might occur in the passage of the succession from one branch to another should be avoided."

The provisions of the Emperor Paul's Act, together with certain other supplementary acts, were included as articles in the Fundamental State Laws in the first part of Volume I of the Code of Laws issued by order of the Emperor Nicholas I. Since that time several new editions of the Code of Laws were issued. In the Appendix the reader will find texts of the Act of Emperor Paul I of 1797 and of the corresponding articles of the Fundamental Laws, taken from the last edition of the Code of Laws of 1906. Let us now examine the principles underlying this legislation.

We begin with the question whose answer will help to solve most of the other questions that are likely to arise, namely who has and who has not the right of succession to the throne?

In the Act of 1797 it was the stated aim of the Emperor Paul I to ensure "that the rights of the branches to the succession should be maintained without violation of natural right." Article 27 of the Fundamental Laws contains the provision: "Both sexes have the right of succession to the Throne; but this right belongs by preference to the male sex in order of primogeniture; with the extinction of the last male issue succession passes to the female issue by right of substitution." This article is followed by others that indicate the order in which the succession passes from one member of the Imperial House to another. Article 53 states: "On the demise of an emperor his heir accedes to the Throne by virtue of the law of succession itself, which confers this right upon him." In Article 126 it is laid down that "all persons of the Imperial Blood who are the issue of a lawful marriage with a person of corresponding dignity authorized by the reigning

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\* From this one can deduce that, if an analogous situation were to arise today, the assembly of representatives of the people, whatever name it might bear, would have to be presented with the task of calling an available candidate to the throne, and not settling the disputes of warring sectarian groups. In the latter case it would probably end up by calling no candidate to the throne.



emperor are recognized as Members of the Imperial House." In Articles 135-143, which laid down the procedure to be followed by parents of persons newly born into the Imperial House, there is an indication of the outward sign which manifests admission of the newborn to the "Imperial issue" (Article 137), namely, the inclusion of his or her name by the reigning emperor in the genealogical book of the Imperial House of Russia. This is again confirmed in Article 142: "The inclusion of the name in the genealogical book is proof of admission to the Imperial issue."

It follows that all persons whose names have been entered into the genealogical book by the reigning emperor have been admitted to the Imperial issue and, consequently, have the right of succession to the throne, since the main purpose of these articles is to indicate who has the right of succession to the throne and in what order it is to pass from one person of the Imperial issue to another. Nowhere, in the Act of the Emperor Paul I of 1797 or in the articles of the Fundamental Laws, is there mention of **Members of the Imperial House who have no right of succession to the throne**. Such a category simply does not exist.

The right of succession does not belong to persons who have not been admitted to the Imperial issue: that is, the posterity of A) marriages contracted between members of the Imperial House and persons of unequal rank (Articles 36 and 188), as well as B) marriages contracted by members of the Imperial House without the permission of the reigning emperor (Article 183). The names of such people are excluded from the genealogical book and they are not regarded as members of the Imperial House.\*

Another important condition for accession to the throne is indicated in Article 63: "The emperor who possesses the Throne of All the Russias cannot profess any faith other than the Orthodox." The action of this article with regard to members of the Imperial House can be imagined only in theory, in the very unlikely case that any member of the Imperial House, male or female, should not be a member of the Orthodox Church. The article would, however, become operative in practice if the succession were to pass from the Imperial House of Russia to another dynasty which was reigning now or had reigned in the past on a foreign throne. This is provided for in Article 35, which establishes the order of succession if such an eventuality were to occur.

Thus any member of the Imperial House, whose name has been entered in the genealogical book by the reigning emperor, has the right of acceding to the throne when the succession comes to him or her in the established order. In conclusion of this chapter on the basic principles of the Russian laws of succession, it remains only to establish what should be understood by the term "reigning emperor" when the dynasty is in exile.

In interpreting any legal term appearing in a legislative act, **the point of departure should always be the establishment of the intention of the legislator**. One should always begin by first establishing what the legislator had in view and what he could not have had in view. The Emperor Paul I who initiated the Russian laws on succession to the throne, by his Act of 1797 abrogated one law, based on the appointment of an heir by a reigning emperor, and replaced it with one by virtue of which the heir is appointed by the law of succession itself. This intent is reflected in the entire legislation based on the Act of 1797 and it is impossible to interpret this legislation correctly without bearing this basic aim in mind.

The term "reigning emperor" cannot be viewed in contrast to some term such as "non-reigning emperor," seeing that a cessation of the reigning dynasty is not envisaged in the articles of the Fundamental Laws. The adjective "reign-

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\* It is important to bear in mind that two distinctions are at issue here: that of the right of succession and that of permission of the reigning emperor to marry. The law lays down that permission of the reigning emperor is required for recognition of the lawfulness of any marriage contracted by a member of the Imperial House with a person of either equal or unequal rank. The law also lays down that right of succession to the throne belongs only to the issue of an equal marriage contracted with the permission of the reigning emperor.

*In the past the attitude of reigning emperors to unequal marriages varied. Prior to Alexander III no obstacles were in principle placed in the way of members of the Imperial House contracting unequal marriages, without, of course, conferring the right of succession to the posterity of such a marriage. The Emperor Alexander III forbade all members of the Imperial House, both Grand Dukes and Princes of the Imperial Blood, to enter into unequal marriages. This ban was included in the Fundamental Laws in the form of a note to the corresponding article. By a Decree of 11th August 1911 the Emperor Nicholas II alleviated this ban, retaining it for Grand Dukes but allowing Princes of the Imperial Blood to enter into unequal marriages with his permission. On the basis of this decree a corresponding amendment was made in the note to Article 188. Article 188 itself, however, remained unaltered, continuing to make impossible the deduction drawn in circles today to the effect that, by virtue of the Decree of 11th August 1911 unequal marriages contracted by Princes of the Imperial Blood were placed on the same footing with equal marriages, with admission of their posterity to the Imperial issue.*

*In exile the Grand Duke Kirill established a pattern of providing titles for morganatic wives of members of the Imperial House. For example, Prince Dimitri Alexandrovich asked him to confer on his first wife the title of Her Serene Highness Princess Romanovsky-Kutuzov, a request which was granted. Following similar requests, the Grand Duke Vladimir conferred the title of Princess Romanovsky-Pavlovsky on the first wife of Prince Vsevolod and that of Princess Romanovsky Knust on his third wife.*

ing" is added in those articles which require the emperor's sanction for their coming into force, such as articles on permission for marriage, in contrast to other articles which establish, for instance, degree of kinship between members of the Imperial House, where the term "emperor-progenitor" is used; or articles which deal with the succession passing to the female line, in which we find the term "last reigning emperor".

Accordingly, in the present conditions of the dynasty's exile, the term "reigning emperor" cannot be taken to refer to any other person than the one who would be reigning in Russia if the monarchy were in possession of sovereign power. For a legitimist this, naturally, presents no problem. But even to a person who does not hold legitimist monarchist views, but who nevertheless considers it desirable that the dynasty should continue its existence in exile, it should be clear, that only such an interpretation is in accord with the true meaning of the law on which such continued existence can be based. With any other interpretation this law simply becomes inapplicable.

### **On the Succession Passing to the Female Line**

The present position of the Romanov dynasty has been elucidated in the Message of the Grand Duke Vladimir, Head of the Imperial House of Russia, of 23rd December 1969, the text of which is included in the Appendix. In this Message the Grand Duke points out that, in view of the fact that all the present surviving male members of the Imperial House, except himself, are married morganatically and in view, also, of the fact that it can hardly be supposed that any of them, "in view of their age, could now enter into a marriage equal in status of birth or have issue possessing the right of succession to the throne", the right of succession on their demise will pass to the female line, to wit: to the Grand Duke's daughter the Grand-Duchess Maria.

Let us now examine the relevant articles of the Fundamental Laws which deal with the succession passing in such a manner within the framework of the Imperial House of Russia (Articles 31-34) and the article dealing with the succession passing from the Imperial House of Russia to a foreign dynasty (Article 35). Of course, we are here primarily concerned with the former eventuality, which affects the present position of the dynasty. We shall examine, nevertheless, the provisions contained in Article 35 which, in addition to the question of succession, touches upon other important questions connected with the interpretation of other articles of the Fundamental Laws: for instance, the question of the religious denomination of a person who might have the right of succession to the throne.

The main import of the law on succession passing to the female line is set forth in Article 30, which states that, with the extinction of the male issue, "succession remains in the same branch, but in the female issue of the last reigning emperor, as being nearest to the throne, and therein it follows the same order, with preference to a male over a female, but the female from whom this right directly proceeds never loses this right." The Articles that follow deal with the subsequent order of succession in the female line, analogous to the Articles on the order of succession in the male line.

Article 30 establishes two basic principles. The first is that succession remains "in the female issue of the last reigning emperor, as being nearest to the throne." This excludes any need to search for an heiress in the posterity of emperors who had reigned earlier when there is an heiress of the last reigning emperor. The second principle requires that "the female person from whom this right proceeds never loses this right." This establishes the fact that the female in question is not a kind of "carrier" who conveys her right to her male issue, but is a female heiress who herself has the right of succession to the throne.

In interpreting the term "last reigning emperor" in a situation where the dynasty is in exile, the same considerations apply as those propounded in the preceding chapter in connection with interpretation of the term "reigning emperor." In view of the fact that, with the exception of the Grand Duke Vladimir, none of the present surviving male members of the Imperial House have issue who could by right succeed to the throne. On their demise the succession passes to the Grand Duchess Maria and to her issue.

One should note here that, even if we were to adhere to the erroneous interpretation which would make this term refer to the last emperor who possessed sovereign power in Russia, to wit: the Emperor Nicholas II, the succession would still pass to the Grand Duchess Maria. All the daughters of the Emperor Nicholas II were murdered. Next in order come the daughters of the emperor-progenitor, in this case Alexander III. His elder daughter was the-Grand Duchess Xenia, whose sons already have the right of succession. The other daughter of the Emperor Alexander III, the Grand Duchess Olga, has also left no heirs capable of succeeding legitimately to the Imperial throne. Next in order comes the female posterity of the Emperor Alexander II, namely the female posterity of the Grand Duke Vladimir Alexandrovich. The senior person in this female line is exactly the Grand Duchess Maria Wladimirovna.

Such are the provisions of the law on the succession passing to the female line within the framework of the Imperial House of Russia, and such is the position of the dynasty today. Let us now examine what the law provides in case of extinction of both the male and the female issue of the Imperial House, with the succession passing to another dynasty. Such an eventuality is provided for in Article 35: "When the succession reaches a female issue already reigning on another throne, it is left to the person who succeeds to make a choice of faith and throne and, together with that per-

son's heir, to renounce the other faith and throne, if such a throne is linked to a religious denomination; if there is no renunciation of faith, the succession passes to the person next in order."

Two questions arise here: the question of faith and that of a possible dynastic union of two thrones. As regards the faith of a Russian sovereign, the stipulation of the law is clearly laid down in Article 63: "The emperor who possesses the Throne of All the Russias cannot profess any faith other than the Orthodox." Article 35, however, envisages the possibility, when the succession passes to another dynasty, of the right of succession devolving upon a person who does not profess the Orthodox Faith and lays down what such a person should do in such circumstances.

In a condensed form, Article 35 covers a number of eventualities. The question at issue is one in which "the Succession reaches a female issue already reigning on a foreign throne." This passage can be paraphrased as follows: "when the succession passes through a female line to a royal or ruling house which occupies (or, in present conditions, which has occupied) another throne." Succession in this way can pass to the head of that house or to one of its other branches. Let us imagine a few examples in the past when, if the position of the Imperial House of Russia had been different from what it was in fact at that time, such a transfer of succession could have taken place.

Let us imagine that the last heiress to the Throne of All the Russias was the daughter of the Emperor Paul I, Anne, Queen of the Netherlands. Succession would have passed to her and, after her, to her heir, a person of non-Orthodox denomination in the line of succession to the throne of the Netherlands. It is also possible to imagine that the last heiress to the Russian Imperial Throne was the daughter of the Grand Duke Constantine Nikolayevich Olga, Queen of the Hellenes. Succession would have passed to her and, after her, to her son and heir, King Constantine of Greece, an Orthodox sovereign. A third possible eventuality of this type might have occurred if the last heiress to the Russian throne had been the daughter of the Grand Duke Vladimir Alexandrovich, Helen, wife of Prince Nicholas of Greece. Succession would have passed to her and, after her, to her three daughters, all Orthodox: Princess Olga of Yugoslavia, Countess Toerring and Marina, Duchess of Kent. Through Princess Paul (Olga) of Yugoslavia succession would have passed to her Orthodox issue. Through the Duchess of Kent it would have passed to her Anglican issue.

Here we have examples of a possibility of (a) the succession passing to heads or future heads of foreign royal houses, in the one case non-Orthodox, in the other Orthodox; and of (b) the succession eventually passing to members of foreign royal houses, in the one case Orthodox and in the other non-Orthodox, who are not themselves direct heirs to the thrones of their countries. In the first two examples, in addition to other considerations, the question arises of a possible dynastic union of two thrones. An example of such a union in the past was the accession in 1603 of James VI, King of Scotland, to the Throne of England in succession to Queen Elizabeth I.

Article 35 makes two provisions relevant to this question. The first lays down that "it is left to the person who succeeds to make a choice of faith and throne and, together with that person's heir, to renounce the other faith and throne, if such a throne is tied with a religious denomination." It is presumed that a person to whom the succession passes in such a manner might be faced with difficulties, in that he would have to make a "choice": it is thus presumed that he might renounce his right of succession. Such difficulties may arise as a result of his **faith** and throne, especially if this throne is **tied to a religious denomination**. For instance, this person might be either the occupant of or heir to a throne tied by the law of that kingdom to the profession of the state religion, let us say Lutheran or Anglican, a profession which would prove an insuperable barrier to his succeeding to the Throne of All the Russias. If, on the other hand, the succession passes to the occupant or heir to the throne of an Orthodox State, the question of faith no longer applies, but obstacles of another kind might nevertheless arise. His accession to the Throne of All the Russias would lead to a dynastic union of the two thrones. In itself, such a union is not excluded by the Russian laws of succession, which do not make any reference to it, but in this case it might be subject to ratification by the legislative bodies of the state in question, which for one reason or another might not be granted. In such circumstances, a person to whom the right of succession to the Russian throne comes in this manner is faced with this choice: he must either, together with his heir, renounce the faith and throne (or throne only) of his State and accept succession to the Throne of All the Russias, or renounce succession to the Russian throne. In the latter case the second provision of the article becomes relevant: "If there is no renunciation of faith, the succession passes to the person next in order." Naturally, the same conditions would apply. It is noteworthy that **faith alone** is mentioned here. One should remember that at the time of the Emperor Paul, Georgia and Imeretia were the only Orthodox kingdoms abroad and that the probable heirs envisaged in the Act of 1797 were members of non-Orthodox dynasties.

It follows from the above that (a) the Emperor of All the Russias must be Orthodox and that (b) the right of succession to the Russian throne can pass to a non-Orthodox person but that, in order to succeed to that throne, the person in question must embrace the Orthodox Faith. No other impediments are envisaged by the law.

### **On Marriages of Members of the imperial House**

Let us now see what the fundamental Laws say about marriages contracted by members of the Imperial House, with special reference to the stipulations on the religious denomination of those members and their consorts. Before

examining the relevant articles, we will define the aims which the legislator pursued when formulating enactments on this question.

The law posits that the Emperor of All the Russias must profess Holy Orthodoxy. It stands to reason that, in normal conditions of succession a future emperor should be brought up as an Orthodox Christian. It is therefore natural to expect the law to contain a provision for this requirement.

The law also lays down that the right of succession belongs only to the issue of marriages contracted with persons belonging to royal or ruling houses. It is common knowledge that the majority of these houses do not profess the Orthodox faith. One may expect that this circumstance, too, will be taken into account in the provisions of the law.

