

Introduction of the New Calendar into the Various Local Orthodox Churches

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The Orthodox Church and the New Calendar Parts 1–3

by Dr. V. Moss

THE ORTHODOX CHURCHES AND THE NEW CALENDAR (1918–1939)

Part 1

Throughout the Orthodox world, the new political rulers after the First World War wanted to introduce the new, Gregorian calendar to replace the old, Julian one sanctioned by the holy canons and many centuries of usage. The question is: Why?

In the Balkans and Constantinople, the motive appears to have been purely political: to obtain the support of the Masonic-led western powers. In Russia the Bolsheviks' motive was more subtle. As Yaroslavsky explained: "[The Patriarch's] agreement with even one of these reforms (he has agreed to recognise the new, Gregorian calendar) will make him a 'heretic' – an innovator in the eyes of the True Orthodox." [1]

However, God had forewarned and pre-armed the Orthodox against the innovation: in 1583, 1587 and 1593, the Eastern Patriarchs had anathematized the new calendar, and in 1904 all of the Local Churches had condemned it.

1. The Russian Church. On January 19, 1918, the Soviet State introduced the new calendar into Russia. Thinking “to change times and laws” (Daniel 7.25), a Decree of the Council of People’s Commissars dated January 24, 1918 ordered that the day after January 31, 1918 would be February 14, not February 1.

By a remarkable coincidence, on the same day the Patriarch anathematized the Bolshevik State, calling on the faithful Orthodox to have no communion with “these outcasts of humanity” in any way whatsoever. A few days later the Patriarch’s anathema was confirmed by the Church Council then in session in Moscow. In view of this rejection of the legitimacy of the State, it is not surprising that the Church also rejected the State’s change of calendar.

Protopriest Alexander Lebedev writes: “The Sobor [Council] addressed the issue three days after the Decree was signed, at its 71st Session on January 27, 1918. The need for a prompt decision by the Church on how to relate to the civil calendar change was clear – the change was to take place four days later.

“It was decided to send the issue to a Joint Session of two separate Sections of the Sobor – the Section on Divine Services and the Section on the Relationship of the Church to the State.

“This Joint Session of the two Sections met two days later, on January 29, 1918 and heard two major reports, one by Professor S.S. Glagolev, entitled ‘A Comparative Evaluation of the Julian and Gregorian Styles’, and one by Prof. I.I. Sokolov, entitled, ‘The Attitude of the Orthodox East to the Question of the Reform of the Calendar’.

“Neither of these presentations in any way supported the introduction into Church life of the Gregorian Calendar – quite the contrary. Prof. Glagolev concluded, ‘The Gregorian Calendar, in addition to being

historically harmful, is astronomically useless’... Professor Sokolov concluded: ‘Therefore, the controlling voice of the Orthodox East, both Greek and Slavic, is expressed as being not only against the Gregorian calendar, as a creature of the inimical to it [the Orthodox East] Catholic West, but also against a neutral or corrected calendar, because such a reform would deleteriously affect the ecclesiastical life of the Orthodox peoples.’

“Finally, the Joint Session of the two Sections prepared a Resolution on the issue of calendar reform.

“It decreed that the Church must stay with the Julian calendar, basing its decision on the following:

“1) There is no reason for the Church not to have a separate ecclesiastical calendar different from the civil calendar.

“2) The Church not only is able to preserve the Old Calendar, – at the present time it would be impossible for it to move to the new calendar.

“3) The introduction of the new calendar by the Russian Church would cause it to break unity with all of the other Orthodox Churches. Any change in the calendar can only be done by mutual agreement of all the Orthodox Churches.

“4) It is impossible to correlate the Orthodox Paschalion with the Gregorian Calendar without causing grave disruption to the Typicon.

“5) It is recognised that the Julian Calendar is astronomically inaccurate. This was noted already at the Council of Constantinople in 1583. However, it is incorrect to believe that the Gregorian Calendar is better suited for ecclesiastical use.

“In conclusion, the Joint Session resolved to maintain the Julian Calendar.

“The Council, in full session, approved this Resolution of the Joint Session.”[2]

However, the pressure from the Bolsheviks continued, and as early as January 21, 1919 Patriarch Tikhon wrote to the patriarch of Constantinople suggesting various options with regard to the calendar.[3] When the Russian renovationists of the “Living Church” adopted the new calendar, the pressure was increased still further. Thus on June 11, 1923, Yaroslavsky wrote to the Politburo and Stalin: “Tikhon must be informed that the penalty meted out to him may be commuted if... he expresses his agreement with some reforms in the ecclesiastical sphere (for example, the new style [i.e. the introduction of the new calendar]).” On September 18 the Antireligious Commission decreed: “To recognize as appropriate that Tikhon and co. should in the first instance bring forward the new style into the church, disband the parish councils and introduce the second marriages of the clergy...”[4]

On September 24, 1923 Patriarch Tikhon convened a Council of bishops which took the decision to introduce the new calendar on October 2/15. The Patriarch explained his decision as follows: “This demand was repeated many times, and was reinforced by the promise of a more benevolent attitude on the part of the Government towards the Orthodox Church and Her institutions in the case of our agreement and the threat of a deterioration in these relations in the case of our refusal”.[5] He also pointed to considerations of unity with the other Orthodox Churches; for he had been falsely informed by Tuchkov that all the other Churches had adopted the new style, whereas in fact all the Churches except Constantinople, Greece and Romania had objected to the change. Also, in a letter to Abbot Paulinus of Valaam dated October 6 he justified the introduction of the new style on the grounds that it introduced no innovation in faith, and the Orthodox Paschalion remained in force.[6]

The decree on the introduction of the new style was read out in the Moscow Pokrov monastery on October 1/14. But it was sent out only to the deans of Moscow, while the diocesan bishops did not receive it, since Archbishop Hilarion had obtained permission from Tuchkov not to send it to the provinces as long as the patriarchal epistle explaining the change had not been printed. So the new style was only introduced in Moscow and in Valaam, where it was rejected by many of the monks. However, on November 8, when the Patriarch learned from Archbishop Anastasy in Constantinople that the patriarchates of Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem

and Serbia, as well as ROCOR, were against the change, and when he saw that the Russian people were also strongly opposed to his decree, he reversed his decision “temporarily”, making use of the fact that his epistle on the calendar change had not been published.[7] In spite of this, agents of the government posted up notices of the now annulled decree on the introduction of the new calendar. But the people saw in this the clear interference of the State, and so no attention was paid to the decree.[8]

“At the request of the Soviet Central Executive Committee”, writes Monk Nicholas, “Patriarch Tikhon delivered a written declaration on the question of the calendar reform, dated September 17/30, 1924, in which he recounted the entire history of its short-lived use in Russia. (The declaration fills six pages of small print.) The following are some of the main points made by St. Tikhon:

“1) Patriarch Tikhon begins by stating that the Julian calendar itself is not a dogma of faith of the Church and could, in theory and principle, be altered.

“2) The common consent of all the Autocephalous Orthodox Churches would be required in order to lawfully introduce the new calendar. Besides, the Julian calendar has been hallowed by centuries of liturgical use by the whole Church, and no one Local Church can replace it unilaterally.

“3) And it must be introduced not only lawfully, but also painlessly, and that could only be achieved with the consent of the believing people. According to the teaching of the Orthodox Church, the guardians of the purity of the faith and of the patristic traditions are not only the head of the Church, nor all the hierarchs combined, but the entire body of the Church, including the faithful laity, to whom belong established rights and a voice in ecclesiastical affairs. The head of one of the Local Churches, and the Patriarch of Russia, in particular, is not the Pope of Rome, enjoying absolute and boundless power. He cannot govern the people of God tyrannically, not asking their consent, and not taking into consideration their religious consciousness, their beliefs, practices and skills. History demonstrates that compelling the people of God, rather than

convincing them, always fails.

“4) The All-Russian Sobor of 1917–1918 had agreed in principle that such a reform was possible, but only in union with the other Orthodox Churches. A commission had been set up, a letter was sent to the Ecumenical Patriarch, but no response was received — no doubt due to the poor communications with the outside world at that time.

“5) The so-called ‘Pan-Orthodox Congress’ was not an Ecumenical Council; not all the Local Churches were represented. Thus, its resolutions could only be implemented if they were approved by an Ecumenical Council, or by the Synod of each of the Local Churches separately. Despite the fact that the majority of representatives did not approve of the calendar change, Patriarch Meletius, violating Catholic unity, introduced the new style into his Patriarchate. The Renovationists in Russia embraced this change.

“6) Tuchkov kept insisting on the reformation. Considering the change possible in principle, mistakenly hoping that the common people would obediently accept the change (since, having no means of contact with the Orthodox East, I had been led to believe that this change had been agreed upon by all the Orthodox Churches), I decided to call upon the Russian Church to adopt the new calendar as of October 1, 1923, and I issued the appropriate encyclical.

“7) This caused great agitation in the Church; the Patriarchate was inundated by delegations and letters from throughout the land asking us to refrain from introducing the new calendar. Therefore, to the great joy of the faithful, we issued a resolution on October 26 / November 8, 1923 [i.e., three weeks after the change] to ‘temporarily postpone’ the obligatory introduction of the Gregorian calendar.

“8) Thereupon, our chancery was sealed by agents from the government, who seized the undelivered copies of my previous encyclical, which was posted throughout Moscow without my knowledge or consent. Archbishop Hilarion, my closest associate, was arrested and sent to Solovki. The common faithful saw this as the State interfering in the internal affairs of the Church.

“9) In December of 1923 I gave permission to the local ruling hierarchs to allow the celebration of Christmas according to the new style for the sake of the working masses who had been given their holidays at that time. Almost no one made use of this permission, which prompted us to appeal to the Commissar of Justice, Kursky, with the request not to insist on the introduction of the new style for liturgical use. And we received from him an oral assurance that the civil authorities were not at all interested in that.

“10) In addition to the reasons for the common folk resisting the new calendar, there are two other circumstances which make it very difficult to enact:

“a) The Renovationalist schism has compromised the new style itself, since they were the first to introduce its use in the Church.

“b) The very strong conviction among the faithful that such a reform is being implemented not by the Church herself for her own good, but under pressure from the civil authorities. The faithful do not appreciate the meddling of the civil authorities in the affairs of the Church, even when that government is well disposed toward the Church and protects it, but when the meddling government is one that has many times declared its anti-religious aims, then this increases the people resistance two-fold.

“11) At present the government is once again strongly insisting on the introduction of the new calendar. Taking into consideration our previous experiences, we are compelled to declare that we absolutely do not find it possible to repeat them.

“12) Rather than insist upon the Church changing to the new style reckoning, it would cause no loss to the Government to simply recalculate the state holidays to coincide with the old style Church feasts: e. g., instead of December 25 (new style), declare January 7 (new style) a day off from work. Just as the government already celebrates the anniversary of the October Revolution not on October 25 (new style), but on November 7. [Touché, St. Tikhon!]

“13) Rumors have reached us that in 1925 an Ecumenical Council will be held to mark the 1,600th anniversary of the First Ecumenical Council at Nicea. If such a council is convoked canonically, then it would be best to raise this question then. Once the new style has been accepted by the entire Catholic Church, then perhaps we can prevail upon the faithful in Russia to accept it too, if the Orthodox bishops, appointed by me, and whom the faithful trust and follow, will have the freedom of abiding in their dioceses, of communicating with their flock, and of religious direction of the clergy and parishes found in canonical communion with me.”[9]

In the same year of 1924 Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky) of Kiev, the second hierarch in rank after the Patriarch and President of the Synod of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia (ROCOR), set off on a seven-month trip to the East to muster support against the renovationist reforms among his friends from before the revolution – Patriarchs Photius of Alexandria, Gregory of Antioch and Damian of Jerusalem. He also visited Mount Athos. The three Eastern patriarchs, together with Patriarch Demetrius of Serbia, spoke out strongly against the new calendar and the other reforms introduced by their colleague in Constantinople. In view of this, Metropolitan Anthony entertained hopes that even the patriarch of Constantinople would reverse course. Thus in a “sorrowful message” to Gregory VII’s successor, Constantine VI, dated February 4/17, 1925, he both defended Patriarch Tikhon and compared Meletius and Gregory to the heretical patriarchs of Constantinople condemned by the Seven Ecumenical Councils: “The history of the Church in general and of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in particular has hardly ever before known such crude violations by the patriarchs of the universal canons and rules of general human justice... It is on this same path of disobedience to the Holy Church and the canons that the two last predecessors of your Holiness descended.”[10]

Nevertheless, in October of the same year, during the celebrations dedicated to the 1600th anniversary of the Council of Nicaea in Oxford, Metropolitans Anthony and Eulogius concelebrated with Metropolitan Germanus of Thyateira and Great Britain of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. And so, in spite of ROCOR’s condemnation of the new calendar, and

Archbishop Anastasy's pointed departure from the "Pan-Orthodox Council" of 1923 after its first session and concelebration with the leading Romanian Old Calendarist, Hieromonk Glycerius, Metropolitan Anthony did not take the canonically correct course adopted by the Greek and Romanian Old Calendarists of breaking communion with the renovationists. In 1925 he even took part, with the patriarch of Constantinople, in the enthronement of the new calendarist Freemason Miron as patriarch of Romania. And in 1930 he refused a request of Russians living in Romania to join ROCOR, which implied a recognition of the Romanian patriarchate.[11] So it is not surprising that his actions were ultimately unsuccessful: the patriarch of Constantinople never abandoned the new calendar, and the Churches of Alexandria and Antioch both, in time, accepted it.

