

IMYASLAVTSY VICTORIOUS

The Ecumenical Patriarch Enters the Fray

During the summer of 1912 the leadership of the Rossikon (another name for St. Panteleimon's monastery) also took a firm stand against the imyaslavtsy. On August 20 Abbot Misail, among whose closest advisors was Agafodor, thought to bring the quarreling to an end by having the entire brotherhood sign one "confession of faith" that would presumably settle the matter once and for all. After beginning with the standard Nicene creed this document added:

When we pronounce his all-holy and divine name, i.e. Jesus Christ, we represent to ourselves the invisible presence of himself, our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ, the second person of the Holy Trinity, neither separating his name, nor confusing. In which [i.e. in the name of Jesus] we must be saved, but we must honor him [i.e. only Jesus himself] and worship the Lord God himself. (Qtd. in Komnenos 365-6)

This was obviously created by a person who shared Khrisanf's point of view; the statement that "we must be saved in the name" (from Acts 4:12) was a sop to the imyaslavtsy, while the main thrust was the implication that the name is not to be honored or worshiped.

This confession was presented to each monk of the monastery to sign individually in the presence of the council of twelve elders with the abbot. Under such conditions most dared not do otherwise, but a certain Fr. Dositheus insisted on being given a copy of it to take and examine at his leisure, which request was reluctantly granted. He then carried it off to Fr. Antony Bulatovich at the kelliya of the Annunciation, where his suspicions of its unacceptability were confirmed.

Perhaps because of this latest impasse both sides in the dispute finally decided to appeal to the ecclesiastical authority common to them all -- the patriarch of Constantinople (Istanbul). Fr. Antony sent to Patr. Joachim III a letter. (See Komnenos 363-4) Misail sent the monk Kirik,

apparently an activist on the side of Aleksey and Agafodor, along with a copy of *Na Gorakh Kavkaza*. Since he knew no Russian, the patriarch's ability to investigate the issues was limited, and since he could naturally be expected to pay more attention to the personal arguments of the representative of a great monastery than to one short letter of a simple and unknown monk, his response was predictable.

In a letter dated September 2, 1912 (See ΟΙ ΙΗΣΟΥΑΝΟΙ) and addressed to Abbot Misail and all Athonite monks "Russian by race," the patriarch warned all those who had invented a "false theory" about "the divinity of the name 'Jesus'" to cease from their "ignorant theologizing" and "soul-destroying error" and instead to attend to the salvation of their own souls. The solution to whatever misunderstandings they have is to be found in the traditional teaching of the Church, "beyond or besides which no one has the right to innovate and say something new." Since the cause of the "scandal" is the book of Ilarion, which contains many "expressions about the name 'Jesus'" which are "false, leading to error and heresy," its reading is forbidden to all who live on the Holy Mountain. More severe measures are promised to follow in the case of persistence and disobedience on the part of those disseminating the "ignorant and blasphemous teaching".

Misail arranged to have the letter translated into Russian, read publicly at a special meeting of the brotherhood of the Rossikon, copied, and disseminated throughout Russian Athos. The Russian translation, while usually faithful to the Greek, contained one noteworthy misrepresentation which betrayed the attitude of its translators. Where the patriarch had warned that no one is permitted to "innovate and say something new" (νεωτερι ζειν και κλινοφνεζιν), the Russian text read "innovate and use new expressions" (новшествовать и новые выражения употреблять). The difference between these phrases is substantial. One can use the same old expressions to say something essentially new -- as when monophysites used St. Cyril's "one nature in Christ" to deny Jesus Christ's humanity. And one can use new expressions to say something that had always been implicit -- as when the term "Trinity" or the phrase "two natures in Christ" came into use. This mistranslation simplified matters for those siding with Khrisanf, for they could easily show that Ilarion's "expression" was new, whereas to prove that it *meant* something essentially new and therefore foreign to the faith was another matter.

Although the Patriarch's letter was presented as a condemnation of the imyaslavtsy, it did not serve that purpose well. To begin with, it was extremely vague and ambiguous. While

condemning certain "expressions," Joachim never said which ones they were, nor did he in any way specify the content of the "false theory". Fr. Antony could and did interpret them as referring rather to such expressions as Khrisanf's "mediating power" or to his attributing the name "Jesus" only to the Lord's human nature. This is hardly what the patriarch intended, but then by leaving the issues unspecified he had left his letter open to such interpretations. Probably he had hoped mainly to foster peace among the Russian monks of Athos without having to invest the time and effort necessary for a detailed investigation of complicated theological issues. Not having performed that investigation, he was careful to avoid saying anything that could later turn out to be wrong. Hence the ambiguous wording. Hence also his failure to resolve the problem and secure the hoped-for peace. The genuine theological issues that were the true cause of the unrest remained unaddressed, and a mere order to "stop talking about it" would not make them go away.