Finally, the law declares that, in order to be lawful, the marriage of a member of the Imperial House must be contracted with the permission of the reigning Emperor.

Such are the requirements which serve as a point of departure for the legislator in formulating enactments on marriages of members of the Imperial House and on the religious denomination of their consorts. Guided by these requirements, the legislator will seek, on the one hand, to do everything possible to ensure an Orthodox upbringing for the future emperor. On the other hand, he will seek to avoid placing unnecessary and onerous obstacles in the way of members of the Imperial House entering into marriage with brides equal to them in rank. In formulating his enactments, the legislator will obviously take into account the current state of the dynasty. When members of the Imperial House are few in number, priority will be given to the first of the two aims stated above: that of ensuring an Orthodox upbringing for the future emperor. When the Imperial House has grown in numbers, the second aim acquires greater importance - that of not placing unnecessary obstacles in the way of equal marriages. Such obstacles could arise if it were made obligatory for all brides of the numerous members of the Imperial House to embrace the Orthodox faith before marriage.

Bearing all these circumstances in mind, let us now examine the provisions of the law on this question. Their substance is contained in Articles 183, 184 and 185, and also, with regard to unequal marriages, in Articles 36 and 188. Although the reader will find these articles in the Appendix, we shall quote them here, for the sake of greater clarity.

On marriages and the religious denomination of those entering into marriage.

183. Permission of the reigning emperor is necessary for the marriage of every member of the Imperial House, and a marriage contracted without such permission is not recognized as lawful.

184. With the permission of the reigning Emperor, members of the Imperial House can enter into marriage both with persons of the Orthodox Faith and with persons of other denominations.

185. The marriage of a male of the Imperial House who may have the right of succeeding to the Throne with a person of another faith may only take place after she has embraced the Orthodox Faith.

#### **On unequal marriages:**

36. Children issuing from a marriage of a person of the Imperial Family with a person not having the corresponding dignity, that is to say, not belonging to a royal or ruling house, have no right of succession to the Throne.

188. A person of the Imperial Family who has entered into marriage with a person of a status unequal to his, that is, not belonging to a royal or ruling house, cannot pass on to that person, or to any posterity that might issue from such a marriage, the rights which belong to members of the Imperial Family.

Note. Henceforward none of the grand dukes or grand duchesses may enter into a marriage with a person of unequal status, that is, not belonging to a royal or ruling house.\*

Article 183 leaves it to the discretion of the Emperor to permit or prohibit the marriage of any member of the Imperial House. Article 184, in allowing marriages with both Orthodox and non-Orthodox persons, is aimed at not placing unnecessary obstacles in the way of members of the Imperial House entering into equal marriages. The object of Article 185 is to do everything possible to ensure an Orthodox upbringing of a future emperor.

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\* Article 36 forms part of the articles on the order of succession (25-39) which every emperor swears both at his accession and at his anointing to maintain inviolate. Article 188, which at first sight might appear to be a repetition of Article 36, forms part of the Statute on the Imperial Family, which is included in the Fundamental Laws and which deals not only with the rights of succession but also with all other rights of members of the Imperial House. This explains the inclusion of the words "to that person", i.e. the person with whom the member of the Imperial House enters into marriage and who, as consort, would in any case have no right of succession to the throne.

The meaning of Articles 183 and 184 is perfectly clear and requires little explanation. The formulation of Article 185, however, could easily mislead an uninitiated reader, especially when it is taken out of context. It is in fact on such a misunderstanding that the erroneous interpretation is based - an interpretation which has become widely circulated and is being skillfully exploited by enemies of the monarchist cause - according to which this article precludes the posterity of a marriage concluded with a non-Orthodox person from having the right of succession to the throne.

Such an interpretation does not hold water. In the first place, as we have established in the preceding chapter, the right of succession can belong not only to a person born of a non-Orthodox mother, but even to a person who, when the right of succession reaches him, does not himself profess the Orthodox Faith. In the second place, if this Article is so interpreted, how is it possible to explain the patent contradiction between these two consecutively numbered Articles? Who are the members of the Imperial House who, by virtue of Article 184, are allowed, with the permission of the reigning Emperor, to enter into marriage with both Orthodox and non-Orthodox persons?

What of female members? The only stipulation is "members of the Imperial House" and, according to Articles 25 and 27, all members of the Imperial House have in principle the right of succession to the throne. It would appear, therefore, that Article 185 introduces a new category nowhere else mentioned in the Fundamental Laws, a category of members of the Imperial House **who do not have the right** of succession. This category is introduced, it would appear, without any explanation whatsoever and also without, any sanction. How are we to explain this absence of sanction? Article 36 states that the posterity of unequal marriages **has no right of succession to the throne**. Article 183 states that a marriage contracted without the permission of the reigning Emperor **is not recognized as lawful**. In Article 185, however, according to which, we are asked to believe, an impediment is put on all marriages of members of the Imperial House with non-Orthodox persons, **not a word is said about the rights or lack of rights of the posterity of such marriages**.

The right of such posterity to succession, however, has been witnessed in a number of Imperial acts issued after the inclusion of Article 185 in the Code of Laws as quoted above. In August 1911 Princess Tatiana, daughter of the Grand Duke Constantine and the Grand Duchess Elizabeth, with the permission of the Emperor Nicholas II, married Prince Constantine Bagration-Mukhransky. Her mother, the Grand Duchess Elizabeth, did not embrace the Orthodox Faith before marriage and remained a Lutheran all her life. Before marriage, Princess Tatiana renounced her rights of succession to the throne. Similar renunciations on entering into marriage with foreign princes had previously been made by female members of the Imperial House. One instance was the case of the Grand Duchess Olga, daughter of Nicholas I Who became the Queen of Wurttemberg. We shall return below to the marriage of Princess Tatiana when dealing with the dynastic position of the House of the Bagratids. At present we are interested in what exactly are the rights of the Princess Tatiana, the daughter of a non-Orthodox mother, to succeed to the throne. Here is what was stated in the Decree of the Emperor Nicholas II to the Senate of 24th August 1911: "Her Highness Princess Tatiana Konstantinovna has presented to Us, over her own signature, **a renunciation of her right of succession to the Imperial Throne of All the Russias which belongs to her as member of the Imperial House of Russia**. The Governing Senate will take the necessary steps to make this public."

Clearly, therefore, the words "male person of the Imperial House who may have the right of succeeding to the Throne," as used in Article 185, do not refer to **all** male members of the imperial House, but to a narrower circle of persons. The meaning of these words will become clear if we go back to the first instance of analogous use of these terms and if we trace the history of the article itself. We come across a similar use of these terms for the first time in the letter of the Grand Duke Constantine Pavlovich to the Emperor Alexander I, dated 14th January, 1822, in which he sought the Emperor's permission to renounce his right of succession. "Feeling that I lack the talents, the strength and the spirit that would enable me at any time to be raised to **the dignity to which, by my birth, I might have the right**, I venture to ask Your Imperial Majesty to hand over that right to the person to whom it belongs after me..." The Grand Duke Constantine, who was the eldest of the brothers of an emperor without male issue, was at that time heir to the throne, but he did not describe himself as such and only stated that he "might have the right", thus not excluding the possibility of Alexander I having a son. The same way of thinking is reflected in Alexander I's manifesto confirming his brother's renunciation, in which he said that he could not proclaim his **successor** by name, "still abiding in expectation that it might be acceptable within the inscrutable destinies of God to grant unto Us **an Heir to the Throne in the direct line**." In foreign countries, for instance in Britain, there exist the terms "heir apparent" and "heir presumptive." The present Queen, Elizabeth II, was, up to the moment of her accession, an "heiress presumptive", as in principle the possibility was not excluded that a son might be born to King George VI. In the vocabulary of our Fundamental Laws and their sources these terms do not exist. Instead, we find such expressions as "heir to the throne in the direct line", "the marriage of the heir to the throne and of the eldest male person in his issue" (instead of the term "heir apparent") and "a male person ... who may have the right of succeeding to the throne" (instead of the term "heir presumptive").

The correctness of such an interpretation of these words when used in Article 185 is borne out by the history of that article. The text quoted above, taken from the 1906 edition of the Code of Laws, is almost word for word the same as the text of the corresponding article in the first edition of the Code of Laws of 1832. Senator Korevo writes in this con-

nection: "The meaning of the expression used by the legislator - 'a male person of the Imperial House who may have the right of succeeding to the Throne' - is elucidated when we bear in mind the composition of the Imperial Family in the first quarter of the XIXth century and at the time when the first edition of the Code of Laws was issued, and when we examine one of the-sources of the Fundamental Laws - the Manifesto of 12th December 1825 and the acts appended to it." At the time of his accession to the throne in 1825, the Emperor Nicholas I was the only member of the Imperial House who had male issue, Caesarevich Alexander (subsequently Alexander II), who was born in 1818. Nicholas I's other three sons were born in 1827, 1831 and 1832. In such circumstances there was no certainty as to which of these young persons would succeed to the throne in the male line, to say nothing of the possibility of the succession passing to the female line through the posterity of Nicholas I's brother, the Grand Duke Michael. It was expedient, therefore, to adhere to the term "male person... who may have the right of succeeding to the throne."

Subsequently the Imperial House increased in numbers. At the end of the reign of Nicholas I his heir already had four sons, and the position was roughly the same at the end of the reign of Alexander II. With this change of circumstances the question arose of changing the text of the law. Such a change occurred in the new Statute on the Imperial Family, which was confirmed in 1886 and in which the corresponding article read: "The marriage of the heir to the throne and of the eldest male person in his issue with a person of another faith may not take place until she has embraced the Orthodox Confession."

In this form, however, this article did not long remain in force. As early as 1889 the Emperor Alexander III, in a Decree to the Senate, commanded that this article in its new form should be withdrawn and that the old version should be restored. The reason for this will become clear when we take account of the position of the Imperial Family in the years 1886-1889. It is true that at that time the composition of the Imperial House was so numerically large that Alexander III limited the number of members of the Imperial House who bore the title of grand duke. Numerical strength of the dynasty, however, is not the only consideration in assessing the state of the succession and in ensuring an Orthodox upbringing of the heir. It is important to consider not only the position of the entire dynasty, but also that of the probable heirs. None of the three sons of Alexander III were yet married, and so they were all close to succession to the throne. The eldest, the Caesarevich Nicholas, married after his accession to the throne, and his son, the Caesarevich Alexis, was not born until 1904. In such conditions it was not prudent to require that only the bride of the "heir apparent" embrace Orthodoxy before marriage. It was desirable to require the same of the brides of the "heirs presumptive."

As can be seen from the foregoing, our imperial legislation is very flexible in practice. It is not satisfied with a plain distinction between "heir apparent" and "heir presumptive" in the singular. In its efforts to ensure the Orthodox upbringing of the heir it looks further ahead. If there is an "heir to the throne," it is important that there should also be an "eldest male person in his issue." If there are no such heirs, the definition "male person... who may have the right of succeeding to the throne" can refer not only to one person but to two or three. This flexibility in practice is made possible thanks to Article 183: the reigning Emperor can always take into account the state of the succession at a given time and accordingly give or withhold permission for the marriage, demand or not demand that the bride should embrace the Orthodox Confession before marriage. Once permission for such an equal marriage has been given, however, there can be no subsequent loss of right by those who have entered into the marriage or by their posterity.\*

In concluding this chapter it remains for us to say a few words about divorce. This too is a question about which all sorts of legends are being circulated, alleging that divorced persons and their posterity lose their right of succession to the throne, and so on and so forth. In this case there is no parallel to Article 185 - an article that itself could be subjected to an analogous process of distortion. In the articles dealing with divorce (194-196) there is not a word said about loss of right by divorced persons. With the permission of the reigning Emperors, in the first case Alexander I and in the second case Nicholas II, the marriage of the Grand Duke Constantine was dissolved in 1820 and that of the Grand Duchess Maria Pavlovna the Younger with Prince Vilhelm of Sweden, Duke of Soedermanland, in 1914. Equal marriages with divorced persons were contracted by the Grand Dukes Nicholas and Kirill. In the latter case the marriage was at first not approved by the reigning Emperor, not because the bride was divorced but because her first husband was the brother of the Empress Consort, Alexandra Feodorovna. Later, however, this marriage was approved by the Emperor, as can be seen from the Decree of 15th July 1907: "The consort of His Imperial Highness the Grand Duke Kirill Vladimirovich is to be styled Grand Duchess Victoria Feodorovna, with the title of Imperial Highness, and the daughter born of the mar-

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\* The absurdity of interpreting Article 185 as depriving of the right of succession all posterity of equal marriages contracted with non-Orthodox persons has evidently penetrated into the minds of some of its proponents. Recently they have voiced in the Russian emigre press a newly invented theory: to wit, that the posterity of such marriages does not lose its right of succession, but that it must, as it were, stand in line awaiting the right of succession to reach them after the extinction of the posterity of marriages contracted with Orthodox consorts. If this were indeed the case, one might have expected to see some indication in the articles of the Fundamental Laws or at least in the notes to them. There is none. Nothing is likewise to be found in the lists of Members of the Imperial House in order of succession to the throne available in Court Calendars and in the publications of the Holy Synod press. There is no such indication, no evidence of support whatsoever.

riage of the Grand Duke Kirill Vladimirovich with the Grand Duchess Victoria Feodorovna, named Maria in holy baptism, is to be recognized as a Princess of the Blood Imperial, with the title of Highness belonging to great-grandchildren of an Emperor."

There is thus provision in the Fundamental Laws for divorce of members of the Imperial House, and divorce of and by itself bears no relation to the right of succession to the throne.

### **Position of the Dynasty in Exile**

The fall of the monarchy in 1917 was attended by a number of unconstitutional acts. The Emperor Nicholas II was led by deceit into a situation in which he considered it to be his duty to abdicate on his own behalf and that of his son in favor of his brother the Grand Duke Michael. The constitutional validity of this act is subject to doubt. The act of the Grand Duke Michael, making acceptance of the Crown dependent on the decision of a constituent assembly, was unconstitutional. Kerensky's proclamation of Russia as a republic which followed a few months later, before the convocation of the Constituent Assembly, was completely unconstitutional and amounted to making all the previous acts null and void. The unsuccessful outcome of the Civil War can be regarded as the final act of this stage of Russian history.

Early in the twenties, there arose the urgent problem of ensuring the continuity of the Russian dynasty and of creating conditions in which it would be able, for a period whose duration was impossible to foresee, to safeguard its rights and at any given moment fulfill its dynastic duty. This had to be done on a legal basis, applying the Fundamental Laws to conditions of life in exile. For obvious reasons these laws made no provision either for those conditions or for the revolution itself. It was therefore necessary to follow their spirit rather than their letter.

It is in the light of these considerations that one should examine the two acts that were undertaken by the Head of the Imperial House in the first years of exile. In 1922, when the outcome of the Civil War had been settled and after it became clear that the events of 1917 had lost all their dubious validity for solving the future destinies of Russia, the Grand Duke Kirill, senior among the surviving members of the Imperial House of Russia in order of succession, proclaimed himself Curator of the Throne. The form in which this act was promulgated was conditioned by the uncertainty which still existed about the fate of the Emperor Nicholas II, the Caesarevich Alexis and the Grand Duke Michael. In the course of the following two years the reports on the dastardly assassination of the Imperial Martyrs were irrefutably confirmed. Consequently, in 1924, the Curator of the Throne assumed the title of Emperor of All the Russias.