In 1926, writing to the Russian Athonite Hieroschemamonk Theodosius of Karoulia[12], Metropolitan Anthony explained his refusal to break communion with the new calendarists as follows: "You know the 13th, 14th and 15th canons of the First-and-Second Council, which speaks about separating oneself from a Bishop or Patriarch after his conciliar condemnation. And then there is the canon (the 15th), which says that that clergyman is worthy, not of condemnation, but of praise, who breaks with links with him [the heretic] for the sake of a heresy condemned by the holy councils or fathers..., and besides 'when he (that is, the first-hierarchy) preaches heresy publicly and teaches it openly in the Church'. But this, glory to God, neither P[at]riarch Basil [III of Constantinople] nor [Archbishop] Chrysostom [of Athens] have done yet. On the contrary, they insist on keeping the former Paschalion, for only it, and not the Julian calendar itself was covered by the curse of the councils. True, P[at]riarch Jeremiah in the 15th [correct: 16th] century and his successor in the 18th anathematised the calendar itself, but this curse: 1) touches only his contemporaries and 2) does not extend to those who are frightened to break communion with him, to which are subjected only those who transgress the canonical Paschalion. Moreover (this needs to be noted in any case), the main idea behind the day of Pascha is that it should be celebrated by all the Christians (that is, the Orthodox) on one and the same day throughout the inhabited world. True, I myself and my brothers do not at all sympathise with the new calendar and modernism, but we beseech the Athonite fathers not to be hasty in composing letters

(Romans 14). – Do not grieve about our readiness to go to the C[onstantinople] Council. Of course, there will be no council, but if there is, and if we go, as St. Flavian went to the robber cou[ncil], then, of course, we will keep the faith and deliver the apostates to anathema. But as long as the last word has not been spoken, as long as the whole Church has not repeated the curses of Patriarch Jeremiah at an ecumenical council, we must retain communion, so that we ourselves should not be deprived of salvation, and, in aiming at a gnat, swallow a camel...”[13]

In another letter he admitted that akriveia was on Fr. Theodosius’ side, but argued in favour of oikonomia: “It is in vain that you torment your conscience with doubts about continuing to be in communion with the Constantinopolitan Patriarchate. Present this matter to the judgement of the hierarchs, and until it has taken place remain in communion...”[14]

However, the wording of the 16th century Councils that anathematised the new calendar does not support the metropolitan’s interpretation: “Whoever does not follow the customs of the Church,... but wishes to follow the Gregorian Paschalion and Menaion,... let him be anathema.” Moreover, there is no word about the anathema applying only to the generation of the anathematisers. In general, anathemas, as expressing the unchanging decision of God with regard to something that which is eternally false, are necessarily applicable, if valid and canonical, in all places and at all times.

One ROCOR bishop who did not agree with Metropolitan Anthony’s relatively liberal attitude was Archbishop Theophan of Poltava. He wrote concerning the new calendar question:

“Question. Have the pastors of the Orthodox Church not made special judgements concerning the calendar?< /U>

“Answer. They have, many times – with regard to the introduction of the new Roman calendar – both in private assemblies and in councils.

“A proof of this is the following. First of all, the Ecumenical Patriarch Jeremiah II, who lived at the same time as the Roman calendar reform,

immediately, in 1582, together with his Synod condemned the new Roman system of chronology as not in agreement with the Tradition of the Church. In the next year (1583), with the participation of Patriarchs Sylvester of Alexandria and Sophronius VI of Jerusalem, he convened a Church Council. This Council recognised the Gregorian calendar to be not in agreement with the canons of the Universal Church and with the decree of the First Ecumenical Council on the method of calculating the day of Holy Pascha.

“Through the labours of this Council there appeared: a Conciliar tome, which denounced the wrongness and unacceptability for the Orthodox Church of the Roman calendar, and a canonical conciliar Decree – the Sigillion of November 20, 1583. In this Sigillion all three of the above-mentioned Patriarchs with their Synods called on the Orthodox firmly and unbendingly, even to the shedding of their blood, to hold the Orthodox Menaion and Julian Paschalion, threatening the transgressors of this with anathema, cutting them off from the Church of Christ and the gathering of the faithful...

“In the course of the following three centuries: the 17th, 18th and 19th, a whole series of Ecumenical Patriarchs decisively expressed themselves against the Gregorian calendar and, evaluating it in the spirit of the conciliar decree of Patriarch Jeremiah II, counselled the Orthodox to avoid it...

“Question. Is the introduction of the new calendar important or of little importance?

“Answer. Very important, especially in connection with the Paschalion, and it is an extreme disorder and ecclesiastical schism, which draws people away from communion and unity with the whole Church of Christ, deprives them of the grace of the Holy Spirit, shakes the dogma of the unity of the Church, and, like Arius, tears the seamless robe of Christ, that is, everywhere divides the Orthodox, depriving them of oneness of mind; breaks the bond with Ecclesiastical Holy Tradition and makes them fall under conciliar condemnation for despising Tradition...

“Question. How must the Orthodox relate to the new calendarist

schismatics, according to the canons?

“Answer. They must have no communion in prayer with them, even before their conciliar condemnation...”

“Question. What punishment is fitting, according to the Church canons, for those who pray with the new calendarist schismatics?”

“Answer. The same condemnation with them...” [15]

In general, it was the liberal view of Metropolitan Anthony that prevailed in ROCOR until its fall into communion with the Moscow Patriarchate in 2007.

2. Constantinople. After the new revolutionary government took power in Greece, all the hierarchs who had condemned the election of the Freemason Meletius Metaxakis as patriarch of Constantinople changed their minds, and, as Stavros Karamitsos writes, “quickly hastened, one after the other, to recognize Meletius, except for two bishops, Sophronius of Eleutheropolis and our famous Chrysostom [Metropolitan of Florina, who wrote in his Apology]: ‘I was then summoned, through the bishop of Kavala Chrysostom, to appear before the Minister, who urged me with threats to recognize Meletius. I took no account of his threats and refused to knuckle under. Then, to avoid a second exile to the Holy Mountain, I departed to Alexandria to see my relatives and to recover from my distress. ‘While in Alexandria, I received a summons from the Ecumenical Patriarchate to appear before the Holy Synod and explain why I did not recognize the election of Meletius as Ecumenical Patriarch. But..., being unable to appear in person before the Synod, I sent a letter justifying my refusal to recognize Meletius as the canonical Patriarch on the basis of the divine and sacred Canons. And while he was preparing to condemn and defrock me in my absence, he was driven from his throne by the Turks for scandalously mixing his spiritual mission with anti-Turkish politics...’”[16]

However, the mood in Constantinople had begun to turn against Meletius nearly a year before that, in the wake of the events of August–September, 1922, when the terrified Greeks began to leave at the rate of 3000 a day.

One of those who left at this time was Hierodeacon Basil Apostolides. As Fr. Jerome of Aegina he was to become one of the great figures of the True Orthodox Church. He gave as reason for his departure to the Patriarch his fear that the Turks would force the clergy to take off their cassocks – a prophecy that was fulfilled twelve years later.[17]

“The second fall of Constantinople” took place for the same reason as the first fall in 1453 – the attempt of the Church to achieve union with the western heretics. The first concrete step towards that union was to be the adoption of the new, papist calendar... Already at the beginning of 1923, a Commission had been set up on the initiative of the government to see whether the Greek Church could accept the new calendar. The Commission reported: “Although the Church of Greece, like the other Autocephalous Orthodox Churches, is inherently independent, they are firmly united and bound to each other through the principle of the spiritual unity of the Church, composing one and one only Church, the Orthodox Church. Consequently none of them can separate itself from the others and accept the new calendar without becoming schismatic in relation to them.”

On the basis of this report a royal mandate was issued decreeing, among other things, that “the Julian Calendar is to remain in force as regards the Church and religious feasts in general”, and that “the national festival of the 25th of March and all the holidays laid down by the laws are to be regulated according to the Julian Calendar.”[18]

On February 3, Meletius Metaxakis wrote to the Church of Greece, arguing for the change of calendar at his forthcoming Pan-Orthodox Council “so as to further the cause, in this part of the Pan-Christian unity, of the celebration of the Nativity and Resurrection of Christ on the same day by all those who are called by the name of the Lord.” [19] The revolutionary government of Greece under Colonel Plastiras then removed Metropolitan Theocletus I of Athens from office. Shortly afterwards, on February 25, Archimandrite Chrysostom Papadopoulos, was elected Metropolitan of Athens by three out of a specially chosen Synod of only five hierarchs – another ecclesiastical coup. During his enthronement speech, Chrysostom said that for collaboration with the heterodox “it is not necessary to have common ground or dogmatic union, for the union

of Christian love is sufficient”.[20]

As one of the members of the commission which had rejected the new calendar, Chrysostom might have been expected to resist Meletius' call. But it seems that the two men had more in common than the fact that they had both been expelled from the Church of Jerusalem in their youth; for on March 6 Chrysostom and his Synod accepted Meletius' proposal and agreed to send a representative to the forthcoming Council. Then, on April 16, he proposed to the Hierarchy that 13 days should be added to the calendar, “for reasons not only of convenience, but also of ecclesiastical, scientifically ratified accuracy”. This in spite of the fact that only three months before he had signed the Commission's report that rejected the new calendar, saying that any Church that accepted the new calendar would become schismatic...