Moreover, although it was heralded as an official dogmatic decree in which the very authority of the Church itself had spoken, Fr. Antony could convincingly argue that in truth it was more like a private letter: it didn't have the signature of the patriarch and the bishops in his synod; it didn't have the patriarch's official seal; it didn't have the headings and initial greetings customary for such official decrees; and it had been addressed directly to Misail instead of to the *Iera Koinotes* ("Sacred Community"; also called the Protat), the central governing assembly of the Holy Mountain.

Trouble Brews at St. Andrew's Skete

A relative calm followed the reception of this letter, but it appears to have been due as much to Fr. Aleksey's departure for Jerusalem as to the letter itself (a visiting Russian hierarch, vicar-bishop of Moscow Trifon, reportedly advised Fr. Misail to send him away for that purpose). The calm did not last. On December 2 more than one hundred monks in a "council" held at New Thebaide unanimously proclaimed their belief that God's name truly is God himself, and they condemned Khrisanf's review as heretical and blasphemous. That decision was reached peacefully, but in another month the imyaslavtsy won a similar victory at St. Andrew's in a complex series of events involving fist-fights and excommunications.

In November of 1912 Abbot Jerome left St. Andrew's to attend to affairs at the skete's dependency "Nuzla" in Macedonia, apparently convinced that he had adequately dealt with those

inclined toward Ilarion's views. In fact, he had succeeded rather in stirring up active opposition to himself as well as to his theological position, and his opponents used his unusually long absence of seven weeks to their advantage. A few took the lead in this work, talking to uncommitted monks, passing around copies of Fr. Antony's writings, and even arranging to have scriptural and patristic texts glorifying the name of God be read at meal times.¹⁵ They spread around copies of Jerome's open letter to Fr. Antony, arguing that since he had personally approved the publication of Fr. Antony's first article but in the letter denies any agreement with the views presented in all his writings, one can only conclude that it is he who has changed his views. Formerly Orthodox, he is no longer so. During December the squabbling degenerated to the degree that someone wrote and passed around a note warning that "During dinner they will bang on the plates, and directly after this all those on Jerome's side will begin to be beat up." However, both sides claimed the other wrote the note, and at the sparsely attended dinner that day no beatings occurred.

At any rate, by the time Jerome returned on January 8 the tide had turned against him, and he found a large number of monks unwilling even to approach him for the customary blessing. Jerome called the three monks he determined to be ringleaders in marshalling sentiment against him to an assembly of the twelve *epitropoi* (the governing body charged with aiding an abbot in his administration of a skete or monastery). The intention was to take disciplinary measures, but when he called upon the members of the council to condemn and expel the "rebels" from the skete, the latter exclaimed that they did not recognize the council's authority because its most senior member was not present. That was the ancient Archimandrite David, a man highly honored among the brotherhood for his status as one of the skete's founders (he had contributed millions of rubles to building it up) and for his long forty-five year presence there. Whether his not being invited had been because his sympathies for the imyaslavtsy were known or because, as a partisan of Jerome later claimed, he was not actually an epitropos at the time is difficult to determine now. The former seems likely, for Jerome acceded to their demand and summoned Fr. David.

This time when Jerome again read the charges against the three, a young monk who was present neither as one of the judges nor as one of those being tried (presumably his job was to

¹⁵During meals at monasteries all are silent while one person reads a text chosen for its spiritually edifying value.

serve coffee or take notes) suddenly spoke up, excitedly accusing Jerome himself of blasphemy and heresy. After that,

... a heavy silence reigned for several minutes. Finally, having recovered from the interruption, Fr. Jerome sensed that it had become necessary not to condemn [others] but to defend himself and said in a quiet voice to Fr. David, "I hear that you call me a heretic."