This act was accepted without reservation by the overwhelming majority of the Members of the Imperial House. A critical attitude to the act, however, was adopted by the Dowager Empress Maria Feodorovna, on the grounds that she had not lost hope that her two sons and grandson were still alive; and by the Grand Dukes Nicholas and Peter and the latter's son Prince Roman, who considered that the question of sovereign power in Russia had to be decided by popular suffrage. None of them, however, questioned the Grand Duke Kirill's rights on the basis of the laws on succession to the throne. All the other members of the Imperial House, who were then quite numerous and represented the three branches of the dynasty, namely the posterity of the Emperor Alexander II and his brothers the Grand Dukes Constantine and Michael, immediately expressed their acceptance of the act. The Grand Duke Alexander stated in a letter to the Grand Duke Kirill which was signed by himself and his sons, Princes Andrew, Theodore, Nikita and Rostislav: "We pray that God may give you the strength to fulfill the onerous task which you have taken upon yourself in obedience to the Fundamental State Laws. We submit ourselves to you and are prepared to serve our beloved motherland in the way in which our fathers and grandfathers served it, following their behests." In a postscript it was added that the contents of the letter had been communicated to Prince Dimitry, who was then in New York. The youngest son of the Grand Duke Alexander, Prince Vasily, had not yet, according to the Fundamental Laws (Article 198), reached his majority.

In assuming the Imperial title the Grand Duke Kirill introduced no innovation to the legal history of the monarchical form of government that abounds in precedents for his action which themselves aroused no objections. This act was expedient in the prevailing circumstances for securing the future of the dynasty. It was essential that throughout decades, perhaps many decades, there should always be available a rightful successor to the Emperors of All the Russias who had not lost his Russian identity and who had been brought up in awareness of his rights and duties. This duty has been fulfilled by the Grand Duke Kirill and the Grand Duchess Victoria; it is now being fulfilled by the present Head of the Imperial House and his August Consort, and by their August daughter and August grandson. This is the most important consideration, the highest priority.

There is also to be considered the prestige of the dynasty expressed in its titles. The loss of the title of grand duke would be a great deprivation for the future of the dynasty. And yet, without the act of 1924, such a loss would have taken place. By virtue of the Statute of 1886 promulgated by the Emperor Alexander III the title of grand duke belonged only to the emperor's sons and grandsons in the male line, while his great-grandsons and their posterity had the title of Prince of the Imperial Blood. Here it is also important to establish the intention of the legislator, which is clearly expressed by the Emperor Alexander III in the preamble to the Statute of 1886: "Having established a firm order of succession to the Throne, Our great-grandfather, the Emperor Paul Petrovich of blessed memory, confirmed on 5th April

1797 a Statute on the Imperial Family **in accordance with the then prevailing position of the Empire and composition of the Imperial issue**, which guaranteed uninterrupted succession to the Throne. **The increase in the Imperial issue** which, since that time, by the grace of God has been continuing serves as a reliable guarantee for Our Motherland, securing for the future a rightful inheritance of sovereign power. Deeming it right, **in accordance with the present position of the Empire and composition of our Family**, to make some changes in the Statute of 5th April 1797 in accordance with directives which We have issued We have entrusted this task to a Special Commission..." The legislator's intention here could not be clearer. The last thing that could have formed part of his intention, as is clear from the preamble to the statute quoted above, was to lower the dignity of the dynasty by abolishing the title of grand duke itself. Like the other laws of the Russian Empire, the Emperor Alexander III's statute did not provide for the eventuality of a revolution. But after the revolution had taken place and there arose the pressing need to preserve the dynasty for the future, an act was necessary to define the position of the dynasty in exile. Thus we have the Manifesto of 31st August 1924 on the assumption of the Imperial title by the Grand Duke Kirill.

After the death of the Grand Duke Kirill in 1938, his successor, the Grand Duke Wladimir, the present Head of the Imperial House, issued a manifesto in which he declared that he had inherited all the rights and duties of his imperial ancestors. Nothing was said in this manifesto about title. The Grand Duke Wladimir's Chancellery published two circulars. One stated that the Head of the Imperial House would retain for himself the title of grand duke; the other, that some persons had already sworn an oath of allegiance to him as emperor and that he had accepted their oath. This state of affairs was accepted without objection by all Russian emigres who were not hostile to Russia's historical tradition. There were no objections from foreign royal courts and the existing situation was reflected in official reference books. Thus, thanks to the act of the Grand Duke Kirill, the position of the Russian dynasty in conditions of exile was established. The Head of the Imperial House inherits all the rights and duties of his imperial ancestors, and this includes the title of emperor. He can use, or not use, this title at his discretion. Regardless of whether he uses this title, its existence in his heritage confers the title of grand duke on his posterity in the order established in the Statute of 1886.

### **On the House of the Bagratids**

The august Consort of the present Head of the Imperial House, the Grand Duchess Leonida Georgievna, was born Princess Bagration of Mukhrani, a member of the Royal House of Georgia. The Bagratids are one of the oldest dynasties in the world, and later in this chapter we shall say a few words about its history. Let us first examine its present dynastic position.

In 1946, before the Grand Duke Wladimir was acquainted with his future Consort (whom he married two years later), he received an inquiry from a member of the Royal House of Spain, the Infante Don Fernando, Prince of Bavaria, whose contents the Grand Duke made public in an Act issued on 5th December 1946:

"His Royal Highness the Infante Don Fernando, Prince of Bavaria, when his daughter the Infante Mercedes was about to contract a marriage with Prince Irakly Bagration of Mukhrani, asked me whether, taking into account the independence of Georgia from 1918 to 1921 and the present position of her Royal Family, I would consider the proposed marriage to be an equal one.

"My reply, which was conveyed to the Infante through the intermediary of the Spanish Minister in Berne, the Conde de Bailen, was in the affirmative, inasmuch as, after prolonged and diligent study of the history of Georgia and of the Georgian question, and after consulting my uncle His Imperial Highness the Grand Duke Andrew, brother of my late Father, and my advisers, and after correspondence with the historian, Professor M. Muskelishvili, I consider it right and proper to recognize the royal status of the senior branch of the Bagration family, as well as the right of its members to bear the title of Prince of Georgia and the style of Royal Highness. The present head of this family is Prince George."

One should recall here that the Grand Duke Andrew, who was a jurist by education, was then the best living authority on the Russian laws of succession. Both he and another member of the Imperial House with whom the Grand Duke Wladimir was in consultation, the Grand Duchess Maria Pavlovna the Younger, were of the opinion that today the legal position of the Houses of Romanoff and of the Bagratids was identical, as both were former ruling dynasties.

Thus, when two years later the Grand Duke Wladimir himself decided to contract a marriage with a member of the House of the Bagratids, the question of the equality of this marriage was no longer raised. It had already been settled by his Act of 5th December 1946, an act obligatory for all members of the Imperial House by virtue of Article 219 of the Fundamental Laws: "The reigning Emperor must in every case be regarded as Head of all the Imperial Family and as its trustee and protector."

This matter should by now be crystal clear. In view, nonetheless, of the fact that so many people are poorly informed about it, we shall add a few words about the history of the Dynasty of the Bagratids, both before and after the incorporation in 1801 of Georgia into the Russian Empire.



From the remote past Georgia was an Orthodox kingdom in surroundings that were not Orthodox and, to a considerable extent, not even Christian. Times of prosperity and might were followed by periods of disintegration and decline. Like Russia, Georgia suffered the yoke of the Golden Horde, and later she was forced to endure ever persistent threats and invasions of the Shahs of Persia and the Sultans of Turkey. Through all of this, no matter whether they were the sovereigns of a united, independent, and mighty kingdom or the hapless vassals of Muslim overlords, the Bagratids always remained for the Georgians their kings who shared intimately with them their joys and their sorrows.

Georgia had very ancient ties to Russia which date from the Middle Ages and grew more intimate as the power of the Tsars of Moscow became greater. Let us consider more closely Georgia's relations with Russia in the eighteenth century. By this time Georgia had rid herself of the Persian yoke under the leadership of one of her most outstanding sovereigns, King Irakly II. Although Georgia was then independent, the ancient kingdom had, nonetheless, been split and another branch of the Bagratids occupied the throne of Imeretia. King Irakly had no illusions. He was clearly aware of the weakness of his position and was convinced that, sooner or later, Persia and Turkey would renew their efforts to conquer Georgia. He realized that he could not withstand their invasion with his own forces. He decided, therefore, to seek the help of Russia and to concede to her certain of his suzerain rights. As a result, a treaty of alliance between Russia and Georgia was concluded at Georgievsk on 24th June 1783, by virtue of which the Empress Catherine II took Georgia under her protection and Russia was given control over Georgia's foreign policy. At the same time, Russia promised "to respect the independence of Georgia and that henceforth Irakly II, as professing the same faith as Ours and as an ally of Russia, bears the title of King of Georgia, in which title and rights he and his issue are confirmed by Russia for ever and for all time..."

Unfortunately, this treaty was violated and Georgia was again invaded by the Turks and the Persians. They were firmly resisted by King Irakly, now an old man in failing health stricken with grief after the death of his favorite son Levani. He died at the beginning of 1798 and was succeeded by his son George XII, a weak and sick man. The Shah of Persia, Fath Ali, tried to woo him away from Russia, but King George did not fall into this trap. His brother Alexander, however, was an open enemy of Russia and acted in concert with Omar, Khan of the Avars, an ally of Turkey. In these circumstances the Emperor Paul I found it necessary to send troops to Georgia, and in 1800 two Russian battalions under the command of General Lazarev arrived in Tiflis. King George's loyalty was not in doubt. In the previous year his sons Ioane and Bagrat had inflicted a defeat on their hostile uncle Alexander. King George himself, however, was by now mortally sick with dropsy and dark clouds loomed on the horizon. The king tried to secure the succession for his son David, and the draft of a new treaty to replace the Treaty of Georgievsk of 1783 had already been drawn up. According to this draft Georgia was to be more closely tied to the Russian Empire, but the tenure of the throne by the Bagratids was nevertheless guaranteed. King George, however, died in December 1800 before the draft could become a treaty. Prince David did not venture to proclaim his accession and in January 1801 the manifesto on the incorporation of Georgia into the Russian Empire was issued.

Thus the promise made by Russia at the conclusion of the Treaty of Georgievsk was not kept. We shall not engage here in criticism of the motives that prompted this change of policy. No doubt there were weighty reasons, but, speaking in plain human language, one is bound to say that this change of policy, bordering on breach of faith, can hardly be viewed by any Russian without a feeling of regret. In any case, one thing is certain: whatever considerations of expediency made the Russian authorities regard it as essential to take the administration of Georgia under their direct control, these did not free Russia from her promise to the House of the Bagratids as a dynasty at the signing of the Treaty of Georgievsk. The Bagratids found themselves in the same position as later the dynasty of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies after the formation of the Kingdom of Italy and the dynasty of Montenegro after the formation of Yugoslavia, the position of a dynasty which has lost its throne. The Bagratids remain the members of an ancient dynasty that had ruled for many centuries and then by historical fortuity lost their thrones. In the future, whatever their prospects for regaining power, they could not be deprived by any acts of anyone of their position of having been a line of sovereigns that had once ruled.

After the incorporation of Georgia into the Russian Empire the sons of King George XII settled in Russia. They themselves bore the title of Tsarevich, and their posterity and relatives held the title of Prince. King Irakly II's son Alexander continued to maintain a hostile position. He spent a long time in Dagestan and according to legend widespread in the area Shamil was his natural son. In Tiflis itself the embers of resistance smoldered for a long time, culminating as late as 1830 in the "Nobles' Plot" aimed at a restoration of the Bagratids.

In Russia the Bagratids took part in the social life of their Russian contemporaries and many of them served in the armed forces of the Russian Empire. From this some draw the conclusion that the Bagratids thereby forfeited their royal status and were equated as Russian subjects to the Russian nobility. And yet the future King of the Belgians, Leopold I and later Prince Jaime de Bourbon and Prince Napoleon Bonaparte, also served in the armed forces of the Russian Empire, without prejudice to their dynastic status. In fact, the position of the two last named princes was analogous to that of the Bagratids. Both belonged to dynasties that had lost their thrones. It is quite likely that there were people in Russia poorly acquainted with Georgia's past and unaware of the promise made by Russia to the House of the Bagratids,

who equated the Bagratians with Russian nobles of non-royal status. One cannot, however, draw from such groundless opinions, no matter how exalted their proponents may have been, any deductions about what the status of the Bagratians really was.

What is important is that the Bagratians themselves never renounced their royal status and that, on the part of the Russian authorities, no statements were ever made on this matter. The question simply did not arise, not even in 1911 when Tatiana Konstantinovna, a Princess of the Imperial Blood, entered into marriage with Prince Bagration Mukhransky. Before doing so, she renounced her right of succession to the throne. As has already been pointed out, no deductions can be made from this about the dynastic status of Prince Bagration Mukhransky, seeing that a similar renunciation was made by the Grand Duchess Olga before her marriage to the King of Wurtemberg. In each case such a renunciation was undertaken at the discretion of the reigning emperor and affected only the person making it. There was never any question of posterity, since, according to the Fundamental Laws, a member of the Imperial House could renounce only his own right of succession. The sole exception to this was the abdication of the Emperor Nicholas II for himself and for his son. The conditions, however, in which the misled and betrayed Emperor was compelled to sign this act of abdication excludes all possibility of regarding this act as a supplement to the Fundamental Laws.

As a result of the tragic consequences of this act by Emperor Nicholas II, both the Imperial House of Russia and the Royal House of Georgia found themselves in an identical position of being royal dynasties without thrones. The relations which had existed between them from 1801 to 1917, wherever they may have been, had receded into the past. At first the destinies of Russia and Georgia followed different ways. In Russia communism triumphed in October 1917. Georgia was an independent State from 1918 to 1921. In 1921 communism triumphed also in Georgia. At present Georgia is a Union Republic within the U.S.S.R and, by legal fiction a sovereign state possessing in theory the right of secession from the Soviet Union.

In 1946 an opportunity arose for the Grand Duke Wladimir to remove the injustice that lay on the conscience of the Russian State by publicly declaring his recognition of the royal status of the House of the Bagratids. By this act the legal side of this question was fully and finally settled.

This question, however, has not only a legal, but also a very important political significance. The new era in the history of the Russian monarchy must open with account being taken of new conditions which were unknown to the Russian monarchy in the past or which at that time were only faintly reflected. The national awareness which has now matured in every people of the Russian State will best be reflected and satisfied in a marriage between the successor of the Russian sovereigns of the past and a princess of the royal house of one of the other peoples forming the multinational family of our empire. Such a marriage, in fact, took place when the Grand Duke Wladimir married the daughter of the Royal House of Georgia. This was a fitting initiation of a new era for the Russian monarchy. We, who believe in the future of the Russian monarchy, can only regard this marriage as providential.

### **Ensuring the Future of the Dynasty**

When, on 23rd December 1969, the Grand Duchess Maria was sixteen years old and reached her dynastic majority, the Grand Duke Wladimir issued two Messages to the Peoples of Russia, the texts of which the reader will find in the Appendix. The first of these messages contains an act on the institution of a Curatorship of the Imperial Throne of Russia in the person of his daughter, to take effect on the demise of the Grand Duke. The second message is a public announcement of the oath of loyalty to the Grand Duke sworn by the Grand Duchess Maria, with the obligation of observing the provisions on succession to the throne as propounded in the Fundamental Laws.

The first Message elucidates the present position of the Imperial House of Russia and the provisions of the law on the succession passing to the female line. It also contains the Act on the Institution of the Curatorship of the Throne: "The institution of Curatorship of the Throne is being promulgated in accordance with, on the example of and with the prerogatives accruing to the Institution of Regency, provided for in the Fundamental Laws, with a Council attached to the Curatrix, the composition of which will be announced in due time." There can be various reasons for instituting a regency.