Five out of the thirty-two hierarchy voted against the innovation. Two days later, however, at the second meeting of the Hierarchy, it was announced that Chrysostom's proposal had been “unanimously” approved, but “with absolutely no change to the Paschalion and Calendar of the Orthodox Church”. Moreover, it was decided that the Greek Church would approve of any decision regarding the celebration of Pascha made by the forthcoming Pan-Orthodox Council, provided it was in accordance with the Canons... [21]

It was therefore with the knowledge that the Greek Church would support his proposed reforms that Meletius convened a “Pan-Orthodox Council” in Constantinople from May 10 to June 8, 1923, whose renovationist resolutions concerned the “correction” of the Julian calendar, a fixed date for Pascha, the second marriage of clergy, and various relaxations with regard to the clothing of clergy, the keeping of monastic vows, impediments to marriage, the transfer of Saints' feasts from the middle of the week, and fasting. However, hardly more than ten people, and no official representatives of the Patriarchates, turned up for the council, so discredited was its convener.[22] And even Archbishop Chrysostom (Papadopoulos) had to admit: “Unfortunately, the Eastern Patriarchs who refused to take part in the Congress rejected all of its resolutions in toto from the very outset. If the Congress had restricted itself only to the issue of the calendar, perhaps it would not have encountered the kind of

reaction that it did.”[23]

In his “Memorandum to the Holy Synod of the Hierarchy of Greece” (June 14, 1929), Metropolitan Irenaeus of Kassandreia wrote that the council was not “Pan-Orthodox” but “anti-Orthodox”: “It openly and impiously trampled on the 34th Apostolic Canon, which ordains: ‘It behoves the Bishops of every nation to know among them who is the first or chief, and to recognize him as their head, and to refrain from doing anything superfluous without his advice and approval... But let not even such a one do anything without the advice and consent and approval of all. For thus will there be concord, and God will be glorified through the Lord in the Holy Spirit: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit’. He replaced the Julian calendar with the Gregorian in spite of all the prohibitions relating to it; he decided to supersede the Paschalion which had been eternally ordained for the Orthodox Church by the decision of the First Ecumenical Council, turning to the creation of an astronomically more perfect one in the observatories of Bucharest, Belgrade and Athens; he allowed clerics’ hair to be cut and their venerable dress to be replaced by that of the Anglican Pastors; he introduced the anticanonical marriage and second marriage of priests; he entrusted the shortening of the days of the fast and the manner of their observance to the judgement of the local Churches, thereby destroying the order and unity that prevailed in the Autocephalous Orthodox Churches of the East. Acting in this way, he opened wide the gates to every innovation, abolishing the distinctive characteristic of the Eastern Orthodox Church, which is its preservation, perfectly and without innovation, of everything that was handed down by the Lord, the Apostles, the Fathers, and the Local and Ecumenical Councils.”[24]

What made the council’s decisions still less acceptable was the reason it gave for its innovations, viz., that changing the Paschalion “would make a great moral impression on the whole civilized world by bringing the two Christian worlds of the East and West closer through the unforced initiative of this Orthodox Church...”[25]

Archbishop Nikon wrote: “The most important decrees of the Congress were the decisions to change to the new style [calendar] and to allow the clergy to marry a second time. The Alexandrian, Antiochian and

Jerusalem Churches did not participate in the Congress, considering its convening untimely [and Meletius an uncanonical usurper]. But its decrees were rejected by them as being, according to the expression of the Alexandrian Patriarch, 'contrary to the practice, tradition and teaching of our most Holy Mother Church and presented under the pretext of being slight modifications, which are probably elicited by the demands of the new dogma of "Modernism"' (epistle to the Antiochian Patriarch, 23 June, 1923). The representatives of the Russian Church Abroad [Archbishops Anastasy and Alexander], and after them the Council of Bishops, reacted completely negatively to these reforms." [26]

The false council caused rioting in the streets of Constantinople, and the Orthodox population sacked the patriarchal apartments and physically beat Meletius himself... In fact, the position of the patriarchate was already so vulnerable, that during the Lausanne conference (1922–23), which decided on the massive exchange of populations between Greece and Turkey, the Turkish delegation officially demanded the removal of the patriarchate from Constantinople in view of its disloyalty to the Turkish government in the course of the past war. And the Italian president of the exchange of populations subcommission, G.M. Mantagna, even suggested that "the removal of the Patriarchate [from Constantinople] would not be too high a price to pay for the conclusion of an agreement." However, the French delegation, supported by the Greeks, suggested that the patriarchate remain in Constantinople but be deprived of its former political power. And on January 10, 1923 the British Lord Curzon said that the removal of the patriarchate from Constantinople would be a shock to the whole civilised world.

The British, whose troops were still occupying Constantinople and probably prevented a massacre there similar to that which had taken place in Smyrna, suspected the hand of the Vatican in this proposal to remove the patriarchate. For, as the advisor to the Archbishop of Canterbury on Near Eastern questions, J.A. Douglas, said: "No one with the slightest knowledge of the Near East can doubt that Rome is bitterly hostile to the Phanar, and reckons a disaster to it as an institution to be a great thing." < SPAN style="FONT-FAMILY: 'Book Antiqua','serif'; mso-bidi-font-family: 'Book Antiqua'"> [27]

Venizelos then came up with a compromise proposal that the patriarchate remain in Constantinople but that he would do all he could to remove his nephew Metaxakis from it, a proposal that the Turks reluctantly agreed to.[28] Meletius agreed to his resignation, but suggested its postponement until the conclusion of the peace negotiations, in June, 1923. On July 10, harassed by both Venizelos and the Turkish government, and challenged for his see by the newly formed “Turkish Orthodox Church” of Papa Euthymius, Meletius withdrew to Mount Athos. On September 20, he resigned officially.

On December 6, a new patriarch, Gregory VII, was enthroned. On the very next day, the “Turkish Orthodox” priest Papa Euthymius together with Metropolitan Cyril of Rodopolis and his supporters burst into the Phanar, drove out all the inhabitants and declared that they would not leave the Phanar until a “lawful” patriarch was elected and Gregory renounced the throne. Two days, after an order came from Ankara, the Turkish police escorted them out, and the Phanar was returned to Patriarch Gregory.[29]

The irony was that, only a few years earlier, the patriarchate had broken with the Turkish authorities on the grounds of Greek nationalism. Now the patriarchate owed its rescue from the hands of Turkish ecclesiastical nationalists to – the Turkish authorities...

Lausanne and the exchange of populations that followed spelled the end of Greek nationalist dreams, and the beginning of the end of Constantinople as a Greek city...

Metaxakis’s notorious career was not over yet. Platonov writes that after “hiding with his Masonic protectors in England” for a few years, in 1926, on the death of Patriarch Photius of Alexandria, “with the financial and organisational support of the secret world powers—that-be, Meletius was put forward as second candidate for the throne of Alexandria. The first claimant was Metropolitan Nicholas of Nubia. According to established practice, the first candidate should have been proclaimed patriarch. However, the Egyptian authorities under pressure from the English confirmed the ‘election’ of Meletius. Using his power, the new Alexandrian patriarch–mason introduced the Gregorian calendar [in 1926], causing a serious schism in the Alexandrian Church.”[30]

This had major repercussions on the relationship between Constantinople and ROCOR. On March 30, 1924 the Ecumenical Patriarch appointed a commission composed of three metropolitans which told Archbishop Anastasy that in carrying out ordinations and divorces he was exceeding his prerogatives. Nevertheless, no specific ordinations were discussed, but instead it was demanded of Anastasy that (a) he should not speak out against Soviet power, (b) ceased commemorating Patriarch Tikhon, and (c) recognize Bolshevik power.[31] So the Ecumenical Patriarch by 1924 was what we should now call sergianist as well as ecumenist, pro-Bolshevik as well as pro-western!

[1] N.N. Pokrovsky, S.G. Petrov, *Arkhivy Kremliia: Politburo i Tserkov' 1922–1925gg.* (The Kremlin Archives: the Politburo and the Church, 1922–1925), Moscow: Rosspen, 1997, vol. 1, pp. 282–284.

[2] Lebedev, “St. Patriarch Tikhon and the Calendar Question Part 1”, orthodox@LISTSERV.INDIANA.EDU, 10 July, 2002.

[3] M.E. Gubonin, *Akty Sviateishago Patriarkha Tikhona*, Moscow, 1994, pp. 332–338.

[4] Pokrovsky and Petrov, op. cit., p. 531; Monk Benjamin (Gomareteli), *Letopis' tserkovnykh sobytij Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi nachina ia s 1917 goda* (Chronicle of Church Events, beginning from 1917), <http://www.zlatoust.ws/letopis.htm>, p. 113.

[5] Gubonin, op. cit., pp. 299–300, 335.

[6] Monk Benjamin, op. cit., p. 114.

[7] Gubonin, op. cit., pp. 300, 335; Monk Benjamin, op. cit., p. 118.

[8] Gubonin, op. cit., pp. 332–338; Monk Benjamin, op. cit., pp. 115–117,

130–131.

[9] Monk Nicholas, “RE: [paradosis] Communion to RCs / St. Tikhon and New Calendar”, orthodox-tradition@yahogroups.com, May 22, 2006.

[10] Tserkovnie Vedomosti, №11–12 (1925), pp. 1–4; Archbishop Nikon (Rklitsky), Zhizneopisanie Blazhenneishago Mitropolita Antonia (A Life of His Beatitude Metropolitan Anthony), 1960, vol. VI, p. 164; Monk Benjamin, op. cit., pp. 134–135.

[11] He wrote: “Some Russians from Romania have suddenly crept up to me petitioning for Church autonomy and Slavonic services. I promise d them nothing because their strivings were nationalist–chauvinist, and not ecclesiastical.”

[12] See “Starets Feodosij Karul’skij Sviatogorets”, Russkij Palomnik, № 23, 2001, pp. 15–43.

[13] Pis’ma Blazhennejshago Mitropolita Antonia (Khrapovitskago) (The Letters of his Beatitude Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky), Jordanville, 1988, p. 195.

[14] Pis’ma Blazhennejshago Mitropolita Antonia, op. cit., p. 197. But Fr. Theodosius remained in communion with the Athonite zealots and not with the new calendarist innovators...

[15] Archbishop Theophan, “Kratkie kanonicheskie suzhdenia o letoschislenii” (Short canonical judgements on the calendar), in V.K., Russkaia Zarubezhnaia Tserkov’ na Steziakh Otstupnichestva (The Russian Church Abroad on the way to Apostasy), St. Petersburg, 1999, pp. 29–30.

[16] Karamitsos, O Synkhronos Omologitis tis Orthodoxias (The Contemporary Confessor of Orthodoxy), Athens, 1990, p. 25.

[17] Peter Botsis, Gerontas Ieronymos o Isykhastes tis Aiginas (Elder Jerome the Hesychast of Aegina), Athens, 1991, p. 76.< o:p>

[18] Eleutherios Goutzides, *Ekklesiologika Themata (Ecclesiological Themes)*, Athens, 1980, pp. 68–70.

[19] Goutzidis, *op. cit.*, p. 76.

[20] Cited in Bishop Photius of Triaditsa, "The 70th Anniversary of the Pan-Orthodox Congress in Constantinople", *Orthodox Life*, № 1, 1994, p. 40. At about this time the Churches of Cyprus, Jerusalem and Sinai all issued declarations recognising Anglican orders (Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, pp. 91, 92).

[21] Goutzidis, *op. cit.*, pp. 74–78.

[22] However, an Anglican hierarch, Charles Gore of Oxford, was allowed to attend one of the sessions, sitting at the right hand of Meletius and taking part in the work of the Congress.

[23] "Oecumenical Patriarch Meletios (Metaxakis)", *Orthodox Tradition*, vol. XVII, №№ 2 & 3, 2000, p. 9.

[24] Monk Paul, *Neoimerologitismos–Oikoumenismos (Newcalendarism–Ecumenism)*, Athens, 1982, pp. 72–73.

[25] Dionysius Battistatos, *Praktika–Apophaseis tou en Kon/polei Panorthodoxou Synedriou 1923 (The Acts and Decisions of the Pan-Orthodox Conference in Constantinople in 1923)*, 1982, p. 57.

[26] Nikon (Rklitsky), *Zhizneopisanie*, *op. cit.*, vol. 10, p. 38.

[27] Alexis Alexandris, *The Greek Minority of Istanbul and Greek–Turkish Relations, 1918–1974*, Athens: Centre for Asia Minor Studies, 1983, pp. 90, 91.

[28] Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

[29] *Oriente Moderno (The Contemporary East)*, January 15, 1924, p. 30; Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, p. 118.

[30] Platonov, *Ternovij Venets Rossii (Russia's Crown of Thorns)*, Moscow: Rodnik, 1998, p. 478. Moreo ver, he again tried to push many of the Greek Orthodox in America into schism. See *Holy Transfiguration Monastery, Boston, A Reply to Archbishop Athenagoras, Montreal, 1979*, p. 19; Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, p. 150.

[31] E. Kholmogorov, letter to Vertograd, 1999.

Part 2

3. Finland and Poland. Only in two parts of the Russian Church was the new calendar successfully introduced – in Poland, and in Finland, both of whose Churches had been taken away from the Russian Church by Patriarch Meletius of Constantinople and given autonomy by him. In Poland, the Russian, Ukrainian and Belorussian press was full of protests against the innovation. However, the government strongly supported it, and there were some bloody confrontations between supporters of the Old Calendar and the police.[1]

The struggle against the new calendar was particularly fierce in the great Russian monastery of Valaam, which was now within the bounds of the Finnish State. Already on July 19, 1923 Meletius moved to force the monastery to accept the new calendar, writing mendaciously to Archbishop Seraphim (Lukyanov) that the new calendar had been accepted “with the agreement and by means of a decision of all the Orthodox Churches”. [2] Moreover, since the Finnish Church had accepted

the western paschalion, that, too, would be imposed on the Valaam monks...

