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RICHARD B. SPENCE

Tsarina's Necklace: Russian Jewels, Secret Agents, and the *Hellig Olav* Affair, 1918

Testifying before the Congressional Un-American Activities Committee in 1939, ex-Soviet functionary Dr. David Dubrowsky stated that, starting in early 1918, the Russian Bolshevik regime had relied on “confiscated diamonds and precious stones” to finance legal and illegal operations in the United States and other countries. The actual smuggling was done by “special couriers,” often equipped with “different names and different passports.”¹ When asked if any Russian “Crown jewels” had so entered the United States, Dubrowsky replied that “there are a great many Crown jewels” and “you [can] find on Fifth Avenue, New York, all sorts of trinkets which belonged to the Czar and his family.”²

This article will examine what may be the very first Soviet attempt to smuggle such valuables into America. It will detail who was involved, what happened, and what *did not* happen, as best the surviving records allow. It is,

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Additional information

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