In the majority of cases it was instituted to function during the minority of a monarch. As examples of great monarchs whose reigns were initiated by regencies, one could cite the Russian Tsars Ivan IV (wrongfully called the "Terrible", where a better translation would be the "Thunderous" or the "Stern"), Ivan V and his brother, the Emperor Peter the Great, as well as King Louis XIV of France and Alfonso XIII of Spain. There were also cases of a regency being instituted when a monarch became insane, as in the case of George III in England. In other cases a regency was instituted under circumstances in which, for one reason or another, the monarch was in fact deprived of the possibility of exercising his sovereign authority in his country; examples of this were the regencies of Admiral Horthy in Hungary and of Archbishop Damaskinos in Greece.

As should be expected, there is no enumeration of all these possibilities in the Fundamental Laws, for the simple reason that they cannot all be foreseen in advance. Who in the nineteenth century, for instance, could have foreseen the

circumstances in which the regencies of Admiral Horthy and of Archbishop Damaskinos were instituted? Even so these circumstances did arise and corresponding measures had to be taken. Circumstances of another kind, such as we cannot foresee at present, may arise in the future. In the Fundamental Laws we find no directives on the measures which should be taken in such circumstances, but we do find in them an indication of the **spirit** in which these measures should be taken. In Article 43 it is stated: "The appointment of regent and guardian, either jointly in one person or separately in two persons, depends on the will and discretion of the reigning emperor who, **for better security**, should make this provision for the case of his demise." Article 52 states: "Appointment of the council and selection of the members thereof are provided for **in case of absence of other directives from the deceased sovereign, to whom the circumstances and the persons should have been known.**" The words "for better security" and "to whom the circumstances and the persons should have been known" presume the **possibility of the occurrence of an abnormal situation - a possibility of which the reigning emperor is aware and for the prevention of which he should take the appropriate measures.**

It was in this spirit that the Act of the Grand Duke Wladimir of 23rd December 1969 was issued. The possibility of the occurrence of an abnormal situation stems from the unfriendly attitude of certain members of the Imperial House to the Grand Duke and to his family. From some of their statements one could conclude that they had dissociated themselves from the position taken by the late Grand Duke Alexander and expressed in his letter to the Grand Duke Kirill in 1924 quoted above, signed by the Grand Duke Alexander and four of his sons. The possibility was not excluded that, if any one of them were to succeed the Grand Duke Wladimir as Head of the Imperial House, he would not consider himself bound to observe Articles 25-39 of the Fundamental Laws and would be prepared to infringe on the legitimate rights of the Grand Duchess Maria.

Thus arose a danger for the future of the dynasty and a danger also for the future of the monarchy itself in Russia which may legitimately be compared with the danger that arises when the heir to throne loses his reason. In such cases the reigning emperor, or in present circumstances the Head of the Imperial House, takes the necessary measures for averting this danger. This is what the Grand Duke Wladimir did in his Act of 23rd December 1969, thereby safeguarding the legitimate rights of his daughter and her posterity.

In recent years we have witnessed two important events: the wedding of the daughter of the Head of the Imperial House and the birth of her son. In September 1976 the Grand Duchess Maria married prince Franz-Wilhelm of Prussia, who became Prince Michael after embracing the Orthodox Faith before marriage and Grand Duke Michael of Russia after the marriage. This was not the first time that such an alliance had taken place between the Imperial House of Russia and the Royal House of Prussia. Born into that dynasty was the Empress Alexandra, Consort of the Emperor Nicholas I. An ability to associate their destiny with their adopted country has always been a noteworthy feature of those members of German royal and ruling houses who entered into marriage with members of other dynasties, especially with future monarchs. This applies not only to German princesses, but also to the princes who were destined to play their part in circumstances that were new to them, such as Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, the Consort of Queen Victoria and the ancestor both of the Grand Duchess Maria and of the Grand Duke Michael.

The august Consort of the Grand Duchess Maria embraced the Orthodox Faith before marriage, and he did this out of deep personal conviction, after study of the doctrine and practice of the Holy Orthodox Church. The spirit of the law was observed, moreover providing for an Orthodox upbringing of the future heir. This heir was born on 13th March 1981 and was named Georgy in holy baptism. Of this we can be fully assured: the young Grand Duke will be brought up in the Russian spirit and in full awareness of his position and duties. We are assured of this by the examples set by the late Grand Duke Kirill and Grand Duchess Victoria in the upbringing of their son the Grand Duke Wladimir, and by the Grand Duke Wladimir and his Consort in the rearing of their daughter. On one occasion the headmaster of one of the best and oldest schools in England approached the Grand Duke Kirill with an offer to take his son into his school. This offer was declined, mainly at the initiative of the Grand Duchess Victoria, on the grounds that, however excellent was the secondary education offered at that boarding school, the young grand duke might lose his Russian identity there. Instead, he received excellent education in Russian at home and matriculated at the Russian gymnasium in Paris. The Grand Duke Wladimir and the Grand Duchess Leonida were guided by the same spirit in bringing up their daughter. Living in Spain and in Brittany, she was taught from childhood to speak faultless Russian and measures were taken to provide her with a good knowledge of Russian history and with full awareness of the part which by her birth she was destined to play. When the time came for her to matriculate into Oxford University, Russian language and literature were the subjects which she chose to study.

Let us then pray to the King of Kings that He may grant His good mercy in all things to the Head of the Imperial House and to all his august Family, and that He may grant many years of happiness and health to the young Grand Duke Georgy Mikhaylovich, for the good and prosperity of the sovereign House of Romanov. Let every one of us contribute his mite\* to the cause of delivering our motherland from the yoke of the godless regicides, so that she may once again enjoy happiness and prosperity under the scepter of the Imperial House of Russia.

\*St. Mark XII:41-44

## APPENDIX TO PART TWO

### I. RELEVANT ARTICLES OF THE FUNDAMENTAL LAWS (On the supreme power of the Monarch:)

4. Supreme sovereign power belongs to the Emperor of All the Russias. Obedience to this power, not only out of fear but for the sake of conscience, is ordained by God Himself.

5. The person of the Lord Emperor is sacrosanct and inviolable.

6. The same supreme sovereign power belongs to the Lady empress when succession to the Throne, in the order thereunto established, reaches a female person; but her consort is not regarded as emperor; he equally enjoys the honours and privileges available to consorts of emperors, except the title.

(The inviolable articles 25-39 on order of succession to the Throne:)

25. The Imperial Throne of All the Russias is hereditary within the Imperial House now happily reigning.

26. Inseparable from the Imperial Throne of All the Russias are the Thrones of the Kingdom of Poland and of the Grand Duchy of Finland.

27. Both sexes have the right of succession to the Throne; but this right belongs by preference to the male sex in order of primogeniture; with the extinction of the last male issue succession to the Throne passes to the female issue by right of substitution.

28. Accordingly, succession to the Throne belongs in the first place to the eldest son of the reigning Emperor, and after him to all his male issue.

29. With the extinction of this male issue, succession passes to the branch of the second son of the Emperor and his male issue; with the extinction of the second male issue, succession passes to the branch of the third son, and so on.

30. When the last male issue of the Emperor's sons is extinct, succession remains in the same branch, but in the female issue of the last reigning Emperor, as being nearest to the Throne, and therein it follows the same order, with preference to a male over a female person; but the female person from whom this right directly proceeds never loses this right.

31. With the extinction of this branch succession passes to the female issue of the branch of the eldest son of the emperor-progenitor, wherein the nearest relative of the last reigning emperor in the branch of this son succeeds, the eldest in the descending lines, by a collateral line, or, when there is no such relative available, the male or female person who takes her place by substitution, with preference, as above, for a male over a female person.

32. When these branches too are extinct succession passes to the female issue of the other sons of the emperor-progenitor, following the same order, and after, that to the male issue of the eldest daughter of the emperor-progenitor; and when that too is extinct to her female issue, following the order established for the female issue of the emperor's sons.

33. With the extinction of the male and female issue of the eldest daughter of the emperor-progenitor, succession passes first to the male and then to the female issue of the second daughter of the emperor-progenitor, and so on.

34. A younger sister, even if she has sons, does not take the right away from an elder sister who is not even married; but a younger brother succeeds before his elder sisters.

35. When the succession reaches a female branch which is already reigning on another throne, it is left to the person who succeeds to make a choice of faith and throne and, together with that person's heir, to renounce the other faith and throne, if such a throne is tied with a religious denomination; if there is no renunciation of faith, the succession passes to the person next in order.

36. Children issuing from a marriage of a person of the Imperial Family with a person not having the corresponding dignity, that is to say, not belonging to a royal or ruling house, have no right of succession to the Throne.

37. In the operation of the rules on the order of succession to the Throne enunciated above, a person who has such a right of succession is free to abdicate from this right in circumstances in which such an abdication does not create any difficulty in the future succession to the Throne.

38. Such an abdication, when it has been made public and acquires the force of law, becomes irrevocable.

39. An emperor or empress succeeding to the Throne undertake, at their accession and at their anointment, solemnly to observe the aforesaid laws on succession to the Throne.

(On the majority of sovereigns of both sexes and of the heir and on regency and guardianship when a minor emperor succeeds to the Throne:)

40. Sovereigns of both sexes and the heir to the Imperial Throne reach their majority at the age of sixteen.

41. When an emperor younger than this age succeeds to the Throne a regency and a guardianship are instituted to last until he has reached his majority.

42. The regency and the guardianship are instituted jointly in one person or separately, in which case one person is entrusted with the regency and the other with the guardianship.

43. The appointment of regent and guardian, either jointly in one person or separately in two persons, depends on the will and discretion of the reigning emperor who, for better security, should make this provision in the case of his demise.

44. When no such appointment has been made in the lifetime of an emperor, regency of the State and guardianship of the minor emperor belong to his father or mother; but his father-in-law and mother-in-law are excluded.

45. When there is no father or mother, regency and guardianship belong to the nearest in succession to the Throne among the minor emperor's major relatives of both sexes.

46. The legal reasons disqualifying one for tenure of regency and guardianship are: (1) insanity, even if temporary; (2) remarriage during tenure of regency or guardianship.

47. A regent of the State must have a regency council; there can be neither a regent without a council or a council without a regent.

48. The council consists of six persons of the first two classes selected by the regent, who can appoint others as changes arise.

49. Members of the Imperial Family of the male sex can attend sessions of this council at the choice of the regent, but not before reaching their majority. They are not included in the number of the six persons constituting the council.

50. The regency council deals with all matters without exception which are subject to the decision of the emperor or himself and with all matters which are submitted to him and to his council; but the council is not concerned with guardianship.

51. The regent has the casting vote.

52. Appointment of the council and selection of the members thereof are provided for in case of the absence of other directives from the deceased sovereign, to whom the circumstances and the persons should have been known.

(On accession to the Throne and oath of allegiance:)

53. On the demise of an emperor his heir accedes to the Throne by virtue of the law of succession itself, which confers this right upon him. The accession of an emperor to the Throne is counted from the day of the demise of his predecessor.

54. In the manifesto on accession to the Throne the rightful heir to the Throne is also named, if a person to whom succession belongs by law exists.

55. Allegiance to the newly acceded emperor and to his rightful heir, even if the latter is not named in the manifesto, is confirmed by a nationwide oath.

(Here follow articles; 56, on the oath and the procedure of taking it; 57-58, on coronation and anointment; 59-61, on the title of His Imperial Majesty and the State arms.)

### **On faith:**

62. The leading and predominant faith in the Russian Empire is the Christian Orthodox Catholic faith of the Eastern confession.

63. The emperor who possesses the Throne of All the Russias cannot profess any faith other than the Orthodox.

64. The emperor, as a Christian sovereign, is the supreme defender and guardian of the dogmas of the predominant faith and watches over the purity of Faith and all good order in the holy Church.

65. In church administration the sovereign power acts through the instrumentality of the Most Holy Governing Synod instituted by it.

(Section Two of the Fundamental Laws - the Statute on the Imperial Family.)

(On degrees of kinship in the Imperial House:)

126. All persons of the Blood Imperial who are the issue of a lawful marriage with a person of corresponding dignity authorized by the reigning emperor are recognized as Members of the Imperial House.

127. All members of the Imperial House consider their degree according to their kinship with the emperor from whom they are descended in direct line, without confusing it with their nearer kinship with subsequent emperors who acceded to the Throne after the progenitor of their family.

128. The eldest son of the emperor and all the eldest issue of the eldest branch, as long as the Imperial Family exists, are respected and considered, in the eyes of the emperor, as heirs to the Throne and bear the name of children of the sovereign.

129. All younger sons of the emperor or the issue of branches younger than him, that is to say, all except the firstborn, are regarded, at their birth, as sons of the sovereign.

130. The second and all younger sons of elder branches, as sons of a person capable of substituting an heir to the Throne, are considered to be on an equal footing with the sons of the sovereign, with all the rights appertaining to them.

131. All issue of the younger branches have and enjoy privileges according to their degree of kinship with the emperor from whom they are descended, even if a third person of an older branch were to be on the throne, and consequently they cannot expect, seek or demand any other privileges, except when succession to the Throne reaches them or when their brother accedes to the Throne.

132. Persons of the female sex who are issue of a male branch, in their degrees of kinship, are considered on the same basis as persons of the male sex, that is to say: the daughter of an elder person of an elder branch is considered to be a daughter of the emperor, the daughter of a younger person of the same branch, is considered to be the granddaughter, and so on.

133. Issue of the female sex are completely distinguished from issue of the male sex; and consequently they should not take account of their kinship with an emperor in order to receive a title, a pension or dowry, but enjoy all this according to the right belonging to their father, and can demand nothing from the State or from the Chief Administration of Appanages.

134. Children born of a marriage which has not been authorized by the reigning emperor enjoy no privileges belonging to Members of the Imperial House.

(On the birth and demise of Members of the Imperial House and on the genealogical book:)

135. When a son or daughter is born in the Imperial House of male or female parentage, within the State or outside it, the father and mother or the closest of kin must without delay inform the reigning emperor about the date of birth and the name of the newly-born.

136. This information must be done in writing and those absent from the State direct this information through the intermediary of the nearest Russian diplomatic representatives.

137. Having received this information, the emperor commands that the name of the newly-born be included in the genealogical book of the Imperial House of Russia and that the family of the newly-born be informed that the newly-born has been duly included among the Members of the Imperial House.

138. In case of the demise of a Member of the Imperial House, within or without the State, the emperor is similarly informed about it.

139. The public is informed about the birth and demise of Members of the Imperial House of male parentage and about the demise of foreign princesses in wedlock with grand dukes and princes of the Blood Imperial by the Governing Senate; birth and demise of grand dukes and grand duchesses is announced to the public in manifestoes.

140. Announcements on the birth and demise of Members of the Imperial House are kept in the State Archives.

141. The demise of persons of the Imperial House, as also their birth, is inscribed in the genealogical book.

142. The inclusion of the name in the genealogical book is proof of admission to the Imperial issue.

143. The genealogical book serves as a basis for the granting of pensions, appanages and monetary awards to Members of the Imperial House. It is kept in His Imperial Majesty's Cabinet.

(Articles 144-163 deal with titles, coats of arms and other outer privileges of Members of the Imperial House. They are in no way relevant to the question of succession to the Throne, but we give below the articles 144-148 on titles of the Members of the Imperial House, as these articles are of some interest:)

144. The titles belonging to Members of the Imperial House, are the following:

(1) Heir, Caesarevich, Grand Duke and Imperial Highness.

(2) Grand Duke (Veliki Knyaz) Grand Duchess (Velikaya Knyaginya - i.e. wife), Grand Duchess (Velikaya Knyazhna, i.e. daughter) and Imperial Highness.

(3) Prince, Princess (Knyaginya - i.e. wife), and Princess (Knyazhna - i.e. daughter) and Highnesses.

(4) Prince, Princess (wife), Princess (daughter) and Serene Highnesses.