At a general assembly of the 600 brothers, writes Nun Angelina (Zhavoronkova), "Abbot Paulinus read out an epistle from Bishop Seraphim in which he said that both Patriarchs Meletius of Constantinople and Tikhon of Moscow blessed Valaam to change to the new style from October 4. Two days later Vladyka Seraphim arrived. He was met by the objections of the brotherhood and the request that they remain with the old style. This was refused to them, and less than two weeks later five of the protesting brothers were forcibly expelled from Valaam and deprived of the mantia.

"... On June 25, 1924 the new Bishop of Karelia visited Valaam. In November the Valaam monks presented him with a petition asking him to allow them to keep the celebration at any rate of Pascha according to the old style, but this, too, was refused them, and those who refused to obey the decrees of the Finnish Church were threatened with exile from Valaam.

"Fr. Michael [Popov] was the spiritual father of the brotherhood at this exceptionally difficult time for Valaam. He encouraged everyone to remain faithful to the traditions of the Holy Orthodox Church. He often served in distant sketes and deserts and encouraged other Fathers to follow him. His nearest disciple and follower, Elder Michael the Younger, at that time Fr. Timon, was one of the most zealous defenders of the Orthodox calendar right until 1939, when the Valaam brotherhood was forced to leave their beloved monastery.

"Secret resistance increased especially in 1925. Fr. Michael sent his spiritual children by night with prosphoras to Gethsemane skete for Fr. Timon and they unfailing fulfilled their obedience, covering six kilometres every night. From the first days of the resistance the Gethsemane skete had become the place where people gathered for services according to the Old Church Calendar.

"On the question of the calendar, the Valaam monks entered into correspondence with the Athonite zealots of Holy Orthodoxy, the so-

called zealots, the elders of Karoulia, especially the learned monk Theodosius, who even wrote a whole composition about the importance of the calendar question. On Valaam Hieromonk Justinian, the main correspondent in this correspondence, was a disciple of Elder Michael. While Elder Theodosius was the last spiritual disciple by correspondence with Elder Theophanes the Recluse.

“In the evening on the eve of the monastery’s feast day of SS. Sergius and Herman of Valaam, September 10, 1925, Metropolitan Germanus of Thyateira, the representative of the Patriarch of Constantinople, arrived [from London]. Having gathered together the brethren, he declared that the new calendar was being introduced from now. On September 16 the brotherhood sent to Sortavala their own representatives in the persons of Fr. Michael, Fr. Joasaph the deputy, Fr. Jerome and the other older priests of the monastery to talk with Metropolitan Germanus. With tears they besought him to keep the old style in the monastery. In reply the metropolitan irritably shouted at them. On September 20 Metropolitan Germanus accompanied by Bishop Germanus arrived on the island to celebrate the all-night vigil. Half of the brotherhood did not come to the service. He called the brotherhood to peace and love.

“Immediately after this repressions began. The antimins were taken from all the skete churches. Fr. Timon was transferred from the Gethsemane skete to the main monastery. A little later Hieromonk Polycarp was exiled to Russia to almost certain death in the concentration camps for his published articles against the leadership of the monastery.”[3]

“On September 25, 1925,” writes Schema-Monk Nicholas of Valaam, “there was a division of people in Valaam as to the ‘old’ and ‘new’ style. Many of the brothers remained true to the old style. Legal proceedings began. The church administration arrived; there was a court with Abbot Paulinus in charge. They began to summon the brothers one by one, and many were expelled from the monastery. Then my turn also came. I went into the room, and there sat Abbot Paulinus with others from the church administration. Father Abbot said, ‘Here is a slave of God; ask him.’ One of them said that he would speak and that everything should be recorded. They asked, ‘Do you accept Fr. Paulinus as Abbot?’ ‘Will you go to church services according to the new calendar?’ I could not answer this

question; it was as if my tongue had become paralysed. They hesitated and said, 'Well, why aren't you answering?' I couldn't say anything. Then they said: 'Well, go on, slave of God, and think this over.'

"I began to pray to the Mother of God, my 'Surety', in my heart. 'Tell me and indicate my life's path: Which side should I go to, the new or old style? Should I go to the cathedral or somewhere else?' And I, the sinful one, prayed to the Mother of God during my obedience in the kitchen. When I finished my evening obedience, I went to my cell and thought in the simplicity of my heart, 'Why don't you answer me, Mother of God?' But the grace of God did not abandon me, a sinner. He wants salvation for all. Suddenly the cathedral appeared before me, the same as it is: the same height, length and width. I was amazed at this miraculous apparition – how could it enter my small cell? But my inner voice said to me: 'Everything is possible with God. There is nothing impossible for Him.' 'Well,' I thought, 'one must go to church in the cathedral according to the new style.' Then, as I was thinking thus, a blue curtain came down from above, in the middle of which was a golden cross. The cathedral became invisible to me, and the inner voice said to me: 'Go to the old style and hold to it.' And I heard a woman's voice coming from above the corner: 'If you want to be saved, hold fast to the traditions of the Holy Apostles and the Holy Fathers.' And then the same thing was repeated a second time, and the third time the voice said: 'If you want to be saved, keep fast to the tradition of the Holy Apostles and Holy Fathers, but not these "wise" men.' After this miracle, everything disappeared and I remained alone in my cell. My heart began to rejoice that the Lord had indicated the path of salvation to me, according to the prayers of the Mother of God." [4]

"On September 12, 1926," continues Nun Angelina, "the former cathedral elders of Valaam, who had remained faithful to patristic Orthodoxy, were summoned to a new trial in Serdobol. The trial was pro forma, and 35 monks were condemned to exile, while the abbot was to deal with the rest, dispersing them among all the sketes.

"On October 9 the sentence was carried out. One of those exiled from Valaam, Hieromonk Nicander, the former spiritual father of the famed Lesna monastery, remembers:

“We shall never forget that... sad day... Our own Abbot Paulinus and our own monastic brothers handed us over to the police... For the sake of temporary comfort, out of fear of men, they drowned out the voice of their conscience and transgressed the holy canons of the Church... The day of our exile that autumn was exceptionally quiet, Lake Ladoga was calm and the first powdery snow covered Valaam... By eight o'clock in the morning we had all gathered on the ferry... the Old Calendarist monks who remained, together with some unwilling new calendarists, came to say goodbye to us; not a few tears were shed on both sides. (Even the gendarme wept, remembered Fr. Philemon.)... How bitter it was for us to leave our native nest, but our souls were at peace, for we felt that we were suffering for the sake of righteousness and that God was with us.’

“On November 15 an Investigative Commission arrived at the monastery, and in the course of four days interrogated each of the brothers on their own, asking whether they recognised Bishop Germanus and whether they would serve with him. Fr. Michael was defrocked by a church court, removed from his obedience as Spiritual Father and exiled on December 15 to the distant St. Herman skete. (According to the words of Fr. Athanasius, who left memoirs of his elder, Fr. Michael was first exiled to Tikhvin island.) Thence he was transferred to the Skete of St. John the Forerunner in 1926, where he spent the following eight years [until his death on May 8, 1934], suffering from a weakness of the heart in the severe conditions of the strictest skete on Valaam . In that year 44 of the brothers were exiled and 48 left Valaam...”[5]

In 1939, when the Soviets captured Old Valaam, the spiritual life of the great monastery came to an end...[6]

4. The Greek Church. It was the Freemason Archbishop Chrysostom Papadopoulos of Athens who took the lead in introducing the new calendar in Greece. Or rather, it was the revolutionary Greek government that took the lead, and Chrysostom immediately followed. Thus on December 14, 1923 the government decided to suspend the old Constitutional Law in accordance with which the Greek Church had been administered for the previous 70 years. According to the new Law, the Hierarchy would meet only once a year, and between sessions would be

represented by the Archbishop of Athens alone. Metropolitans would have to retire at 65, which conveniently neutralized the influence of the older and more conservative hierarchs. Invested now with almost dictatorial powers, Archbishop Chrysostom convened a meeting of the Hierarchy, which, on December 24, voted to thank the government for emancipating it from the previous administrative system (!), and, on December 27, decided to introduce the new calendar with the agreement of the Ecumenical Patriarchate (but no other Orthodox Church).

It is striking how similar were the programs of the renovationists in Greece and Russia at this time. Both proposed a complete reformation of the Church with a very similar agenda. And both were pushed from behind by the political revolution... Thus the decision to change the calendar in Greece was imposed on the Church by the revolutionary government. At a meeting on December 24, Nicholas Plastiras, the President of the government, said to the hierarchs: "The Revolution requests you, then, my respected Hierarchs, to leave all personal preference to one side and proceed to purge the Church... The Revolution hopes that a useful work for the new generation will result from your labours, and that it will reckon itself happy to see the rebirth of the Church being set in motion... Consequently, it wishes you not to limit yourselves to the ancestral Canons, but to proceed to radical measures."

On January 4, 1924, Chrysostom wrote to the Ecumenical Patriarch asking, in a rather lordly tone, for his agreement to the calendar change. He said that it was "sad" that the other Orthodox Churches had not agreed to this, but did not suggest that this might be an impediment. The Patriarch replied on February 14 in a much more sycophantic tone, suggesting that the change should take place on March 10 (henceforth March 23), but asking that he be informed of the agreement of the other Orthodox Churches. Chrysostom immediately telegraphed his agreement to this date, and asked the Patriarch to inform his metropolitans in the New Territories about it.

His haste was probably elicited by the Alexandrian Patriarch Photius' message to the Ecumenical Patriarch on January 15: "Your announcement that, without any real cause or dogmatic or canonical reasons, the brotherly advice and entreaties of the four Apostolic Thrones has been

rejected, and the 'reform of the calendar' has taken place, caused us great grief and surprise. You are in danger of alienating all the Orthodox peoples of the Church. Therefore I suggest the convening of a council to examine the question. Taking into consideration the letters from the Churches of Romania and Serbia, we abide in these things which have been dogmatized in former Synodal Congresses, and we reject every addition or any change of the calendar before the convocation of an Ecumenical Council, which alone is capable of discussing this question, concerning which Ecumenical Council we propose a speedy convocation."

On February 16 Chrysostom telegraphed Photius that an Ecumenical Council could not be convened immediately, and that the calendar change was an urgent necessity "for the sake of millions of Orthodox people". After asking him to change the calendar on March 10, he added, rather craftily, that there would be no change in the Paschalion, for such a change would have to be referred to an Ecumenical Council (as if the addition of 13 days to the calendar was a much less important change that did not require a conciliar decision). But Photius was not persuaded...

The other patriarchs spoke out strongly against the calendar reforms. Thus Patriarch Damian of Jerusalem and his Synod wrote: "The most holy Mother of the Churches is unable to accept the change at present because of the disadvantageous position in which, as is well known, she finds herself in relation to the Latins in the holy places, and because of the dangers of proselytism." And Patriarch Gregory of Antioch and his Synod wrote: "Political factors produced the change of the calendar even though the whole of the Eastern Church keeps to the Julian calendar. The tendency to change the canons represents a great danger in our eyes." And Patriarch Demetrius of Serbia wrote: "We have indicated the necessity of postponing for the time being the council that has been convened in order that the question be examined before an Ecumenical Council so as to decide on a single calendar for all the Orthodox Churches." [7]

On March 3, Chrysostom wrote to all the Hierarchs of the Church of Greece that "in accordance with the decision of the Holy Synod the Church of Greece has accepted the correction of the Julian calendar

defined by the Ecumenical Patriarch, according to which March 10 is to be considered and called March 23...”

Finally, on March 4, he completed his coup, asking the Foreign Ministry to “send urgent telegrams to the Blessed Patriarchs of Jerusalem, Antioch, Alexandria and Serbia, and the Archbishops of Romania and Cyprus, informing them that the Church of Greece has accepted the decision of the Ecumenical Patriarchate concerning the convergence of the ecclesiastical and political calendar, calling March 10 March 23, and to inform the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople that the Church of Greece had put his decision into effect.”[8]

As we have seen, the Ecumenical Patriarch accepted the change, albeit with the proviso that it should be with the agreement of all the Orthodox Churches. This acquiescence is largely explained by the very weak position of the patriarchate in the wake of the Asia Minor catastrophe. For it was economically dependent on the Greek Church and could not afford to disagree.

In fact, Patriarch Gregory VII was personally opposed to the change. But he accepted it because, as he told the Holy Synod: “Unfortunately, the change in the calendar was imposed by the Greek government.” For as the tomos of November 13, 1924 declared: “The conduct of Church affairs must be compatible with the political and social forms”!...