145. The title of Heir, Caesarevich, Grand Duke and Imperial Highness belongs to the one publicly declared Heir to the Throne. The consort of the Heir to the Throne is entitled Tsesarevna and Grand Duchess with the style of Imperial Highness.

146. The title of Grand Duke, Grand Duchess (daughter) and Imperial Highness belongs to the sons, daughters, brothers, sisters and, through male issue, to all grandchildren of an emperor.

**Note.** By virtue of the Ukase of 1852 the children of the Grand Duchess Mariya Nikolayevna and Duke Maximilian of Leuchtenberg bear the title of Imperial Highnesses conferred upon them and are considered, together with their issue in the descending male line, to be Princes and Princesses of the Blood Imperial and enjoy the rights and privileges conferred upon Princes and Princesses of the Blood Imperial in this chapter of the Statute. Among their issue the title of Imperial Highness belongs only to Prince Alexander Georgievich Romanovsky Duke of Leuchtenberg, personally.

147. The title of Highness, Prince and Princess (daughter) of the Blood Imperial belongs to great-grandchildren of an emperor, descended from male issue, and in the offspring of each great-grandson the title of Highness is conferred upon his eldest son and his eldest descendants of the male sex and branch, by right of primogeniture. If a person who bore the title of Highness dies without leaving issue, the title passes to collateral lines, following the order established for inheriting entailed properties. (Appendix VI).

**Note.** By virtue of the Ukase of 1899 the children of Their Imperial Highnesses Prince Georgy Maximilianovich and Princess Anastasia Nikolayevna Romanovsky, Duke and Duchess of Leuchtenburg, are enabled to bear the title of Highness with the extension to their descendants of the right of bearing the titles of Highness and Serene Highness in accordance with the rules indicated in Articles 147 and 148.

148. The title of Serene Highness, Prince and Princess (daughter) of the Blood Imperial belongs to the younger children of a great-grandson and to all their descendants of the Blood Imperial in the male line.

(Articles 149-163 deal with foreign princes who have married grand duchesses and princesses of the Blood Imperial, seniority of Members of the Imperial House in precedence to one another, precedence of the Dowager Empress over the Consort of a reigning emperor.

(Article 153), coats of arms of Members of the Imperial Family, flags and honours accorded to Members of the Imperial Family; Articles 164-182 deal with the upkeep of Members of the Imperial Family.)

### **On marriage:**

183. Permission of the reigning emperor is necessary for the marriage of every Member of the Imperial House, and a marriage contracted without such permission is not recognized as lawful;

184. With the permission of the reigning emperor, members of the Imperial House can enter into marriage both with persons of the Orthodox Faith and with persons of other denominations.

185. The marriage of a male person of the Imperial House who may have the right of succeeding to the Throne with a person of another faith can take place only after she has embraced the Orthodox confession.

186. Betrothal and marriage are celebrated in accordance with the rules of the Church and with observance of ceremonial established by Imperial order.

**Note.** The betrothal, as well as the marriage itself, of persons of the imperial House with persons belonging to another religion may be carried out by proxy when in the agreements concluded thereon by the State authorities there is an indication of the persons empowered to act by proxy at the celebrations of betrothal and matrimony.

187. Marriages of grand dukes and grand duchesses are announced to the public by manifestoes which contain the title of the newly-married and, if the bride has embraced the Orthodox confession, the name which was given her at holy chrismation. Marriages of other persons of the Imperial House are brought to public notice of the Governing Senate.

188. A person of the Imperial Family who has entered into a marriage alliance with a person of a status unequal to his, that is, not belonging to any royal or ruling house, cannot pass on to that person, or to posterity that might issue from such a marriage, the rights which belong to members of the Imperial Family.

**Note.** Henceforward none of the grand dukes or grand duchesses may enter into a marriage with a person of unequal status, that is, not belonging to a royal or ruling house.

(Articles 189-193 deal with marriage settlements and dowry.)

### **On divorce:**

194. A marriage of a member of the Imperial House is dissolved in exact accordance with the regulations of the Church and for reasons determined therein.

195. The marriage in such cases is dissolved by a ruling of the Most Holy Synod, with confirmation by the emperor.

196. A member of the Imperial House whose marriage has been dissolved may enter into another marriage union when, in view of the reasons for the dissolution of the previous marriage, this is not contrary to the rules of the Church.

(On the majority of Members of the Imperial House:)

197. For the heir to the Throne, according to the Fundamental State Laws, the majority is established at the age of sixteen.

198. For grand dukes and grand duchesses, as well as for princes and princesses of the Blood Imperial who have the style of Highness, the majority is established at the age of twenty or, if such persons have contracted a marriage before reaching that age, from the day of their marriage; for princes and princesses of the Blood Imperial who have the style of Serene Highness, the age of majority is the same as that established by the civil law at the age of twenty-one. (Articles 199-218 deal with guardianship of minors and rights of major Members of the Imperial House; the oath sworn by them on reaching their majority; the various types of property, their acquisition and assignation; inheritance; and judicial matters.)

(On the duties of Members of the Imperial House towards the Emperor:)

219. The reigning emperor must in every case be regarded as head of all the Imperial Family and as its trustee and protector,

220. Every Member of the Imperial House is committed to the reigning monarch, as Head of the House and Sovereign, with complete respect, obedience and allegiance.

221. An inviolable pledge, moreover, of the privileges accorded to every Member of the Imperial House is their peaceful conduct and their maintenance of family calm and concord.

222. The reigning emperor, as a sovereign without limitation of his rights, has the right to deprive an insubordinate of the rights appointed in this law and to deal with him as with one who has defied the will of the Monarch.

223. When every member of the Family, in gratitude for the Monarch's solicitude, will consider it to be truly beneficial to bring his behavior into complete accord with the Monarch's will and the enactments which the Monarch has made, the constant implementation of these laws will remain inviolable from generation to generation and forever and a fundamental law of the Russian Empire.

## **II. FROM THE SOURCES OF THE FUNDAMENTAL LAWS**

**(1) Act confirmed by the Emperor Paul I on the day of his coronation on 5 April 1797 and placed by him for safe keeping on the altar of the Cathedral of the Assumption.**

*We, Paul, Heir, Caesarevich and Grand Duke, and We, his Consort, Maria, Grand Duchess.  
In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost.*



*By Our common, free and mutual agreement, after mature consideration and in a tranquil spirit, We have enacted this Our common Act, whereby, witnessing Our love of the Motherland, We designate as successor after My, Paul's, death, in accordance with natural law, Our eldest son Alexander, and after him all his male issue.*

*In case of extinction of this male issue, the succession will pass to the branch of My second son, in which it will follow in the same order which has been established for the issue of My eldest son, and so it will follow, if I have more sons; which is primogeniture.*

*With the extinction of the last male issue of my sons, the succession will remain in that branch, but in the female line of the last one to have reigned, as being nearest to the throne, in order to avoid the difficulties involved in the passage of the succession from one branch to another, in which it will follow the same order, with preference to a male over a female person; one should, however, note here once and for all time that the female person from whom the right directly proceeds never loses this right.*

*With the extinction of this branch, the succession passes to the branch of my eldest son in the female line, in which the heiress is the nearest relative of the last one to have reigned in the branch of my aforesaid son, or, if she is wanting, to the male or female person who occupies her place, observing that preference is given to a male over a female person, as has already been said above; which is substitution.*

*With the extinction of these branches the succession passes to the female branches of my other sons, following the same order, and to the branch of my eldest daughter, to the male issue therein and, with its extinction, to the female issue, following the order observed in the female issues of my sons.*

*With the extinction of the male and female issue of my eldest daughter, the succession passes to the male and thereafter to the female issue of my second daughter, and so on.*

*Here the principle should be laid down that a younger sister, even if she has sons, does not deprive an elder sister of her rights, even if the latter be unmarried, inasmuch as the latter could marry and bear children; but a younger brother succeeds before his elder sisters.*

*Having established the regulations for the succession, I must explain the motives which prompted them. They are the following:*

*That the State should never be without an Heir.*

*That the Heir should be determined by the law itself.*

*That there should never be the least doubt as to who is to succeed.*

*That the rights of the branches to the succession should be maintained without violation of natural right and that difficulties which might occur in the passage of the succession from one branch to another should be avoided.*

*Having established the order of succession in this manner, one must add the following supplement to this law:*

*When the succession reaches a female branch which is already reigning on another throne, it is left to the person who succeeds to make a choice of faith and throne and, together with that person's heir, to renounce the other faith and throne, if such a throne is tied with a religious denomination, seeing that the sovereigns of Russia are Heads of the Church; and if there is no renunciation of faith, the succession passes to the person next in order. The heirs roust undertake, at their accession and their anointment, solemnly to observe this law on succession. If a female person succeeds to the Throne, and such a person is married or will be married, her husband should not be regarded as sovereign, but should nevertheless be accorded honors on an equal footing with consorts of sovereigns and enjoy their other privileges, except the title. Marriages must not be regarded as lawful if they have been contracted without the permission of the sovereign.*

*In the case when the person succeeding is a minor, the order and security of the State and of the sovereign require that a regency and a guardianship be instituted to function until his majority.*

*The majority of sovereigns of both sexes and of their Heirs is established at the age of sixteen in order to shorten the duration of the Regency.*

*If the last reigning sovereign has not appointed a Regent and a Guardian, as he should have made this provision for better security, the Regency of the State and guardianship of the person of the sovereign belong to his father or mother, but his father-in-law- and mother-in-law are excluded. If there is no father or mother, they belong to the nearest in succession to the Throne among the minor's major relatives of both sexes.*

*The majority of other members of the Imperial Family of both sexes is established at the age of twenty.*

*Legally determined incapacity barring tenure of regency and guardianship is as follows: insanity, even if temporary, and remarriage of widowed persons during tenure of regency and guardianship.*

*The Regent must have a Regency Council, and there can be neither a regent without a council or a council without a regent; but the council is not concerned with guardianship.*

*This council is to consist of six persons of the first two classes elected by the Regent, who can appoint others as changes arise.*

*This regency council deals with all matters without exception which are subject to the decision of the sovereign himself and with all matters which are submitted to him and to his council; the Regent has the casting vote.*

*Members of the Imperial Family of the male sex can attend sessions of the council at the choice of the Regent, but not before reaching their majority and not included in the number of the six persons constituting the council.*

*Appointment of this council and selection of the members thereof are provided for in case of the absence of other directives from the deceased sovereign, to whom the circumstances and the persons should have been known.*

*Hereby we have made our contribution to the tranquility of the State, which is based on a firm law of succession, of which every right thinking person is convinced.*

*We wish that this Act, in the eyes of the whole world, should serve as the most striking proof of our love of the Motherland, of our conjugal love and concord and of our love of our children and posterity. In witness whereof we have signed our names and affixed our armorial seals.*

*The original act is thus signed by Their Imperial Majesties' own hands:*

**Paul  
(Seal)**

**Maria  
(Seal)**

Saint-Petersburg, 4th January, 1788.

The original transcript is thus signed by His Imperial Majesty's own hand:

Correct. **Paul.**

(Simultaneously with this Act, on 5th April 1797, a Statute on the Imperial Family was confirmed, and subsequently it constituted Section II of the Fundamental Laws. A new Statute was confirmed by the Emperor Alexander III on 2nd July 1886. In the 1906 edition, from which the articles given above have been taken, the Statute is contained in Articles 126-223.)

**(2) Addendum to the above Act and to the Statute simultaneously confirmed with it on unequal marriages. (Excerpt from the Manifesto of the Emperor Alexander I of 20th March 1820 on the dissolution of the marriage of the Grand Duke Constantine Pavlovich with the Grand Duchess Anna Feodorovna and on the additional enactment on the Imperial Family.)**

... We consider it good, for the firm maintenance of the dignity and tranquility of the Imperial Family and of the Empire itself, to add to the existing enactments of the Imperial Family the following additional regulation: if any person of the Imperial Family enters into a marriage alliance with a person of a status unequal to his, that is, not belonging to any royal or ruling house; in such a case the person of the Imperial Family cannot pass on to the other person the rights which belong to members of the Imperial Family, and the children issuing from such a marriage have no right of succession to the Throne. Expressing this Our Will to all present and future members of Our Imperial Family and to all Our faithful subjects, in accordance with the exact right established in article 23\* of the Statute on the Imperial Family, We, in face of the King of Kings, make it incumbent upon one and all whom it may concern solemnly and inviolably to maintain for all time this Our additional enactment.

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\* Corresponds to article 219 in the 1906 edition, given above.

### III. DOCUMENTS REFERRING TO THE RENUNCIATION OF CAESAREVICH AND GRAND DUKE CONSTANTINE PAVLOVICH FROM HIS RIGHT OF SUCCESSION TO THE THRONE.

#### (1) Letter of Caesarevich and Grand Duke Constantine Pavlovich to the Emperor Alexander I regarding the Grand Duke's renunciation from succession to the Throne.

*Most Gracious Lord!*

*Encouraged by my experience of Your Imperial Majesty's boundless benevolence towards me, I venture once again to avail myself of it and to lay at your feet, Most Gracious Lord, my humblest request.*

*Feeling that I lack the talents, the strength and the spirit that would enable me at any time to be raised to the dignity to which, by my birth, I might have the right, I venture to ask Your Imperial Majesty to hand over that right to the person to whom it belongs after me and thereby assure for all time the stability of our State. By doing this I can add yet another pledge and new strength to the obligation which I solemnly undertook of my own free will on the occasion of my divorce from my former wife. All the circumstances of my present position make me convinced of this more and more and will provide further proof of my sincere sentiments before our State and the whole world.*

*Most Gracious Lord! Accept this my request favourably, ask our Most August Mother for her agreement with it and confirm it by your Imperial word. As for me, I shall endeavor always, on retiring to private life, to serve as an example to your subjects and faithful sons of our beloved State.*

*I am, with profoundest respect, Most Gracious Lord, Your imperial Majesty's most faithful subject and brother.*

*The letter, written by his own hand, is signed:*

**Constantine Caesarevich.**

*St. Petersburg, 14th January 1822.*

*The copy bears the following inscription in His Imperial Majesty's own hand:*

*"In conformity with the original:*

**Alexander."**

#### (2) Reply of the Emperor Alexander I. consenting to the renunciation of the Grand Duke Constantine Pavlovich

*My dear brother,*

*I have read your letter with due attention. As I have always appreciated the noble sentiments of your spirit, this letter caused me no surprise. It has provided me with further proof of your sincere love of the State and of your concern for its steadfast tranquility.*

*In accordance with your wish, I submitted this letter to our dear mother. Like myself, she read it with the same feeling of gratitude for the honourable motives which guided you.*

*It remains to us both, in appreciation of the reasons which you have expounded, to give you full freedom to follow the firm decision which you have taken, praying Almighty God that He might bless the consequences of such purest of intentions.*

*I remain forever your affectionate brother.*

*The original is signed by His Imperial Majesty's own hand:*

**"Alexander".**

*The copy is inscribed: "Correct, Constantine Caesarevich."*

*St. Petersburg, 2nd February 1822.*

**(3) Manifesto of the Emperor Alexander I, confirming the renunciation  
of the Grand Duke Constantine Pavlovich  
and designating the Grand Duke Nicholas Pavlovich as heir.**

*By the Grace of God, We, Alexander the First, Emperor and Sovereign Lord of All the Russias, etc., etc., etc.*

*Ever since Our accession to the Throne of All the Russias We have always been aware of Our duty before Almighty God not only to assure and increase the prosperity of Our beloved Motherland and people, but also to prepare for and ensure their tranquility and prosperity after Us, by clearly and precisely indicating Our heir, in accordance with the rights of Our Imperial House and the benefits of the Empire. We could not, like our predecessors, proclaim him by name, still abiding in expectation that it might be acceptable within the inscrutable destinies of God to grant Us an Heir to the Throne in the direct line. The further Our days are passing, however, the more urgent do We feel it necessary to place Our Throne in a position in which **it could not for an instant become vacant.***