On Sunday, March 10, 1924 (March 23, according to the new calendar) the State Church of Greece and the Patriarchate of Constantinople adopted the new calendar. On that day, the future hierarch-confessor of the True Orthodox Church, Archimandrite Germanus (Varykopoulos) was serving the Divine Liturgy in his church of St. Alexander in Palaion Faliron. Having come to the end of the Liturgy, he commemorated “the holy 13 days whose memory we celebrate!”[9]

On March 25, 1924 (new calendar), two important events took place simultaneously in Athens. The great feast of the Annunciation was celebrated according to the new calendar by Archbishop Chrysostom (Papadopoulos). And the Greek monarchy was abrogated (without a vote) by the revolutionary government.

As Nicholas Kraniotakis wrote: “Under strict orders, and to the sound of trumpets, the soldiers detached the Crown from the Cross and threw it to the ground! And Greek democracy was born!...”[10]

This is another indication of the close spiritual link between events in Greece and in Russia. In both, political anti-monarchism was joined to religious renovationism. In Greece since 1917 the anti-monarchists and renovationists had been led by Eleutherios Venizelos in the State and Meletios Metaxakis in the Church.

Moreover, Meletios had been helped by the fact that in Russia the so-called “Living Church” had come to power in 1922 with a very similar programme of modernistic reforms to his own. And on the occasion of his election as Patriarch of Alexandria, the synod of the “Living Church” wrote to him: “The Holy Synod recalls with sincere best wishes the moral support which Your Beatitude showed us while you were yet Patriarch of Constantinople by entering into communion with us as the only rightfully ruling organ of the Russian Orthodox Church.”[11]

On April 6, 1924, a vast crowd gathered in the courtyard outside the Annunciation cathedral. The next day the newspaper Vradini (Evening News) reported: “The priests have been forbidden, under pain of defrocking, to liturgise or chant the troparia of the Annunciation today. Also forbidden is the ringing of the bells of the Russian cathedral (in Phillelinon Street), and today’s celebration of the Liturgy at the metochion of the Holy Sepulchre, although the Patriarchate of Jerusalem has not accepted the new calendar.

“In spite of all the measures taken, multitudes of the faithful inundated the metropolitan cathedral from afternoon to late at night, and at their persistent entreaty one priest was found who chanted a paraklesis, being ‘obedient,’ as he said, ‘to the threats of the people’. The wardens wanted to close the church, but in view of the fanaticism of the worshippers the cathedral remained open into the night. Three miracles took place at the metropolitan cathedral... Seven-year-old Stasinopoulos, a deaf-mute and paralytic since birth, was brought by his mother to the icon of the Mother of God, convulsed by spasms. A little while later he arose amidst general

compunction, pronounced the words “mama–granny–papa” and began to walk.

“A little later a seventeen–year–old paralytic was healed, and... a hard–working deaf–mute. The latter spoke yesterday for the first time in thirty years, declaring that he would not go to work today. Although the cathedral wardens know the names of these two, they refuse to publish them, affirming that no miracle has taken place, although the contrary is confessed by the whole congregation.”

Another newspaper, Skrip, reported on the same day: “Movement inside the cathedral was impossible. The faithful listened to the vespers, and after the dismissal anxiously discussed the change in the worshipping calendar and the transfer of the feast of the Annunciation. “Two thousand pious Christians, together with women and children, unanimously proclaimed their adherence to the holy dogmas of religion, which the democrats have come to change, and one voice was heard: ‘We will not become Franks! We are Orthodox Christians, and we will remain Orthodox Christians!’”

Similar scenes, and similar miracles, took place in other regional centres, such as Nauplion, Tripolis, Thessalonica and Corinth. The secular authorities everywhere supported the new ecclesiastical regime. But the faithful Christians, obeying the teachings of the holy Fathers and imitating the Christians of old who in similar situations broke communion with the innovators, themselves broke off all ecclesiastical communion with the innovating Church of Greece. They prayed at home or in country chapels, served by a very small number of priests, including some from Mount Athos, who were continually persecuted by the police at the instigation of Chrysostom Papadopoulos.

From the beginning the Lord showed by many signs and wonders that He was with the adherents of the Orthodox Calendar. Thus a miracle took place on January 6, 1925 – that is, the eve of the feast of the Nativity of Christ according to the Orthodox Calendar and the feast of the Theophany according to the new. The parishioners of the new calendar church of the Holy Apostles in Acropolis were following the Divine Liturgy. Suddenly they saw that tears were flowing from the eyes of the

icon of the Mother of God, and blood from the heads of the Apostles. The amazed parishioners were not slow to see in this a sign of God's anger at "the change in religion", that they were baptizing Christ when He had not yet been born. The church authorities sent an archimandrite to convince the people that it was no sign from God but "an effluence from the wood, which is fir and is acted upon by excessive heat or also by... cold"! The archimandrite was laughed off the ambon. Finally, the authorities closed the church, preventing worshippers from entering. Today the church is denuded of icons and visited only by... tourists![12]

A critical turning-point in the history of the Greek Church was the appearance of the sign of the Cross in the sky over the Old Calendarist monastery of St. John the Theologian near Athens. This greatly strengthened the faith of the people that God was with them in the struggle. Bishop Lazarus (Puhalo) writes: "In 1925, on the eve of the Exaltation of the All-Honourable and Life-giving Cross of our Saviour, September 14 according to the Orthodox Church calendar [27 according to the new], the all-night vigil was served in the church of St. John the Theologian in suburban Athens. By 9 o'clock that evening, more than 2000 true Orthodox faithful had gathered in and around the church for the service, since very few true Orthodox churches had been accidentally left open by the civil authorities. Such a large gathering of people could not, however, go unnoticed by the authorities. Around eleven p.m. the authorities despatched a battalion of police to the church 'to prevent any disorders which might arise from such a large gathering.' The gathering was too large for the police to take any direct action or to arrest the priest at that time and so they mingled with the crowd of worshippers in the already over-flowing courtyard of the church.

"Then, regardless of the true motives for their presence, against their own will, but according to the Will which exceeds all human power, they became participants in the miraculous experience of the crowd of believers.

"At 11.30 [during the procession of the Litya] there began to appear in the heavens above the church, in the direction of the North-East, a bright, radiant Cross of light. The light not only illuminated the church and the faithful but, in its rays, the stars of the clear, cloudless sky

became dim and the church-yard was filled with an almost tangible light. The form of the Cross itself was an especially dense light and it could be clearly seen as a Byzantine cross with an angular cross bar towards the bottom. This heavenly miracle lasted for half an hour, until midnight, and then the Cross began slowly to rise up vertically, as the cross in the hands of the priests does in the ceremony of the Exaltation of the Cross in church. Having come straight up, the Cross began gradually to fade away.

“Human language is not adequate to convey what took place during the apparition. The entire crowd fell prostrate upon the ground with tears and began to sing hymns, praising the Lord with one heart and one mouth. The police were among those who wept, suddenly discovering, in the depths of their hearts, a childlike faith. The crowd of believers and battalion of police were transformed into one, unified flock of faithful. All were seized with a holy ecstasy.

“The vigil continued until four a.m., when all this human torrent streamed back into the city, carrying the news of the miracle because of which they were still trembling and weeping.

“Many of the unbelievers, sophists and renovationists, realizing their sin and guilt, but unwilling to repent, tried by every means to explain away or deny this miracle. The fact that the form of the cross had been so sharply and clearly that of the Byzantine Cross (sometimes called the Russian Cross), with three cross-bars, the bottom one at an angle, completely negated any arguments of accidental physical phenomena.

“The fact that such an apparition of the cross also occurred during the height of the first great heresy [13] must strike the Orthodox with an especial sense of the magnitude of the calendar question and of all that is connected with it. No sensible person can discuss this question lightly, with secular reasoning or with worldly arguments. Renovationists, like the Arians in 351, are left without extenuation or mitigation.”[14]

There were many eyewitness accounts. Thus John Glymis, a retired police officer, witnesses: “I was one of the men from the Police Institute who were sent to stop the vigil that night, some fifty years ago, at the country

Church of St. John the Theologian. The Old Calendarists were keeping vigil there, because it was the eve of the feast of the Exaltation of the Precious Cross [according to the Old Calendar]. Since many people had gathered – more than two thousand individuals – we did not attempt to seize the priest as we had been ordered, but we sat down quietly in the nearby court and waited for them to finish. At about 11.30 at night, we heard a loud and strange uproar coming from the shouts of the multitude. Without any delay, we ran to see what was happening – and we saw. The whole multitude of the faithful was in a state of excitement. Some were weeping and others, crying out ‘Lord, have mercy!’, were kneeling and had turned their eyes toward heaven, and yet others were fainting, overwhelmed with great emotion. Then we too looked and beheld the marvel: an enormous radiant Cross, very high above the church, was illumining the whole area. At first, we were seized with fear, but immediately we came to ourselves and, forgetting the purpose for which we had been sent, we fell to our knees and wept like little children. Of course, it is superfluous for me to tell you that, filled with emotion, we attended the rest of the vigil to the end – not as persecutors but as faithful Christians. In the morning when we returned to the Institute, we told everyone about the great marvel we had been deemed worthy to see. Afterwards there was an investigation and all of us swore under oath that we had seen the Precious Cross clearly, high in the sky.”

Another eye-witness, Athanasios Primalis, was driving a tram around Omonoia square. “Immediately I stepped on the brakes and stopped the vehicle. I stuck my head out of the tram door and I, the unworthy one, also saw the Precious Cross of our Lord – may His Name be glorified. It was shining over Mount Hymettus. I don’t remember how long this lasted. I know only one thing: the Precious Cross which I saw that night turned me into a different man. Since then, everyone in my family has become a faithful child of the Church of the True Orthodox Christians...”[15]

However, on hearing of the miracle, the new calendarist bishops declared: “What appeared before the Old Calendarists, if it really appeared, was God's testimony that they are in great spiritual deception. The sign was telling them: 'Oh, unreasonable ones, do you not know that the Exaltation of the Holy Cross has passed? So many hundreds of thousands of people

agree on the fact that today is September 26, and you are still thinking it is September 13 and the eve of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross! Why, unfaithful ones, do you celebrate the Exaltation of the Holy Cross on the 27th, when it is to be done on September 14?' So, that is what this could mean, if there was any appearance at all." [16]

But this was a desperate attempt by the new calendarists – the heavens spoke against them...

5. Mount Athos. The centre of the struggle against the new calendar in the Greek-speaking lands was Mount Athos. In 1924, all the monasteries except Vatopedi stopped commemorating the Ecumenical Patriarch. On Great Thursday, 1926, 450 hieromonks and monks on Mount Athos led by the Romanian Fr. Arsenius Kotteas signed "The Sacred League of the Zealot Monks" for the defence of Orthodoxy against the new calendar. The League published its Constitutional Charter under the heading "The Anchor of Orthodoxy" until it was banned by a new Charter for Mount Athos ratified by the Greek government in 1927. This did not stop the zealot monks, however, who initiated a vigorous campaign against the new calendar throughout Greece. This led to the expulsion of nineteen zealots from the sketes of Vatopedi and Koutloumousiou in 1927. Some were allowed to circulate freely through Greece, while others were confined to a monastery in Mytilene on the island of Lesbos.

In 1926 the Athonite "Sacred League" was joined by the "Greek Religious Community of the True Orthodox Christians" in Athens in the struggle for the return of the Orthodox Calendar. On October 1, 1926, Hieromonk Matthew (Karpatakis), the confessor of three of the Athonite monasteries, went to Athens to help the True Orthodox there, and in 1929 the Sacred League sent two more hieromonks. [17]

On April 24, 1926 the State Church of Greece issued an encyclical (№ 2398 / 2203) which declared that the True Orthodox had "separated from the Church and cut themselves off from the Body of Christ, drawing upon themselves condemnation and excommunication, not knowing or, perhaps, having forgotten, that he who does not listen to the Church is like a heathen and a publican (Matthew 18.17)... The decisions of the Church are absolutely obligatory; he who does not submit to them no

longer belongs to her, he is deprived of the gifts of Divine Grace; he is separated and cut off from her and is subject to eternal torment...”

So for the “sin” of simply remaining exactly where they were, and keeping to the traditions of their ancestors since apostolic times, the True Orthodox were “subject to eternal torment”!

In 1927 a patriarchal committee succeeded in negotiating a compromise that was accepted under pressure by all the monasteries but not by all the monks. The committee assured the Athonites that the calendar reform was not final in that it had not been accepted by all the Orthodox Churches. Moreover, the issue was to be reconsidered at an impending Pan-Orthodox Council that would resolve the matter. In this way, the committee persuaded the Athonites to continue following the Old Calendar while commemorating the Ecumenical Patriarch, pending the resolution of the question by a Pan-Orthodox Council. The compromise was accepted by all the Athonite monasteries, but only partially by Esphigmenou, which did not resume the commemoration of the Patriarch but did continue to receive his representatives and to commune with other monasteries that commemorated him. Moreover, they continued to concelebrate at the cathedral of the Protatou in Karyes, where the Patriarch was commemorated. Later, in the 1970s, Esphigmenou would break completely with the Patriarchate.[18]

However, many of the monks refused to accept the compromise – which turned out to be a deception in that the new calendar had not been abolished by any competent Council. And to this day Mount Athos has remained a citadel of resistance to newcalendarism and ecumenism. Even if most of the monks now commemorate the Ecumenical Patriarch, Esphigmenou, with its 117 zealot monks, remains defiant.

The spirit of these zealot monks is well caught in the following excerpt from the life of the zealot monk Habbakuk “the barefoot”: “After the adoption of the new calendar, a large number of Athonite Fathers decided to stop commemorating their bishop, who was subject to the Patriarch, and to break communion with the latter and with every church that accepted the innovation of the new calendar or even continued to be in communion with the innovators. But the majority of the monks did not

dare to subscribe to this decision; whence the schism which continues to this day and whose effects are felt more and more acutely. At the beginning, twenty-four monks from the monastery of the Great Lavra rebelled, among whom was the peaceable Habbakuk.

“The quarrel was so intense that shouting could be heard even in the courtyard of the monastery. For a place in which a tranquil calm had reigned only shortly before, it was a harsh trial that suddenly flared up. Father Habbakuk shut himself in his cell. Prayer-rope in his hand, he prayed without ceasing that God bring back peace to sorely tried Athos. The monks who were faithful to Tradition continued, as before, to work in the monastery, but since they could no longer accept the commemoration of the patriarch they were not in communion of prayer with the other Fathers and celebrated separately, in a large chapel which had been granted them. Soon Fr. Habbakuk was exiled for a certain period to Vigla, to the cave of St. Athanasius. But very quickly the Fathers, seeing how noble his cause was and how much they loved him, could not stand it any longer and asked for his recall to the monastery. This time he was given the service of nurse; he was attached to the great hospital which the Lavra had for the numerous old or sick members of the community...

“However, the evil one again lay in wait. Soon his position as an old calendarist brought the elder a second exile to the cave of St. Athanasius. It was not long, however, before the sick complained: the nurse who had replaced Fr. Habbakuk did not have the strength to follow the routine of his predecessor in the very testing service of helping the sick. For Fr. Habbakuk was known to have a very strong constitution, he was the most dedicated worker of them all and never felt tired. So the sick very quickly got him back through their supplications! And one should have seen the enthusiasm with which the monks and the sick, who all loved him, reserved for his return.

“At the beginning of 1927 the community wanted to put an end, once and for all, to the pitiless quarrel which would end by destroying the monastery. And to assure them of a better success, they sent a written invitation to the governor, asking him to come and preside over the synaxis of the elders which would debate the question of the zealots faithful to the calendar of the Fathers for the last time. At the suggestion

of a brother doctor, Fr. Athanasius Kambanaou, who was himself a zealot, they had elected Fr. Habbakuk to represent these Fathers. All the elders were present with the governor in the chair.

“He immediately asked Habbakuk: ‘Father, how do you explain your deserting a community in the heart of which you had previously sown anarchy? And tell me: why are you not in communion with the other Fathers?’ Fr. Habbakuk replied with meekness and humility: ‘Has your Excellency the Governor read the holy canons of the Rudder?’ ‘And what does the Rudder say, Father?’ asked the other. Fr. Habbakuk replied promptly: ‘If you don’t know it, Sir, go and read it first. Then you can come and judge us.’

“Judging that this reply constituted a grave insult to authority, the synaxis immediately exiled its author to the holy monastery of Xeropotamou. Poor Habbakuk was driven out of his place of repentance for the third time.

“About two months later, he was recalled from his exile. That day, which was March 9, they even asked him to be present at an all-night vigil with the governor. And in the morning, immediately after the service which had lasted all night, the governor mounted his mule and hurried back in haste to Karyes. Then Fr. Habbakuk, seeing an opportunity to make him hear the voice of reason, took the animal by the halter and set off on the path with him. And as they were going along he spoke to him as he knew how. He explained to him in a gentle way which had its effect on the hearer why the Fathers of the Holy Mountain were opposed to the change in the calendar, and he made him see how the ecclesiastical texts formed a good basis and justification for such an opposition. Very soon the governor was moved by the simplicity and childlike enthusiasm which Habbakuk put in his words, as well as by his admirable mastery of Holy Scripture. And it did not take him long to come to the conclusion that he was dealing with a virtuous man who was in love with an ideal. So immediately he arrived at Karyes he asked for the zealot to be returned without delay to his home monastery. Some days later, the Great Lavra received Habbakuk into its bosom again.

“However, his return did not take place without disappointment. Of the

zealot fathers who had been his companions in the struggle, almost all had fled, some of their own free will and others constrained by force. And the few who remained had hastened to rejoin the Catholicon. From then on, Fr. Habbakuk had no peace until the day when, with one of the brothers who also loved the virtues, he left the monastery...

“Thus it was his love for the apostolic Tradition of the Church, a pure and disinterested love which was proof against tribulations and penalties, that always made him struggle to discern the will of God in everything. It was this love that had merited him exile to Vigla. But he had his reward: for it was also there, in the solitude of Vigla, that he was granted a multitude of spiritual goods, goods which were clearly not earned without sweat and grief, but which were great gifts for all that.

“... One day a monk whom he loved very much, Fr. Ephraim who was from the Great Lavra like himself, asked why he had become a zealot. He was given a reply full of a frank realism: ‘Because God will call me to account; he will say: “Habbakuk, you knew the law of the Church, how did you come to trample it underfoot?’ And he added that the new calendar was a ‘sacrifice of Cain’.”[19]

[1] Monk Benjamin, op. cit., p. 121.

[2] Monk Benjamin, op. cit., p. 106.

[3] Nun Angelina, “Starets Mikhail Starshij, ispovednik strazhdushego pravoslavia”, Russkij Palomnik, № 17, 1998, p. 64.

[4] The Orthodox Word, №№. 160–161, September–December, 1991, pp. 268–270.

[5] Nun Angelina, op. cit., pp. 64–66. There was a nationalist, Russophobic element to the introduction of the new calendar in Finland.

Bishop Germanus (Aav) forbade his priests to wear pectoral crosses of Russian make, and would even paint over Slavonic inscriptions on old icons. His successor, Paul (Gusev), was a Russian who pretended to be a Finn. He, according to one source, “showed an indefatigable concern for one thing alone: how to make services in his Church completely unlike those in the Russian Church (“Demons in cassocks”, orthodox-tradition@yahoogroups.com, December 22, 2003).

[6] In New Valaamo in Finland, according to the witness of a True Orthodox Christian who spent a year there before his conversion, there continued to be Russian monks who confessed the Old Calendar – an abbot named Symphorian and another monk over one hundred years old. They lived in separate quarters and refused all communion with the new calendarists and visiting Soviet hierarchs. Abbot Symphorian died in the 1980s; nothing is known about the other monk.

[7] Abraham Tsimirikas, *Eis Ipakoin Pisteos (To the Obedience of the Faith)*, 1977, pp. 28–30.

[8] Tsimirakis, *op. cit.*, pp. 85–98.

[9] Metropolitan Calliopius of Pentapolis, *Deinopathimata G.O.X. (The Sufferings of the True Orthodox Christians)*, vol. 1, Piraeus, 1990, p. 30.

[10] Metropolitan Calliopius, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

[11] Cited in Bishop Photius, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

[12] Metropolitan Calliopius, *op. cit.*, pp. 17–18, 22, 45–48.

[13] Arianism – the reference is to the appearance of the sign of the Cross over Jerusalem in 351.

[14] *Orthodox Life*, vol. 22, №. 2, March–April, 1972; reprinted in Fr. Basile Sakkas, *The Calendar Question*, Jordanville: Holy Trinity Monastery, 1973. For further witnesses and photographs, see Metropolitan Calliopius, *op. cit.*, 1990, vol. I, pp. 81–92, and Holy Transfiguration Monastery, Papa–Nicholas Planas, Boston, 1961, pp. 117–119.

[15] “Miraculous Appearance of Cross over Athens, Greece”, Smyrna1922@aol.com < /FONT>, May 20, 2004.

[16] Quoted in “Re[2]: [paradosis] (unknown)”, 1 January, 2003, orthodox-tradition@yahoogroups.com.

[17] The Zealot Monks of Mount Athos, Syntomos Istoriki Perigraphi tis Ekklesias ton Gnision Orthodoxon Khristianon Ellados (Brief Historical Description of the True Orthodox Christians of Greece), Mount Athos, 1973, pp. 8–11; Metropolitan Calliopius, op. cit., pp. 101–111.

[18] “A Rejoinder to a Challenge of the Legitimacy of the Orthodox Monastic Brotherhood of the Holy Monastery of Esphigmenou”, orthodox-synod@yahoogroups.com, January 29, 2003.

[19] Hieromonk Theodoritus (Mavros), Avvakoum, Le Zélote aux Pieds Nus (Habbakuk, the Bare-Footed Zealot), a translation from the Greek by the Fraternité Orthodoxe de St. Grégoire Palamas, Paris, 1986, pp. 37–42. There is now an English translation of this book.

Part 3

6. The Romanian Church. The Romanian Church had already been tempted by the new calendar in 1864, when Prince Alexandru Ioan Cuza “convoked a Church Synod at which he recommended that the Romanian Orthodox Church change from the Julian Calendar to the Gregorian Calendar. Also present at this Synod was Saint Calinic of Cernica (1787–1868), one of the most dauntless strugglers for the triumph of the truth and for the preservation of the True Faith. He was categorically opposed to the calendar innovation and exclaimed as he was leaving the hall in which the Synod was meeting: ‘I will not be reckoned with transgressors!’ Thus, the Prince did not succeed in implementing this recommendation, which had been imposed on him by Freemasons.”[1]

However, Cuza succeeded in getting some leading hierarchs sent to foreign heterodox institutions for training. Among them was Metropolitan

Miron (Cristea), a former uniate, who on December 17, 1923, as head of the Romanian Orthodox Church, wrote to the Patriarch of Constantinople that the Romanian Church accepted the decision of the “Pan-Orthodox Council” on the change of calendar, and that it would be applied in 1924.< SPAN style="mso-special-character: footnote">[2] And so in Romania, the new calendar was introduced in the same year as in Greece, October 1, 1924 becoming October 14.

In reward for this, on February 4, 1925, the Romanian Church was proclaimed a patriarchate by Constantinople, and on November 1 Metropolitan Miron was enthroned as patriarch of Romania. Then, in 1926 and again in 1929, he changed the date of Pascha to bring it into conformity with the western Paschalion.