*While We have been pondering over this solemn duty in Our heart, our beloved brother, the Caesarevich and Grand Duke Constantine Pavlovich, of his own accord, presented Us with a request that the right to the dignity to which, by his birth, he might at some time be raised should be handed over to the person to whom it belongs after him. He stated, moreover, that it was his intention thereby to provide new force to the additional Act on succession to the Throne which We have established in the year 1820 and which he, inasmuch as it concerns him, has freely and solemnly accepted.*

*We have been deeply touched by this sacrifice which our dear brother has decided, with no thought of his own person, to make in order to strengthen the family enactments of Our Imperial House and to contribute to the stable tranquility of the Russian Empire.*

*After beseeching the aid of God and giving mature consideration to a subject so close to Our heart and so important for the State, and finding that the present enactments on the order of succession to the Throne do not deprive those who have a right to it from freely renouncing this right in circumstances in which this does not create any difficulty in the future succession to the Throne - We have, with the agreement of Our Most August Mother and in accordance with Our hereditary right as Head of the Imperial Family and the sovereign authority granted unto Us by God, resolved, in the first place: that the free renunciation of Our first brother, Caesarevich and Grand Duke Constantine Pavlovich, from his right to the Throne of All the Russias, should be firm and immutable; that the act on this renunciation, for its authentic publication, should be kept in the Great Cathedral of the Assumption in Moscow and in the three supreme offices of authority in Our Empire: the Holy Synod, the State Council and the Governing Senate. In the second place, in consequence thereof, in accordance with the act on succession to the Throne, that Our heir should be Our second brother, the Grand Duke Nicholas Pavlovich.*

*Having done this, with Our mind at peace, We expect that on the day when the King of Kings, in accordance with the law common to all mankind, will call Us from this transient kingdom to eternity, the estates of the realm, to whom this immutable will of Ours and this our legal enactment will be made known in due time and by Our provision, will immediately avow their fidelity as loyal subjects to the hereditary emperor indicated by Us as succeeding to the one and indivisible Throne of the Empire of All the Russias, the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Finland. As for Us, we ask all Our loyal subjects that they should, with that love which We, in Our solicitude for their constant prosperity, regard as the highest blessing on earth, bring their heartfelt prayers to Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ that, in His infinite mercy, He would receive Our soul into his everlasting kingdom.*

*Given at Tsarskoje Selo on the 16th August in the year of Our Lord 1823, in the twenty-third year of Our reign.*

*The original has been signed thus by His Imperial Majesty's own hand:*

**"Alexander".**

(In the letters of the Grand Duke Constantine to the Empress Maria Feodorovna and the Emperor Nicholas I, both from Warsaw and dated 20th November 1825, the Grand Duke's renunciation of succession to the Throne is again confirmed.)

**(4) Manifesto of the Emperor Nicholas I on his accession to the Throne.**

We declare to all Our faithful subjects with a contrite heart, in humility before the inscrutable destinies of the Most High, amid the general sorrow which has overwhelmed Us, Our consolation in God alone. With the demise of Our dearly-beloved brother the Lord Emperor Alexander Pavlovich, now resting in God, we have lost a father and a sovereign by whose charity Russia and We Ourselves have been benefiting for twenty-five years. When the news of this sad event reached Us on the 27th day of November, in the very first hour of sorrow and lamentation, We, summoning up spirit for the fulfillment of our sacred duty and following the prompting of Our heart, swore an oath of allegiance to our elder brother the Lord Heir and Grand Duke Constantine Pavlovich as, by right of primogeniture, the lawful heir to the Throne of All the Russias.

After We had fulfilled this sacred duty, We received information from the State Council that, on 15th October 1823, an envelope was delivered to it bearing the seal of the late Lord Emperor and the following inscription written in His Majesty's own hand: To be kept in the State Council pending my request or, in the event of my demise, to be opened before any other action in extraordinary session; that this Imperial command had been carried out by the State Council and that the envelope contained: (1) A letter of Caesarevich and Grand Duke Constantine Pavlovich to the Lord Emperor of 14th January 1822, in which His Highness renounced succession to the Throne, which belonged to him by right of primogeniture. - (2) A Manifesto, confirmed on 16th August 1823 by a signature in His Imperial Majesty's own hand, in which the Lord Emperor, announcing his consent to the renunciation of Caesarevich and Grand Duke Constantine Pavlovich, recognized Us as Heir, as next in seniority to him and as nearest to the succession according to basic law. At the same time it was reported to Us that similar acts bearing the same inscription were being kept in the Governing Senate, the Holy Synod and in the Assumption Cathedral in Moscow. These reports could not change the measure which We had taken. We saw in these acts and abdication made by His Highness in the lifetime of the Lord Emperor and confirmed by His Majesty's consent; but We had neither the desire nor the right to recognize this abdication, which in its time had not been made public and legally established, as forever irrevocable. We thereby wished to affirm Our respect for our country's foremost basic law on the immutability of the order of succession to the Throne. In consequence whereof, faithful to the oath which We had sworn, We insisted that the whole State should follow Our example; and We did this not by way of disputing the reality of the will expressed by His Highness, still less in insubordination to the will of the late Lord Emperor, who for all of us was our father and benefactor, a will which always remains sacred to us, but in order to safeguard the basic law on the order of succession to the Throne from any violation, in order to dispel any shadow of doubt of the purity of Our intentions and in order to prevent our beloved Motherland from finding herself unaware, even for one moment, as to who is her rightful sovereign. This decision, which We took with a clear conscience before God, to Whom all hearts are open, has also received the blessing of Our dearly-beloved Mother, the Lady Empress Maria Feodorovna.

In the meantime the sad news of the demise of the Lord Emperor reached Warsaw, straight from Taganrog, on 25th November, two days before it reached here. Remaining constant in his intention, the Lord Caesarevich and Grand Duke Constantine Pavlovich, on the very next day, on 26th November, deemed it right to confirm it once again in two acts, which he handed to our dearly-beloved brother the Grand Duke Michael Pavlovich for forwarding hither. These acts are the following: (1) A Letter to Our dearly beloved Mother the Lady Empress, in which His Highness reiterated his previous decision and, confirming it with the letter of the late Lord Emperor, a copy of which was enclosed, written in reply to His Highness's letter of 2nd February 1822, once again solemnly abdicated from succession to the Throne, passing it on, in the order established in the basic law, to Us and Our posterity. (2) His Highness's letter to Us, in which, having repeated the same declarations of his will, His Highness gives Us the title of Imperial Majesty, retaining for himself his previous title of Caesarevich and declaring himself to be Our most faithful subject.

Positive as these acts were and clearly as they represented His Highness's abdication as being firm and irrevocable, We nevertheless regarded it to be in conformity with Our sentiments and with the existing state of affairs to delay their publication until We received the final declaration of His Highness's will regarding the path which We and the whole State had sworn.

Now, having received this final declaration of the firm and irrevocable will of His Highness, We announce it to all the people, attaching herewith: (1) The Letter of His Imperial Highness Caesarevich and Grand Duke Constantine Pavlovich to the late Lord Emperor Alexander I; (2) His Imperial Majesty's reply; (3) The Manifesto of the late Lord Emperor, confirming His Highness' abdication and recognizing Us as Heir; (4) His Highness' letter to the Lady Empress Maria Feodorovna; (5) His Highness' Letter to Us.

In consequences of all these Acts and in accordance with the basic law of the Empire on the order of succession, with a heart filled with veneration and submission to the inscrutable destinies of the Providence that leads Us, on ascending the ancestral Throne of the Empire of All the Russias and the Thrones indivisible from it of the Kingdom of Poland and of the Grand Duchy of Finland, We ordain: (1) That the oath of allegiance should be sworn to Us and to Our Heir, His Imperial Highness the Grand Duke Alexander Nikolayevich, Our dearly beloved son. (2) That our accession to the Throne should be dated as from 19th November 1825.

Finally, We call upon all Our faithful subjects to join Us in fervent prayers to the Most High that He may send Us the strength to bear the burden placed upon Us by His Divine Providence; that He may strengthen Our good intentions to live solely for Our beloved Motherland to follow the example of Our lamented Sovereign; that Our reign should be but a continuation of his reign and that everything should be fulfilled which was desired for the good of Russia by him whose sacred memory will inspire Us with the zeal and hope to merit the blessing of God and the love of Our peoples.

Given in the Imperial city of Saint Petersburg, on the twelfth day of December of the year of Our Lord 1825 and the first year of Our reign.

#### **IV. DECREE OF THE EMPEROR ALEXANDER III. ATTACHED TO THE NEW STATUTE ON THE IMPERIAL FAMILY CONFIRMED ON 2nd JULY 1886.**

Having established a firm order of succession to the Throne, Our great-grandfather, the Emperor Paul Petrovich of blessed memory, confirmed on 5th April 1797 a Statute on the Imperial Family, in accordance with the then prevailing position of the Empire and composition of the Imperial issue, which guaranteed uninterrupted succession to the Throne. The increase in the Imperial issue which, since that time, has, by the grace of God, been continuing serves as a reliable guarantee for Our Motherland, securing for the future a rightful inheritance of sovereign power. Deeming it right, in accordance with the present position of the Empire and composition of Our Family, to make some changes in the Statute of 5th April 1797 in accordance with directives which We have issued, We have entrusted this task to a Special Commission under the chairmanship of Our beloved brother, the Grand Duke Vladimir Alexandrovich. Now, after examining the Statute drawn up by this commission and finding it to be in full accord with Our desire to establish regulations which for all time establish for all members of Our Family the dignity belonging to each one of them, We command that this Statute should be implemented.

#### **V. MANIFESTOES AND OTHER DOCUMENTS CONCERNING MEMBERS OF THE IMPERIAL HOUSE.**

##### **(1) Manifesto of the Emperor Alexander II announcing the birth of the Grand Duke Andrey Vladimirovich (see Article 139 of the Fundamental Laws.)**

We announce to all Our faithful subjects.

On the second day of this May Our dearly beloved daughter-in-law Her Imperial Highness the Lady Grand Duchess Maria Alexandrovna, Consort of our dearly beloved son His Imperial Highness the Grand Duke Vladimir Alexandrovich, was delivered of a child, bearing Us a grandson named Andrew.

Considering this increase in Our Imperial House to be a new manifestation of the grace of God, sent to Us as a consolation, We are fully assured that all Our faithful subjects will, together with Us, offer their fervent prayers to the Most High for the happy growth and well-being of the newly born. We command that this Our dearly beloved grandson, the newly born Grand Duke, should in all appropriate cases be written of and named with the style of His Imperial Highness. Given at Livadia, on the second day of this May, in the year of the Lord 1879, the twenty-fifth year of Our reign.

##### **(2) From the Manifesto of the Emperor Alexander II on the marriage of the Grand Duke Vladimir Alexandrovich with the Grand Duchess Maria Pavlovna and from the Manifesto of the Emperor Nicholas II on the reception of the Grand Duchess Maria Pavlovna into the Orthodox faith.**

###### **(a) From the Manifesto of the Emperor Alexander II of 1874;**

By the grace of God and Our parental blessing, together with that of Our dearly beloved Consort, the Lady Empress Maria Alexandrovna, Our dearly beloved son the Grand Duke Vladimir Alexandrovich has contracted a marriage with Duchess Maria, daughter of the sovereign Grand Duke of Mecklemburg-Schwerin, and on the sixteenth day of this August their wedding was solemnly celebrated in Our presence in the cathedral church of the Winter Palace, according to the rites of our Orthodox Church.

Announcing this event so joyful to Our parental heart and commanding that Our dearly beloved daughter-in-law, the Consort of the Grand Duke Vladimir Alexandrovich, be named Grand Duchess Maria Pavlovna with the title of Imperial Highness, We are fully convinced that Our faithful subjects will, together with Us, offer their fervent prayers to Almighty and Most Merciful God that He may grant constant and stable happiness to the newly wed dear to Our heart.

**(Note.** The Holy Synod on 21st November 1874 conveyed to the Senate the Imperial command that the birthday of the Grand Duchess Maria Pavlovna was to be celebrated on 2nd May and her name-day on 22nd July.)

###### **(b) From the Manifesto of the Emperor Nicholas II of 10th April 1908.**

Our dearly beloved aunt, the Grand Duchess Maria Pavlovna, having learned and experienced, in accord with her husband, the truth of Orthodoxy, has desired, at her own spiritual prompting, to unite with Us in faith and in the communion of Church prayer and sacrament. Today, to Our great joy, she has embraced our Orthodox faith and received holy chrismation. Announcing this much desired event to all Our loyal subjects, We command that Her Imperial Highness be styled Grand Duchess of Good Faith.

(**Translator's Note:** This refers to occasions when she would be named in church prayers. All Grand Dukes, and Grand Duchesses who are Orthodox, then bear the style "Blagovernny" or "Blagovernaya" - "Pious".)

(c) **The Decree of the Emperor Nicholas of 15th July 1907 on the marriage of the Grand Duke Kirill Vladimirovich to the Grand Duchess Victoria Feodorovna and on the birth of their daughter Princess Maria Kirillovna is given in full on page 14. The Decree of the Emperor Nicholas II on the abdication of Princess Tatiana Konstantinovna of her right of succession to the Throne is given in full on page 13.**

**(3) From the archives of the Minsk Ecclesiastical Consistory: celebration of the birth of the Grand Duke Kirill (Kirill Vladimirovich)**

(a) 21 Received 25th December 1876

No. 115

Decree of **His Imperial Majesty the Sovereign Lord of All the Russias**, from the Minsk Consistory to the Epiphany Monastery in Pinsk.

The Minsk Ecclesiastical Consistory has taken notice of the decree of the Governing Synod No. 6 of 12th November last, transmitted by the Lord Bishop for circulation, in which the Holy Synod, reporting on the August order of His Imperial Majesty to celebrate the birthday of His Imperial Highness the Grand Duke Kirill Vladimirovich on 30th September and his name-day on 11th May, encloses an addendum drawn up in the Holy Synod to the list of days on which festive occasions are to be celebrated, to be circulated by the rural deans in the required number to churches and cathedrals, and also to monasteries of Minsk diocese, with printed copies of the decrees attached. 20th day of December 1876.

No. 1776. Archpriest Lavr Podolsky, Member of the Consistory.

I.N. Kornilov, Secretary

Addendum to the list of festive days.

Department Chief Migay.

(b) 21 Received 31st December 1876

No. 120.

**Decree of His Imperial Majesty the Sovereign Lord of All the Russias.** From the Minsk Consistory to the Epiphany Monastery in Pinsk.

By order of **His Imperial Majesty** the Minsk Ecclesiastical Consistory has taken notice of the decree of the Governing Synod No. 8 of 27th November last to the Lord Bishop in which, having informed him that the baptism of the August newly born Grand Duke Kirill Vladimirovich had taken place on the seventh day of the same November, instructed him, that on receipt of this decree and after previous consultation with the civil authorities, an office of thanksgiving for the holy baptism of the august newly born with genuflection and bell ringing should be offered to the Lord God in all churches on the first Sunday or festival after celebration of the divine liturgy. The Lord Bishop issued the following resolution: "Divine Liturgy, and thereafter the office of thanksgiving, will be celebrated by myself in the cathedral on the 19th day of this month, and offices of thanksgiving should be celebrated in all churches in the city of Minsk at the same time. The Consistory should accordingly make all the necessary arrangements and inform the Governor on my behalf about the services in the cathedral."

Resolved: Orders for due implementation to be sent to rural deans of the churches and monasteries of the diocese of Minsk. 23rd December 1876.

No. 9905. Archpriest Podolsky, Member of the Consistory.

I.N. Kornilov, Secretary

On the baptism of the August newly born Grand Duke Kirill Vladimirovich.