The new calendar innovation was pushed through by Alexandru Lapedatu, the Minister of Cults. Nicolae Iorga, the future President of the Council of Ministers writes that it “did not bring about the expected results. People were beaten even in front of altars, and on the following day, after these desperate measures, the congregations were mostly empty, and the few people who were present – mainly clergy – were content to listen to proceedings of the driest imperial tradition.”[3]

“These,” as Constantin Bujor writes, “were reports written in advance, in which the Faithful ‘begged’ for the use of the Gregorian Calendar in the Church, just as the peasants of Romania later ‘begged’ to enter en masse the collective agricultural cooperatives patterned after Soviet collective farms, according to the Congress of the Romanian Workers’ Party of February 18–20/March 3–5, 1949. Iorga continues: ‘Nevertheless, this decision to adopt the Western Calendar was taken too lightly and without recognition of the complex, conservative, and mystical psychology of the people, and it provoked a schism that still continues not only in Basarabia but also in the mountainous regions of old Moldavia.’ The population living in the extensive mountain regions remained steadfast in the ancestral Orthodox Tradition, from one generation to the next, from great-grandparents to grandparents, parents, children, and grandchildren, and so on, by recounting stories about the sacrifices made in the past, in the hope that such sufferings would leave memories and kindle the flame of the traditional Orthodox Faith everywhere. The press

of this period mentions an eloquent declaration in this regard from some of the Faithful living in the vicinity of Cluj: 'We, the whole village, will not abandon the Tradition and Faith into which we were born. It is up to the Priests to decide which religion they wish to join; we will have no part in this. But if we find that any of them want to introduce innovations here, such a one will no longer be our Priest.'"[4]

In fact, only one hierarch rejected the calendar innovation – Metropolitan Visarion (Puiu) of Bucovina, who went into exile and died in Paris in 1964. [5]

Resistance to the reform was particularly strong in Bessarabia, where, as we have seen, there had already been strong resistance to the union with Romania and the removal of Church Slavonic from the churches. "The patriotically minded Bessarabian population," writes Glazkov, "who took a very cautious attitude to any attempt by the Bessarabian authorities to liquidate the national particularities of the Moldavian people, met the reform with protests. 'The Union of Orthodox Christians' immediately condemned Metropolitan Gurias, who carried out the decision of the Synod, and began an active campaign against the new calendar style by publishing apologetic literature and conducting popular meetings and processions. Some of the Bessarabian priests who considered the reform of the calendar to be uncanonical supported the protests of the laity and rejected the Gregorian calendar. Around the churches where the Church Slavonic language and the Julian calendar were preserved (for example, the church of the Alexander Nevsky brotherhood), there gathered priests and laity. Thus in April, 1926 thousands of believers gathered at the church of St. Panteleimon in Kishinev for a pannikhida for Tsar-Martyr Nicholas II. Some priests openly celebrated all the feasts according to the old style in front of a large number of believers, which was defined by the authorities as rebellion, for many lay Old Calendarists were subjected to direct humiliations by the new style clergy. There was an attempt to build, in Kishinev, a church in direct submission to the Patriarch of Jerusalem, who had remained faithful to the old style. According to the police, the majority of the population resisted the ecclesiastical reform, only individual parishes passed over to the Gregorian calendar. It is noteworthy that if, at the beginning, the civil authorities were quite conciliatory towards the Old Calendarists, allowing them to celebrate

Pascha and other Church feasts according to the old and new styles, the official Romanian Church authorities took upon themselves police–fiscal functions in exposing and repressing them...”[6]

In Bessarabia, the leadership of the movement against the new style had been taken up by the white clergy and the city intelligentsia. In other parts of Romania, however, the leaders were the monks. Out of the 14,000 parish priests, almost none stood up against the calendar reform.

The only exception to this, as Metropolitan Blaise writes, was “Archimandrite Galaction (Cordun), who at that time was serving as parish priest in the metropolitan cathedral in Bucharest and who used to preach there when there was no bishop.

“... Fr. Galaction, who later became our first metropolitan, fought against the reform, but was unable to do anything, since he was only an archimandrite. He was very capable, and had studied in Petersburg with the future Patriarchs Alexis of Moscow and Cyril of Bulgaria, graduating with the degree of doctor of theology. Later, in 1935, he was consecrated to the episcopate – they thought he had changed his views. Three bishops who had been consecrated before the change of calendar participated in the consecration, so [apostolic] succession was not broken...

“This is what happened, for example, in Neamț monastery, where St. Paisius Velichkovsky was once the abbot. When the reform took place there were about 200 monks in the monastery, 80 of whom were clergy. This was the biggest monastery in Romania. It was here that the strongest movement against the new style arose. Two months before the reform the abbot warned the brotherhood: be careful, reforms are coming, do not accept them. This was as it were a prophecy. But out of the 80 hieromonks only 30 (not counting the monks) were against the reform; and of these 30 only 6 stood out openly in opposition – the rest did not separate for material reasons. By a decree of the metropolitan of Moldavia all the clergy who did not accept the new style were threatened with deposition, exile from the monastery and confiscation of their property – the man would be outlawed. Then a small group of monks with the most devoted and zealous priests left the monastery, and it is

from this group that our Church begins its history. Neamț monastery as a whole accepted the new style, later they also renounced St. Paisius' rule, for the keeping of which the monastery was renowned. Our monastery of Slatioara, which is not far from Neamț, inherited this rule and tradition.

“Here are the names of the (clerical) inhabitants of the monastery who resisted all their lives: Hieromonk Fr. Glycerius (later metropolitan)[7], Hierodeacon David (the first abbot of the monastery at Slatioara), Hieromonk Pambo, Fr. Baruch, Fr. Gimnadius, Fr. Zosima, Fr. Gamaliel, Fr. Damascene, who died in the woods near the monastery. We also know the names of other monks of Neamț who resisted the new style. There were also nuns: Mother Macaria, who was the helper of the abbess of the biggest women's monastery in the country, Agapia, which became new calendarist (it now has 450 nuns), and who with her nuns founded the first women's monastery in our Church.

“The small groups of clergy and monastics of these men's and women's monasteries – the purest, who had God in their hearts and not their property -- rejected the reforms and were driven out of the monasteries, being forced to live in the world. The pious laity who supported them became like bees constructing hives, the churches, while these clerics were like queen-bees. That was how our Church came into being.”[8]

“Two months before the calendar change,” writes Metropolitan Blaise, “something very momentous happened in the great Church of the Neamț Monastery. It was on the Eve of the Dormition of the Mother of God. The Ecclesiarch went to the Church to prepare all that was needed and to light the candles and kandelia for the Midnight Service. The weather was calm, with clear skies and numerous stars; no cloud was in sight. Suddenly, a great bolt of lightning came down from the heavens and, passing through a window in the dome of the Church, struck in front of the Miracle-working Icon of the Mother of God. It hit the stone floor, and a section of stone collapsed; from the impact, the candlestand that was affixed to this slab in front of the Icon was knocked over. [Cf. the words of the Lord in Revelation (2.5): “Repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place”]. When the Fathers and Brothers came to Church, the Priest who was serving told them what had happened; seeing the damage done by the lightning strike, they all

concluded that it was a Divine sign.

“Here is another incident. When Father Glycherie reached the Coroi Ravine, a spiritual uneasiness overcame him. One night, after lengthy prayer, he was beset by heavy thoughts. ‘How is it possible,’ he said, ‘that in our country many Priests with advanced theological training, together with a large number of intellectuals, are leaving the Old Calendar, as it was bequeathed to the people by the Holy Fathers of the Orthodox Church, who have honoured it from times of old? Should I not abandon the Old Calendar and be one of these? Am I making a mistake before God by not changing?’ Late in the night, he had a beautiful vision: from the West, a dark cloud appeared; it tried to cover the whole world and was moving furiously towards the East, howling like a monster. In front of the cloud, a powerful storm formed, adorned with a chain as black as tar, on which black Crosses appeared. Everyone was frightened. But looking towards the East, he saw a snow-white cloud, glittering like gold; before it was a chain of gold, from which there were hanging Crosses of gold.

“A choir of Hierarchs also appeared – all with golden vestments, – walking towards the black cloud. In a designated place, the two clouds collided and the dark cloud fell; and in its place, a sea of water appeared, engulfing the earth...”[9]

In 1926, two shepherds, Ioan and Mihail Urzică found Hieromonk Pamvu and Monks Galaction and Veniamin hiding in the Coroi Ravine. They then led them to Fr. Glycherie and Fr. David. The Old Calendarist monks were received with rejoicing by the faithful of Vânători, and it was decided to build a church. When it was built, Fr. Glycherie appointed Hieromonk Pamvu and his Monks Galaction and Veniamin to look after it.[10] In this way a beginning was made to the Old Calendarist movement in Romania. In spite of continual persecution by the police and the new calendarists, it flourished. By 1936 Fr. Glycherie had built about forty large churches, most of them in Moldavia.

Metropolitan Cyprian writes: “The Romanian Patriarchate, both in 1926 and 1929, celebrated Pascha with the Latins, constituting an infringement of the Orthodox tradition of centuries. Indeed, on the second occasion

that this was done, Patriarch Miron, having the undivided support of the Uniate (Greek–Catholic) prime minister, Julius Maniu, and several others among the clergy, compelled all of the Romanian Metropolises to proceed with the common celebration of Pascha with the Papists, a fact which evoked great commotion in the ranks of the Romanian Church. Metropolitan Gurias of Bessarabia openly criticized Miron and, ignoring the Patriarchal decree, ordered his churches to celebrate with the other autocephalous Orthodox Churches (i.e. with the entire Orthodox world, with the exception of the innovative Church of Finland). Patriarch Miron's action also scandalized these other Orthodox Churches, many of which reacted in protest. As well, the White Russian clergy of Bucharest took a particularly strong position during those trying days, ignoring the Patriarchal order and celebrating Pascha in accordance with the traditional canonical decrees.”[11]

The Romanian monks on Mount Athos fully supported their co-religionists in the homeland. Two hieromonks returned from the Holy Mountain to support their co-religionists in the homeland. However, the new calendarists prepared counter-measures.

Thus in 1930, “there arrived in the Moldavian skete [of the Forerunner] from Romania one of the skete's hieromonks, Simeon, a fifty-year-old who had been sent by Patriarch Miron to propagandise the new style on Athos. He brought with him a lot of money... from Romania. He also brought with him from Romania a lawyer, who was armed with an agreement obtained in Athens to conduct negotiations over the return of the metochion on the island of Thasos. The skete-dwellers received him with honour. They promised to gather the brotherhood and speak to them in the church about accepting the new style. But they prepared a trap for him. They summoned him to the hall, cut off his beard and pigtail, took the money sent for propaganda, put a jacket and hat on him and drove him out... He appealed to the police in Karyes for help, but they replied that this did not come within the compass of their responsibilities. This was the end of the propaganda for the new style on Athos. This was already the Romanians' second piece of trickery. The first time they had received a letter from the patriarch suggesting that they change to the new style. The skete-dwellers, on receiving this letter, served a triumphant all-night vigil, and, on the next day, a liturgy with a

moleben, after which they pronounced an anathema on the patriarch, composing an official document which they sent on to him.”[12]

In the 1920s and 1930s many Romanians fled from the new calendarists in Romania and Bessarabia. They constituted the majority of the new postulants in the Russian monasteries of the Holy Land.[13] Among these was the famous priest-hermit Fr. John the Romanian (+1960), who never concelebrated with the new calendarists and whose relics are still incorrupt...

Conclusion. The adoption of the new calendar by the Churches of Greece and Romania in 1924 came at a very vulnerable time for the Orthodox Church as a whole. The outward position of the Church had changed radically in the previous ten years. The Russian empire was gone, and the Ecumenical and the Moscow patriarchates, to which the vast majority of Orthodox Christians belonged, were fighting both external foes (the Bolsheviks and the Turks) and internal schism (“the Living Church” and “the Turkish Orthodox Church”). Neither the remaining Eastern patriarchates, on the one hand, nor the Serbian patriarchate and the Russian Church Abroad, on the other, could take the place occupied by the Russian empire and the Ecumenical patriarchate in the preceding centuries. It followed that if, as was (temporarily) the case, none of the hierarchs of the Greek Church would reject the calendar change and break communion with the Archbishop of Athens, there was only one force remaining that could take up the banner of truth – the people.