Department Chief Migay.

**VI. DOCUMENTS REFERRING TO THE POSITION OF THE DYNASTY IN EXILE:  
THREE ACTS OF THE GRAND DUKE KIRILL.**

**(1) Manifesto of 31st August (13 September) 1924 on the assumption by the Grand Duke Kirill, Curator of the Imperial Russian Throne, of the title of Emperor of All the Russias**

Making the sign of the Cross, I declare to all the Russian people:

Our hope that the precious life of the Lord Emperor Nicholas Alexandrovich, or that of the Heir and Caesarevich Alexey Nikolayevich, or of the Grand Duke Michael Alexandrovich, be preserved has not been realized.

The time has now come to bring to the knowledge of all that on 4th/17th July, 1918, there took place in the city of Ekaterinburg, by order of the international group which has seized power in Russia, the bestial assassination of the Lord Emperor Nicholas Alexandrovich, the Lady Empress Alexandra Feodorovna, their son and heir Caesarevich Alexey Nikolayevich, and their daughters the Grand Duchesses Olga, Tatiana, Maria and Anastasia.

In the same year, near the city of Perm, the brother of the Lord Emperor, the Grand Duke Michael Alexandrovich, was killed.

Let the blessed memory of these August Martyrs be the guiding star for us in the sacred cause of restoring the former well-being of our Motherland. And let the day of the 4th / 17th July be for Russia for all time a day of sorrow, penitence and prayer.

The Russian laws on succession to the Throne do not permit the Imperial Throne to remain vacant after the demise of the previously reigning Emperor and that of his closest heirs have been established.

Also, by our law, the new Emperor becomes such by virtue of the law on succession itself.

The unprecedented famine that has again broken out in Russia and the despairing appeals for help which are coming from the Motherland make it imperative that the cause of the deliverance of the Motherland should have at its head a supreme and rightful authority, free of class or party.

Therefore I, as senior member of the Imperial Family and the only rightful heir to the Imperial Throne of Russia, assume the title of Emperor of All the Russias which indisputably belongs to me.

I declare my son Prince Vladimir Kirillovich to be heir to the Throne, with the title of Grand Duke, Heir and Caesarevich.

I promise and swear solemnly to maintain the Orthodox Faith and the Russian Fundamental Laws on succession to the Throne, I undertake to safeguard inviolably the rights of all religious denominations.

The people of Russia are great and endowed with abundant gifts of mind and heart, but they have fallen into terrible calamity and misfortune .

May the great trials sent to them by God cleanse them and lead them to a bright future, renewing and strengthening the holy alliance between Tsar and people.

Given on 31st August 1924

**KIRILL**

**(b) Official Correspondence with Metropolitan Antonii of Kiev and Galicia,  
in response to His Declaration of Loyalty to Grand Duke Kirill**

To His Eminence, Metropolitan Antonii of Kiev and Galicia:

Your Eminence, Metropolitan Antonii! I was pleased to read Your statement of loyalty to Me. May the Lord bless Your actions and may they serve as an example for the unity of all Russian people for the sake of the salvation of the Motherland.

The Holy Orthodox Church has always been a support for the Throne, and I believe that also now, in these evil times, It will give Me support in My difficult work for the monarchy, for the sake of the reestablishment of the legitimate and historical government.

Entrusting Myself to Your holy prayers, I remain yours, devotedly,

**KIRILL**

(Below, written in His own hand:)

*Please don't deprive Me of Your advice and support.*

26 January (Old Style) 1929. St. Briac

**(2) Manifesto of the Grand Duke Kirill  
on the Majority of Heir Caesarevich and Grand Duke Vladimir Kirillovich.**

On the 17th/30th day of this August in the year 1933, by virtue of the basic law, took place the majority of my first-born son, Heir Caesarevich and Grand Duke Vladimir Kirillovich.

This joyful event is the first in Our House since the time when Russia was overwhelmed with trouble and, in the inscrutable ways of the Lord, the precious life was cut short of Our dearly beloved cousin the Lord Emperor Nicholas Alexandrovich, of his son the Heir Caesarevich and Grand Duke Alexey Nikolayevich, and of his brother the Grand Duke Michael Alexandrovich.



After ascertaining with ineffable sorrow the untimely death of these Martyrs, We, profoundly aware of the solemn duty which was incumbent upon Us, accepted by inheritance, by the supreme right of Head of the Imperial House to which We succeeded, all the rights and duties which belong to Us by virtue of the Fundamental Laws of the Russian Empire and the Statute on the Imperial Family.

On this solemn day of the majority of Our Heir Our thoughts go out to the great family of the Russian people.

Boundless are the sufferings which have befallen the land of Russia. Russia is being governed by blood and iron, by famine and cold, by slavery and ruin. Everything sacred has been outraged, churches have been defiled and destroyed, the family, the Faith, all the mainstays of the community and the very name of Russia are being destroyed with hatred and merciless cruelty.

We now confirm that, as long as it may please the Most High to prolong Our days, We shall continue to toil tirelessly for the deliverance and happiness of suffering Russia. Our dearly beloved son and heir, the Grand Duke Vladimir Kirillovich, serves as a great consolation in these labors, and We call upon all Russian people who are faithful to the age-long behests of our Russian tradition to offer their fervent prayers to Almighty God for the health and happiness of Our Heir.

May Divine Providence endow him with unfailing strength for selfless service to the great land of Russia and all the peoples dwelling therein, following the example of his Imperial ancestors, under whose sovereign leadership the great State of Russia grew, strengthened and developed.

Saint-Briac.

**KIRILL**

### **(2) Decree of the Grand Duke Kirill on titles and surnames for morganatic wives of Members of the Imperial House and their posterity.**

In order to establish the position of wives of Members of the Imperial House in cases of unequal marriage and the position of the issue of such marriages, I have established the following order in supplement to and development of the Statute on the Imperial Family:

The wives and children of Members of the Imperial House in cases of unequal but lawful marriages (see Articles 134 and 183, Section II, of the Fundamental Laws) receive the title and surname of Princes Romanovsky with, added to it, the maiden surname of the wife of the said Member of the Imperial House or a surname granted by the Head of the Imperial House of Russia, with the style of Serene Highness for the wife and the senior in her issue.

May these marriages lay the foundation for new Russian princely families with a blood relationship to the Imperial House of Russia and, as a result of this relationship, may they always give their faithful support to the Imperial House.

Given at Saint-Briac on 28th July 1935.

**KIRILL**

## **VII. DOCUMENTS REFERRING TO THE PRESENT POSITION OF THE DYNASTY IN EXILE AFTER THE DEMISE OF THE GRAND DUKE KIRILL**

### **(1) Manifesto of the Head of the Imperial House of 31st October 1938.**

*It has pleased the Lord God, on the 12th day of October this year, to call unto Himself my beloved Father, the Lord Emperor Kirill Vladimirovich. Humbly bowing before the Will of the Most High, I believe that all Russian people will share with me the new heavy sorrow that has been sent to me.*

*My unforgettable parents have bequeathed to me a love and sense of sacrifice for Russia and the Russian people. They showed me the way which I must follow in order to complete the great work which they had begun and I, in sacred and reverent memory of them, will steadfastly follow their instructions, devoting all my resources to service of the Motherland.*

*Following the example of my Father, profoundly aware of the sacred duty incumbent upon me, I accept by inheritance, by the supreme right of Head of the Imperial House of Russia to which I have succeeded, all the rights and duties which belong to me by virtue of the Fundamental Laws of the Russian Empire and the Statute on the Imperial Family.*

*As a faithful son of the Holy Orthodox Church, now, at this crucial moment, I address myself to Her, seeking Her blessing and support in the arduous service which is in store for me.*

*I also address myself to all those Russian people who hold dear the destiny of Russia and I call upon them to rally around me. I call upon them to follow me in close co-operation for the good of their people.*

*I have one aim and one aspiration - to devote myself to the service of Russia, for the happiness and prosperity of the Russian people, which will only find its right and freedom under the protection of the Imperial Throne.*

*Bending my knees before the Lord Almighty, I pray that He may grant me strength to serve my people, and I believe that all Russian people will with one accord come to my help in their endeavor to free the Motherland from suffering and humiliation.*

## **WLADIMIR**

*Issued at Saint-Briac on 31st October 1938.*

(Note: When the Grand Duke Kirill issued his Manifesto of 30th August/12th September 1924, in which he assumed the title of Emperor, his Chancellery issued a circular stating that he would use the Imperial title only in his relations with Russians, retaining the title of Grand Duke in his relations with Foreigners, thus declaring a partial incognito. After issuing the Manifesto of 31st October 1938 given above, the Grand Duke Wladimir instructed his Chancellery to issue two circulars. In the one it was stated that the Grand Duke Wladimir would continue to use the title of Grand Duke, thus extending the incognito to Russians as well as to foreigners. The other circular stated that some people had sworn an oath of allegiance to him as Emperor and that the Grand Duke thanked them and accepted their oath.)

### **(2) Attitude of the Members of the Imperial House**

#### **(a) Declaration of the Members of the Imperial House of Russia**

We, Members of the Imperial House of Russia, having assembled after the demise of the Head of our House, the Grand Duke Kirill Vladimirovich, consider it to be our most sacred duty solemnly to declare that the rights of each one of the Members of the Imperial House of Russia are precisely defined by the Fundamental State Laws of the Russian Empire and the Statute on the Imperial Family, and are well known to all of us and we have all committed ourselves by a special oath to observe them, wherefore the question of the order of succession to the Throne has never aroused in our midst the slightest doubts, still less differences of opinion. We reject any deviation from the order established by law as an infringement on the stability of our laws and family enactments.

By virtue of the aforesaid laws, we recognize that succession to the Throne belongs by right, in order of primogeniture, in the first place to the senior member of the Imperial House of Russia, the Grand Duke Vladimir Kirillovich, who has, after the demise of his Father on 29th September/ 12th October 1938, being profoundly aware of the sacred duty incumbent upon him, accepted by inheritance by the supreme right of Head of the Imperial House to which he has succeeded, all the rights and duties which belong to him by virtue of the Fundamental State Laws of the Russian Empire and the Statute on the Imperial Family.

After him, in the order of succession to the Throne, the Members of the Imperial House come in the following seniority, by right of primogeniture: Grand Duke Boris Vladimirovich, Grand Duke Andrey Vladimirovich, Grand Duke Dmitriy Pavlovich, Prince Vsevolod Ioannovich, Prince Gavriil Konstantinovich, Prince Georgiy Konstantinovich, Prince Roman Petrovich, Prince Andrey Alexandrovich, Prince Nikita Alexandrovich, Prince Dmitriy Alexandrovich, Prince Rostislav Alexandrovich, Prince Vasily Alexandrovich.

11th/24th October 1938.

(Signed:)

**Boris  
Andrey  
Dmitriy  
Gavriil**

**Vsevolod**

(The signatures are those of the Grand Dukes Boris, Andrew and Dmitry, Prince - subsequently Grand Duke - Gabriel and Prince Vsevolod, who were present at the meeting.)

#### **(b) Letter of Prince Andrew (Andrey Alexandrovich) to Grand Duke Andrew (Andrey Vladimirovich) of 1st November 1938**

Dear Andrey,

Mama has conveyed to me the contents of your (singular: the Grand Duke Andrew) letter and your (plural: the Members of the Imperial House) statement which you have prepared for the press. I am not signing it as I was not pres-

ent at the family meetings and do not know what you have decided, and in the second place I do not see why the family need sign this statement as it is self-evident that after the death of Kirill as Head of the Imperial House his son takes over the seniority. I personally recognized Kirill and in the same way now recognize his son.

Vladimir in his message will himself confirm his position as Head of the House.

I heartily embrace you,

Yours,

**Andrey**

**(3) Letter from Grand Duke Vladimir Kirillovich  
to the President of the Synod of Bishops, Metropolitan Anastasiy,  
and the Reply from Metropolitan Anastasiy**

(a) Shortly after accepting the rights and responsibilities of the Head of the Imperial House, Grand Duke Vladimir Kirillovich sent the following letter to Metropolitan Anastasiy:

**Your Eminence,  
Most esteemed Master**

Having accepted all the rights and responsibilities that have transferred to me by right of succession, I now turn to You, as the President of the Synod of Bishops, to request your assistance in uniting with Me all the Russian people, for the reestablishment of the former place and position of the Holy Orthodox Church, which is inseparably connected with the reestablishment of monarchy in Russia.

Knowing, Your Eminence, Your convictions and judging by the mood of the members of the Council, which took place in September of this year, I am firmly counting on this requested assistance, so necessary for the salvation of our Motherland.

Entrusting myself to Your Eminence's holy prayers, I ask You, Eminence, to accept my expression of deep respect.

**VLADIMIR**

**(b) Reply of Metropolitan Anastasiy:**

**Your Imperial Highness,**

It has pleased God now to pass on to You the rights and responsibilities of the Head of the Russian Imperial House, which come to You by right of primogeniture from your August Ancestors, now departed in the Lord.

Obedient to the holy duty which has come to You, You have embarked on a path of selfless service to the Motherland, calling on all her faithful sons to unite around You so as to assist You in Your noble and patriotic aspiration to "free Russia from its suffering."

Recognizing the weightiness and responsibility of this holy endeavor that has been given to Your Imperial Highness, You, following the example of your pious Ancestors, turn first and foremost to the grace-filled help of the Holy Orthodox Church, asking her "blessing and support for the difficult sacrifices that lie ahead of You."

The Church, which was, according to the words of Your departed father, "from time immemorial, the leader and organizer of the fate of Russia," cannot but greet this noble desire of your Orthodox heart and is prepared to bless all Your good efforts, directed toward the reestablishment of the presently shattered Russian Orthodox Tsardom, which is nurtured, strengthened, and blessed by the Church. The Church fervently prays to the Lord to instill a spirit of concord and unity in the hearts of the Russian people, so that they may all, without exception, unite around You and direct all their nationalist strength to the struggle with communism, which is dying out, though still enslaving our Motherland. Now is the appropriate time for this: the night has already passed, and daylight is drawing near. Bolshevism has run its course, and the Russian people, having paid a price for its willfulness and [for succumbing to the] temptations of communism, are again, through God's mercy, returning to the house of their Fathers, to their ancient, historical roots. Having paid the price of incomparable suffering, destruction, and slavery, one sees more clearly now than ever before all the benefits of a hereditary royal government, which receives its anointing from above, and one again longs for blessed times when, under the mighty scepter of its Orthodox Tsar, each person lived freely and happily in his own vineyard, as did Israel in the days of King Solomon.

In this spiritual outlook and especially in steadfast fidelity to Orthodoxy-which has from time immemorial been the cornerstone of our state, in strong faith and in hope of God's help, things which the Church has always supported in the state-lies the hope of salvation. One cannot fail to see it as a momentous thing that the Lord deigned to call You to this weighty duty to the Motherland at no other time than in the year of St. Vladimir, when, influenced by the jubilee

commemorations of the 950-th anniversary of the baptism of Rus', there has been revived in the people's heart the iconographic image of Your heavenly protector and Enlightener of Rus', the Holy Equal-to-the-Apostles St. Prince Vladimir, together with the people of ancient Holy Rus', emerging from their baptismal font. To connect with strong bonds the present and future with our glorious and holy past, illuminated by the best things of Holy Rus' also constitutes a high calling, placed upon You by God's Will.

Nothing can prevent a rejuvenated Russia from adopting the better and more sensible of the achievements of modern culture so as to be, in this sense, on the same level with other nations surrounding her; but in Russia, all life, in accordance with our historical past, should be imprinted with the spirit of the Orthodox faith, with virtue, and with purity. There would be nothing more dangerous than if, for a time, under the guise of foreign legalized customs and statutes, Russia should want to retain some part of the sad inheritance left by corrupt Bolshevism: everything that was touched by its ubiquitous, godless hand threatens again to infect us with its old leprosy.