The position of the laity in the Orthodox Church has often been misunderstood. In Orthodoxy, the laypeople are neither the inert, impotent, blindly obedient mass of the Roman Catholics, nor the all-powerful, revolutionary horde of the Protestants. There are two vital functions which can only be performed by canonically consecrated clergy: the administration of the sacraments, including the ordination of bishops and priests, and the definition of the faith, including the position of the Church in relation to heretics and schismatics. But while the laity cannot take the leading role in these two functions, they do have an important confirmatory role in them. Thus strictly speaking a bishop or priest cannot celebrate the Divine Liturgy without the presence of at least one layman. Likewise a bishop cannot ordain a priest without the consent of

the people (expressed by shouting “axios!” or “he is worthy!”). And a definition of the faith that is rejected by the people will remain a dead letter. Thus we read: “I shall judge the bishop and the layperson. The sheep are rational and not irrational, so that no layman may ever say: ‘I am a sheep, and not a shepherd, and I give no account of myself, but the shepherd shall see to it, and he alone shall pay the penalty for me.’ For even as the sheep that follows not the good shepherd shall fall to the wolves unto its own destruction, so too it is evident that the sheep that follows the evil shepherd shall acquire death; for he shall utterly devour it. Therefore it is required that we flee from destructive shepherds.”[14]

In the long struggle with the western heresies, the Orthodox had never found themselves so bereft of clerical leadership as in 1924. The signing of the uniate council of Lyons in 1274 had been largely the work of the emperor and his stooge, John Beccus; and there were many clergy who resisted the Unia, which in any case lasted only eight years (to 1282). The position after the council of Florence was more serious: St. Mark of Ephesus was the only Greek hierarch who refused to sign the Unia. And it lasted for a longer period of time (1438–80). There followed a long period in which, although there were some latinizing (and protestantizing) patriarchs, the Church as a whole remained united against the western peril. Thus when the new calendar was introduced by the Pope in 1582 in order to create divisions among the Orthodox, it was synodically condemned no less than eight times: in 1583, 1587, 1593, 1722, 1827, 1848, 1895 and 1904. Towards the end of this period ecumenist tendencies began to increase in the Orthodox Churches, but opposition to the new calendar remained strong.

However, already in their encyclical of 1848, the Eastern Patriarchs had indicated the people’s role: “With us neither Patriarchs nor Councils could ever introduce anything new, because the defender of religion is the very body of the Church, or the people itself, who wanted their religion to remain forever unchanged and in accord with the religion of their Fathers.”

The question that arose in 1924, therefore, was: did the people (and a handful of clergy) have the right to separate from all the innovating bishops and, in the absence of any Orthodox hierarchs, declare

themselves to be the truly Orthodox Church? The answer supplied by the Holy Tradition of the Church was a clear: yes. While certain functions that can only be performed by bishops, such as the ordination of priests, are temporarily suspended in such a situation, the Church does not cease to exist, and remains there, and only there, where the True Faith is confessed. For “where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them”, said the Bishop of bishops, the Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 18.20).

Moreover, the 15th canon of the First-and-Second Council of Constantinople praises those who break with a heretical bishop even before his synodical condemnation. Indeed, there are several cases in the Church’s history of holy men either breaking immediately with heretical bishops – St. Hypatius in the fifth century, for example; or dying out of communion with all the bishops of the Church and yet being praised and glorified by succeeding generations – St. Maximus the Confessor in the seventh century, for example, and St. Arsenius of Paros in the nineteenth. Since the Churches of Constantinople, Greece, Romania, Finland, the Baltic States and Poland adopted the new calendar in 1924[15], there was no way the laity in these Churches could remain in communion with the other Churches keeping the old calendar unless they broke communion with their innovating hierarchs.

“But why such a fuss,” say the new calendarists, “over a mere ‘thirteen days’ difference?” Because the Apostle Paul said: “Hold the traditions” (II Thessalonians 2.15), and the tradition of the “old” Orthodox calendar was sealed by the fathers of the First Ecumenical Council and sanctified by many centuries of usage. To change the calendar, therefore, would be to break communion, not only with our brethren who keep the old calendar on earth, but also with all the saints who worship together with us in heaven.

It is in this rupture of communion that the major crime consists; for, as St. John Chrysostom says, “exactness in the keeping of times is not as important as the crime of division and schism”. [16] “To tear asunder the Church means nothing less, than to fall into heresy. The Church is the house of the Heavenly Father, One Body and One Spirit”. [17] < /SPAN> The supreme aim of our life in Christ is unity in heaven and on earth, in

time and in eternity – "that they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us" (John 17.21); and anything which disrupts that unity is anathema to us. According to the Holy Fathers, schism is no less abhorrent and deadly a sin than heresy. Even martyrdom, writes St. Cyprian of Carthage, followed by St. John Chrysostom[18], cannot wipe out the sin of him who divides the Body of Christ. For as Christ is one, so is His Church one; indeed, the one Christ cannot be separated from the one Church in that "the full and perfect Christ", in St. Augustine's phrase, "is Head and Body" together.[19]

"Since the Church," writes Fr. Justin Popovich, "is catholically one and a unique theanthropic organism for all worlds, she cannot be divided. Any division would signify her death... According to the united position of the Fathers and the Councils, the Church is not only one but unique, because the one unique God-man, her Head, cannot have many bodies. The Church is one and unique because she is the body of the one unique Christ. A division in the Church is ontologically impossible, for which reason there has never been a division in the Church, only a division from the Church. According to the word of the Lord, the Vine is not divided; but only those branches which voluntarily refuse to bring forth fruit fall away from the ever-living Vine and are dried up (John 15.1-6). At various times heretics and schismatics have been separated and cut off from the one undivided Church of Christ; they have subsequently ceased to be members of the Church and united with her theanthropic body. Such were, first of all, the Gnostics, then the Arians and Spirit-fighters, then the Monophysites and Iconoclasts, and finally the Roman Catholics and Protestants and Uniates and all the rest of the heretical and schismatic legion." [20]

The Athonite Elder Augustine writes: "It is a dogma of the Faith that the Church is not only Holy, Catholic and Apostolic, but also One, so that even though the Churches are seen to be many, one and one only is the Church composed of the many that are seen in different places. This is the teaching of the Holy Creed, this is the message of the Divine Scriptures, the Apostolic Tradition, the Sacred councils and the God-bearing Fathers. From this we conclude that the union of the Church is a most important dogma of the Faith.

“We have seen... that St. Constantine and the Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council re-established both the inner and the outer unity of the Church, which is why the joyful autocrat cried out: ‘I have reaped a double victory, I have both re-established inner peace through the common confession of the Faith and brought the separation which existed before into the unity of the Church through the common celebration of Pascha.’

“This, then, is unity, as we are assured by the Acts of the First Council, an inner unity and an outer unity, and neither can the first be a true unity without the second, nor can the second exist without the first. The relationship between them is like that of faith to works and works to faith. The one without the other is dead. Thus inner unity without outer unity is dead, and outer unity without inner unity is dead. And the first is defined by the common confession of the Faith, and the second by the visible harmony in accordance with the laws and institutions of the Church, both constituting the one and only true unity, the essential unity of the Church.”[21]

In 1968 Abbot Philotheus Zervakos of Paros wrote to the new calendar bishop Augustine of Florina: “Since the old calendar is a written tradition, and since the new one is an innovation of papist and masonic origin, whoever despises the old calendar and follows the new is subject to anathema. Every excuse and justification is unjustified and ‘excuses in sins’...

“Last Sunday I had to go to the peak of All Saints and the Prophet Elijah... and as I was kneeling in front of their venerable icon I tearfully besought them to reveal to me which calendar I the wretched one should follow together with my brethren, my spiritual children and all the Orthodox Christians. Before I had finished my humble and pitiful petition, I heard a voice inside me saying: ‘you must follow the old calendar which the God-bearing Fathers who brought together the seven holy Ecumenical Councils and supported the Orthodox Faith handed down to you, and not the new calendar of the popes of the West, who have divided the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church and despised the Apostolic and patristic traditions’!!!

“At that moment I felt such emotion, such joy, such hope, such courage and greatness of soul as I have hardly ever felt in the hour of prayer in the whole of my life...

“Do not suppose that following the papist calendar is a small thing. It [The Orthodox Julian calendar] is a tradition and as such we must guard it or we shall be subject to anathema. ‘If anyone violates any tradition, written or unwritten, let him be anathema’, declares the Seventh Ecumenical Council... This is not the time to continue to be silent... don’t delay, hurry.”[22]

And he added that Chrysostom Papadopoulos had told him during a meeting: “If only I hadn’t gone through with it, if only I hadn’t gone through with it. This perverse Metaxakis has got me by the throat”![23]

On August 7, 1930 Metaxakis headed a delegation from the Churches of Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem, Bulgaria, Romania, Serbia, Greece, Cyprus and Poland to the Lambeth conference of Anglican bishops. There they officially, on the basis of a report by the Anglicans recognising the priesthood to be a sacrament, declared that the Anglicans had Apostolic Succession.[24]

But Metaxakis did not escape retribution. In 1935, on the death of Patriarch Damian of Jerusalem, he tried to acquire that see, too, but failed. It is said that he then went out of his mind, and six days later, grinding his teeth and wringing his hands, he died, groaning: “Alas, I have divided the Church, I have destroyed Orthodoxy.”[25] He lied to the end; for he destroyed only himself, while the True Church will prevail over the gates of hell...

Vladimir Moss.

November 29 / December 12, 2012.

[1] Metropolitan Vlasie, preface to Constantin Bujor, *Resisting unto Blood: Sixty-Five Years of Persecution of the True (Old Calendar) Orthodox Church of Romania (October 1924 – December 1989)*, Etna, CA: Center for Traditionalist Orthodox Studies, 2003, p. 10.

[2] Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, p. 118.

[3] Iorga, *The History of the Romanian Church*; cited in Bujor, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

[4] Bujor, *op. cit.*, pp. 26–27.

[5] Bujor, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

[6] K.V. Glazkov, “Istoricheskie prichiny nekotorykh sobytij v istorii Rumynskoj Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi do II mirovoj vojny” (Historical Reasons for Certain Events in the History of the Romanian Orthodox Church up to the Second World War), *Tserkovnaia Zhizn’ (Church Life)*, №№ 3–4, May–August, 2000, pp. 48–49.

[7] Fr. Glycerie (Tanas) was superior of the Protection skete. When Abbot Nicodemus (Muntianu) of Neamț monastery offered to put him in charge of another skete if he changed calendar, Fr. Glycerie refused, and with Deacon David (Bidascu) left the skete (Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, p. 132). (V.M.)

[8] Metropolitan Blaise, in *Pravoslavnaia Rus’ (Orthodox Russia)*, № 2 (1479), 15/28 January, 1993, pp. 6–7.

[9] Metropolitan Blaise, *The Life of the Holy Hierarch and Confessor Glicherie of Romania*, Etna, Ca.: Center for Traditionalist Orthodox Studies, 1999, pp. 24–25 .

[10] Buzor, *op. cit.*, pp. 52–53.

[11] Metropolitan Cyprian of Oropos, “The True Orthodox Christians of

Romania", *The Orthodox Word*, January–February, 1982, vol. 18, № 1 (102), pp. 6–7.

[12] Letter to Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky), in Glazkov, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

[13] "The Convent of the Ascension on the Holy Mount of Olives, 1906–2006", *Orthodox Life*, September–October, 2006, p. 21.

[14] *Apostolic Constitutions*, 10:19, P.G. 1, 633.

[15] The Church of Alexandria followed in 1928, the Antiochian Church after the war, and the Bulgarian Church – in 1968. Jerusalem and the Slavic Churches remain Old Calendar to this day.

[16] Quoted by Liudmila Perepelkina, "Iulianskij kalendar' – 1000–letnaia ikona vremeni na Rusi" (The Julian Calendar – a thousand-year icon of time in Russia), *Pravoslavnij Put'* (The Orthodox Way), 1988, p. 122.

[17] St. Chrysostom, *Homilies on Ephesians*.

[18] St. Chrysostom, *Homilies on Ephesians*, 4.4.

[19] St. Augustine, *Discourse on Psalm 37*, 4.

[20] Popovich, *Orthodoxos Ekklesia kai Oikoumenismos* (The Orthodox Church and Ecumenism), Thessaloniki, 1974, pp. 80–82.

[21] *Phoni ex Agiou Orous* (A Voice from the Holy Mountain), pp. 57–58. St. Nicodemus of the Holy Mountain writes, in his commentary on the 31st Apostolic Canon: "Even as the ecclesiastical traditions have need of the Faith, so also is the Faith in need of the ecclesiastical traditions; and these two cannot be separated one from another"

[22] Hieromonk Theodoritus (Mavros), *Palaion kai Neon: i Orthodoxia kai Airesis?* (Old and New: Orthodoxy and Heresy?), Athens, 1991, pp. 24–25.

[23] Hieromonk Theodoritus, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

[24] The Christian East, Autumn, 1930. In 1934 two Ugandan Anglicans applied to Metaxakis to receive them into Orthodoxy. He replied that the union of the Churches was not far off, so it would be better for them to stay where they were! (Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 2, p. 45)

[25] Monk Paul, op. cit. p. 82.

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