The crowned leaders of Russia from the House of Romanov, beginning with its founder and down to Tsar-Martyr Nicholas II, strove steadfastly to go along the path set before them by St. Vladimir and to lead by this path the entire Russian people. We are paying for our departure from that path with the present suffering of Russia and with exile. But those who made it out of Sodom and Gomorrah should not, like Lot's wife, look back.

May the Lord grant You, as He did Solomon, a wise heart to decide all things justly, and to discern that which is good, and that which is evil.

Youth in itself always serves as a symbol of purity, of sacrifice and of the ideological lifting of the spirit. It is not surprising that it is to Your bright, unsullied figure, enlivened by the glorious traditions of our Dynasty, that the true sons of Russia, energized with bright and joyful hope, now look. May God help You be a validation of these great hopes of the Russian people, strengthening Your spiritual and bodily power, crowning You with wisdom, courage, the gift of the flame of love for the Fatherland, and mercy for all-all which were from time immemorial the greatest adornment of the royal Romanov Dynasty.

Linked as they are to the last 300 years of history, the Russian people cannot but hold dear their Imperial House and, especially, He who is its Head by right of succession. The firmer this order of succession is held to, the more confidently will we look to the future, for it [the order of succession] guarantees a swifter establishment and confirmation of an Imperial government in Rus'.

It has been appointed to Your Imperial Highness now to be the Bearer and Preserver of this holy royal succession, in order that the historical candle is not extinguished in the twilight of our troubled and sorrowful days. With this candle, the Russian people in exile hope, with God's help, to enter a free Russian land, where the candle will again be set in the All-Russian candle stand, to brightly illuminate not only those in the temples, but also to shine a path for the entire world.

In this holy hope, we call upon You, as the Head of the Russian Imperial House, the blessing of God, and with deepest respect we proclaim ourselves Your Imperial Highness's most loyal servant and sincere intercessor to God.

### **Metropolitan ANASTASIY**

Belgrade  
30 October/11 November, 1938

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## **VII. THE ROYAL DIGNITY OF THE HOUSE OF THE BAGRATIDS**

### **Act of the Head of the Imperial House of 5th December 1946:**

His Royal Highness the Infante Don Fernando, Prince of Bavaria, when his daughter the Infanta Mercedes was about to contract a marriage with Prince Irakly Bagration of Mukhrani, asked me whether, taking into account the independence of Georgia from 1918 to 1921 and the present position of her Royal Family, I could consider the proposed marriage to be an equal one.

My reply, which was conveyed to the Infante through the intermediary of the Spanish Minister in Berne, the Conde de Bailen, was in the affirmative, inasmuch as, after prolonged and diligent study of the history of Georgia and of the Georgian question, and after consulting my uncle His Imperial Highness the Grand Duke Andrew, brother of my late Father, and my advisers, and after correspondence with the historian, Professor M. Muskelishvili, I consider it right and proper to recognize the royal status of the senior branch of the Bagration family, as well as the right of its members to bear the title of Prince of Georgia and the style of Royal Highness. The present head of the family is Prince George.

If Almighty God, in His mercy, allows the rebirth of our great empire, I consider it right that the Georgian language should be restored for use in the internal administration of Georgia and in her educational establishments. The Russian language should be obligatory for general relations within the empire.

I have decided to draw up this Act for the good of the Russian Empire and for the preservation of its integrity in the future and have deemed it right to affix my signature to it, in order to satisfy the legitimate national sentiments of the Georgian people and in the hope of avoiding thereby a possible annexation of its fatherland by force of arms, in the event of its willful secession from the Russian Empire.

## **WLADIMIR**

Sanlucar de Barrameda, 5th December 1946

### **IX. DYNASTIC MAJORITY OF THE GRAND DUCHESS MARIA**

#### **(1) Message of the Grand Duke Wladimir, Head of the Imperial House of Russia to the Peoples of Russia**

The office of Head of the Imperial House of Russia, lawful inheritor of the rights and duties of the Emperors of All the Russias, with which I have been charged by the Lord God by virtue of the paramount right of primogeniture that has passed to me, makes me duty bound to maintain the State Fundamental Laws of the Russian Empire on Succession to the Throne and the Statute on the Imperial Family inseparable from the aforesaid laws.

By virtue whereof I recall the essential condition contained in the law whereby the issue of a marriage contracted between a person of the Imperial Family and a person of a status not corresponding in equality of birth does not inherit the rights belonging to members of the Imperial Family, one of which is the right of succession to the Throne.

Such is the position of the issue of the Princess of the Blood Imperial now living, as also that of the issue of morganatic (to wit, unequal) marriages contracted by members of the Imperial House now deceased.

It can hardly be envisaged that any of the Princes of the Blood Imperial now living, in view of their age, could now enter into a marriage equal in status of birth or have issue possessing the right of succession to the Throne.

In view of the aforesaid, in accordance with the State Fundamental Laws of the Russian Empire, succession to the Throne, after the demise of all male members of the Imperial House, inevitably passes to the female issue of our family.

In accordance with the same laws, my firstborn daughter, Her Imperial Highness the Lady Grand Duchess Maria Vladimirovna, is at present senior in succession to the Throne in the female issue and at the same time the only one capable of having issue enjoying the right to succession.

Aware of the arduous burden and duty conferred by the Will of Almighty God upon my young daughter, the first of which is that of perpetuating the Imperial House and thereby ensuring uninterrupted inheritance to the Throne, I and my Consort, Her Imperial Highness the Lady Grand Duchess Leonida Georgievna, raised the Grand Duchess Maria Vladimirovna, from her early childhood, in an awareness of the responsibility resting upon her for the destinies of the Dynasty of the Romanoffs and to prepare her for her future service of our Motherland.

The irrevocable right which belongs to her and the upbringing and education which she has been given are a surety that my daughter alone, the Grand Duchess Maria Vladimirovna, can perform the responsible duty that rests upon her and successfully discharge the high obligations of Heiress to her Imperial ancestors.

Wherefore, while in no way infringing on the order of succession to the Throne provided by the State Fundamental Laws of the Russian Empire, I declare that, in the event of my demise, my daughter the Lady Grand Duchess Maria Vladimirovna, shall become Curatrix of the Imperial Throne of Russia, with all the rights and functions connected with that office, for the service of Russia and for the protection of our Dynasty from any encroachments from any quarter whatsoever.

When the right of succession to the Throne, after the demise of the last of the male representatives of the Dynasty, will have inevitably passed to the female issue, then the Lady Grand Duchess Maria Vladimirovna, Curatrix of the Throne, shall become Head of the Imperial House of Russia.

The institution of Curatorship of the Throne is being promulgated in accordance with, on the example of and with the prerogatives accruing to the Institution of Regency, provided for in the Fundamental Laws, with a Council attached to the Curatrix, the composition of which will be announced in due time.

I and the Grand Duchess desire that all Russian people should know that our daughter, the Grand Duchess Maria Vladimirovna, is in full agreement and is prepared at any time to dedicate her life and devote all her efforts to the service of the Motherland if she is called upon so to do.

I bequeath to my daughter's sacred custody the spiritual treasure handed over to her by us, her parents. May she, to the end of her days, never for a moment forget her solemn duty of maintaining the Orthodox Faith, of service to Russia and her peoples, and of responsibility for the present and future of our Dynasty.

23rd December 1969

The original is signed by His Imperial Highness:

**WLADIMIR**

Countersigned: Nikolay Wouytch,  
Head of Chancellery

**(2) Message of the Grand Duke Wladimir,  
Head of the Imperial House of Russia, to the Peoples of Russia**

Having promulgated on this day an Act on the institution after my demise of the office of Curatrix of the Imperial Throne of Russia in the person of my daughter, Her Imperial Highness the Lady Grand Duchess Maria Vladimirovna, I deemed it right that my daughter should forthwith swear on the Holy Gospel an oath of loyalty to me with the obligation, furthermore, of observing the provisions on succession to the Throne and the order thereof by Statute established, as propounded in the State Fundamental Laws of the Russian Empire, which she fulfilled after attending Divine Liturgy.

23rd December 1969

The original is signed by His Imperial Highness:

**WLADIMIR**

Countersigned: Nikolay Wouytch,  
Head of Chancellery

**(3) Announcement from the Chancellery of the Head of the Imperial House of Russia:**

On Sunday 21st December 1969, on the eve of her birthday and majority, the Lady Grand Duchess Maria Vladimirovna, together with her Parents, received the holy sacrament at the Orthodox Church in Madrid.

On Tuesday 23rd December, the day of her sixteenth birthday, in close family circle (in view of the impossibility of organizing a large-scale celebration in winter time), the Lady Grand Duchess Maria Vladimirovna, in the presence of her Parents and of Father Dimitrios Tsiamparlis, Incumbent of the Orthodox Church in Madrid and Her Imperial Highness's Confessor, swore on the Holy Gospel an oath of loyalty to her Father the Grand Duke Vladimir Kirillovich, Head of the Imperial House, with the obligation of observing the provisions of the Russian State Laws on succession to the Throne in the order established by the family statute.

The Lord Grand Duke and the Lady Grand Duchess wish to mark the event of their daughter's majority on her name-day, on the coming 4th August, at Saint-Briac, and hope that all Russian organizations will be able to send their representatives. Individual persons who wish to spend that day with Their Imperial Highnesses will, of course, be received with pleasure.

Madrid, 19th January 1970

**Nikolay Wouytch,**  
Head of Chancellery

(Note: The celebration took place at Saint-Briac on 11th August 1970.)

**X. MARRIAGE OF THE GRAND DUCHESS MARIA VLADIMIROVNA  
TO PRINCE FRANZ WILHELM OF PRUSSIA**

**(1) Announcement by the Head of the Imperial House; We announce to all our loyal compatriots:**

By the grace of God and Our parental blessing, together with that of Our dearly beloved Consort, the Lady Grand Duchess Leonida Georgievna, Our dearly beloved daughter the Grand Duchess Maria Vladimirovna has contracted a marriage with Prince Franz Wilhelm of Prussia, and on the twenty-second day of this September their wedding was solemnly celebrated in Our presence in the Orthodox Church in Madrid, according to the rites of our Orthodox Church.

Announcing this event so joyful to Our parental heart and commanding that Our dearly beloved son-in-law, the Consort of the Grand Duchess Maria Vladimirovna, who, to Our great joy, has embraced our Orthodox faith and received holy chrismation, be named Grand Duke Mikhail Pavlovich, with the title of Imperial Highness. We are fully convinced that Our loyal compatriots will unit their fervent prayers to Ours, that Almighty and All-Merciful God will grant constant and unshakeable happiness to the Beloved Newlyweds, so dear to Our heart.

**WLADIMIR**

Issued in Madrid 22 September 1976

## **(2) Message of the Grand Duchess Maria Vladimirovna to compatriots in Russia and abroad**

I and my husband, the Grand Duke Michael Pavlovich, have been deeply touched by the genuine good wishes which numerous compatriots have offered us on the occasion of our marriage and for which we convey to them our heartfelt gratitude.

In these happy days my thoughts go back to that solemn moment in my life when, having reached dynastic majority, I swore on the Holy Gospel an oath to observe and safeguard the Fundamental Laws of the Russian Empire on the order of succession to the Throne. Having accepted the rights and duties connected with them, I was filled with profound faith in the might of Divine Providence and with readiness to accept all Its dispositions, both clement and arduous. And now my entering into marriage is securely linked in my mind with fulfillment of the duties in store for me.

In my love of Russia and my anxiety over the destiny of her peoples, now suffering both spiritual and physical torment, I am firmly convinced that the political, economic and living conditions in our Motherland require intelligent revision and improvement on the part of the future historic and rightful State authority, guided by the principles of freedom of religion, labor and creative imagination.

Being fully at one with the thoughts, precepts and guidance of my beloved and August parents, and confident of the active aid which my August husband will be able to give me, I consider that it would be useful to hear views, balanced, well-grounded and in accord with the basic principles stated above, not only of people made wise by their long life experience, but also of those of the younger generations, about whose hopes, expectations and love of our native land it is especially necessary for me to know.

This is what I want to say at a time when I am embarking on a new period of my life, once again asserting my full readiness to devote myself, together with my husband, to service of the Motherland, delivered by joint and concerted efforts from the alien forces which have enslaved it.

**MARIA**

Given in Madrid  
on the 22nd day of September 1976.

## **XI. BIRTH OF THE IMPERIAL GRANDSON**

**(1) Easter Message of the Head of the Imperial House to the Russian people, containing an announcement on the birth of the Grand Duke Georgiy Mikhailovich**

**From the Head of the Imperial House of Russia**

**CHRIST IS RISEN!**

I heartily congratulate all Russian people, both those living in the Motherland and those abroad, with the glorious festival of the Resurrection of Christ. In these days of Eastertide we shall pray to the Most High that the light of the Resurrection of Christ should penetrate even deeper into our hearts, increasing our efforts aimed at the deliverance of our Motherland from the yoke of the godless and strengthen our firm hope in the triumph of the truth of God in the land of Russia.

This year, not long before Easter, two events took place in our life, one sad and one joyful. We marked on 14th March the centenary of the outrage which put its fateful seal on all the events that followed it in our not too distant history - the assassination of my great-grandfather the Lord Emperor Alexander II, Tsar Liberator. The memory of his great reforms in all spheres of the State and social life of our country will be forever precious to the Russian people. It will be for them a source of national pride, and in moments of despair and doubt it will renew their good cheer in the knowledge of what they can achieve under the leadership of a sovereign power enlightened by Divine Providence.

And on the eve of this sad anniversary, on 13th March, my dearly beloved daughter the Grand Duchess Maria Vladimirovna was delivered of a son named Georgiy.

When my daughter reached her dynastic majority on 23rd December 1969, I concluded my Message to the Peoples of Russia with the following words: "May she, to the end of her days, never for a moment forget her solemn duty of maintaining the Orthodox faith, of service to Russia and her peoples, and of responsibility for the present and future of our Dynasty." On the same day, after Divine Liturgy, my daughter swore an oath to fulfill this duty, the memory of which she recalled in her Message to the Russian people, given on 22nd September, 1976, after her marriage to her Consort, the Grand Duke Michael Pavlovich. Now, when it has pleased the Lord God to bless this marriage with the birth of a son, the spiritual treasure received by my daughter can, with the help of God, be also handed over to future generations of the Imperial House of Russia. Announcing this joyful event, I call upon my compatriots to raise their prayers

to the Most High that He may grant to Our dearly beloved daughter and son-in-law good health, happiness and long life for the glory and well-being of the Russian State, delivered and reborn.

## WLADIMIR

Easter 1981

Madrid

Counter-signed: Ivan Bilibin,  
Head of Chancellery

### **(2) Baptism of the Grand Duke Georgiy Mikhailovich**

(reported by "Nasha Strana" No. 1629, a Russian weekly published in Buenos Aires, on 12th June 1981)

The well known Spanish newspaper ABC has published a report on the "baptism of the first grandson of the Grand Duke Wladimir Kirillovich". The newspaper notes that the King of Spain, Juan Carlos, and Queen Sofia were present and that the godfather was Constantine, King of the Hellenes, represented at the christening by the Grand Duke Wladimir Kirillovich. King Simeon and Queen Margarita of the Bulgarians were also present, as well as many prominent representatives of the aristocracy, the diplomatic corps and the intelligentsia.

The newspaper also reports that the sacrament of baptism was celebrated by Archbishop Antony of Los Angeles in concelebration with Father Boris Kritzky, who had brought with him the wonder Icon of Our Lady of Kursk, specially sent for this occasion by Metropolitan Philaret.

(Note: The office of holy matrimony on 22nd September 1976 was also celebrated by Archbishop Antony.)



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