"I not only call [you that], but here at the council I affirm that you are a heretic, a blasphemer of the name of God," replied David. An altercation began, which ended with Fr. David leaving the conference hall and exclaiming, "Flee, brothers; our abbot is a heretic.¹⁶ Before the whole council he repudiated Jesus." (Моя Борьба 134-5)

This striking remark was directed to the large crowd of monks that had gathered outside the hall waiting to see the outcome, and coming as it did from such an authoritative figure it made quite an impression. Actually Jerome had taken pains to deny having made just such a repudiation, responding directly to claims that he had changed his originally Orthodox opinions:

[He] answered to this that in that letter [to Fr. Antony] he had written that he does not acknowledge the teaching of Bulatovich -- but not that he repudiates the Lord Jesus Christ, in whom he believes and confesses that he -- our Lord Jesus Christ -- is the true God [and] that his name is holy, awesome, [and] worthy of worship (достопоклоняемо). But although he has such a reverent attitude toward it -- toward the name of God -- he does not divinize it.

"But I confess that the name Jesus is God himself with [his] essence and with all his characteristics," said Fr. David.

"And when the name 'Jesus son of Nave or son of Sirach' occurs in divine scripture, then what do you think?" asked Abbot Jerome.

"Of course, then it isn't God."

"Then why are you arguing?" (Климент 764)

In part what was at work here was the unwillingness of either side to try to understand the other. The imyaslavtsy could reasonably argue that a denial of the divinity of the Lord's name implied or would inevitably lead to a denial of his own divinity, but those doing so did not

¹⁶Others report that he said, "... our abbot is a Mason ..."; however, for the monks the difference in meaning would not be terribly significant.

consciously make that connection. So a statement like Fr. David's was something of an oversimplification and misrepresentation even if, as Fr. Antony suggests, all were aware of the particulars of the controversy and would have understood that in saying "he repudiated Jesus" David meant "he repudiated Jesus' name".

The next morning, in order to defend his own reputation Jerome called a meeting of the senior monks of the skete, about sixty in all. He explained that the accusations against him were groundless slander; affirmed that he had never changed his beliefs; read the creed to prove his Orthodoxy; and even repeated his expressions of respect for God's name. But a certain Fr. Sergius loudly accused him of having "repudiated Jesus" on the previous day. Then during the ensuing altercation a large crowd of uninvited junior monks began to enter through the unlocked doors, and as they filled the hall the meeting quickly turned into a series of vehement accusations of heresy and blasphemy directed against Jerome. Finally the senior epitropos asked the brotherhood, "Well, what do you want?" and received the reply "We want a change of abbot." Jerome reportedly then remarked "Well, do with me as you will," and left the hall.

Ethnic Rivalries on Mt. Athos

Since the skete's charter stipulated that if the brotherhood became dissatisfied with their abbot they could remove him and elect another by a simple majority vote, many felt the first stage had already been achieved. So the leaders of the party of imyaslavtsy felt empowered to immediately call back Fr. Antony Bulatovich, who upon leaving back in July of 1912 had given a written promise not to return except at the request of abbot and brotherhood. He came immediately and assumed the lead in all of the following events. The next day, January 10, a meeting of the whole brotherhood was called to confirm its deposition of Fr. Jerome. Unanimous assent to this was confirmed by acclamation (it seems that those on Jerome's side simply did not attend), and two tables were presented with petitions to which those present were invited to affix their signatures. One read:

I the undersigned believe and confess that the name of God and the name of the Lord Jesus Christ is holy by itself (само по себе), is inseparable from God, and is God himself, as is confessed by many holy fathers. Blasphemers and despisers of the Lord's name I reject as heretics, and therefore I request the removal of the abbot Jerome. (Моя Борьба 141)

The other read:

We the undersigned, having lost love and trust for our abbot, Archimandrite Jerome, request his removal.

According to Fr. Antony two different forms were used due to distrust of the Greeks.

The cause for that distrust may be found in the political history of Mt. Athos. Although always under the direct spiritual authority of the Ecumenical Patriarch, the Holy Mountain had long been governed locally by a body of representatives quartered in the town of Karyes. The method of choosing these representatives varied until the seventeenth century when the present system was instituted, according to which each of twenty "ruling monasteries" sends one representative to that council (called the *Iera Koinotes*). Every other monastic institution on the Mountain, from tiny hermitages to large communities of hundreds of monks, then came under the direct authority of one of these twenty monasteries. The "twenty" became so entrenched in their positions that other monasteries established later could even not even be called by that name but rather had to be called "sketes" in recognition of their subordinate relationship to whatever ruling monastery they happened to be under. As might be expected, over time some "monasteries" declined almost to extinction while some "sketes" grew larger than most of the "monasteries" -- yet the decrepit monastery always maintained full political power over the bustling skete due to the antiquated political system.

Being located in Greece, Athos has long been inhabited primarily by Greeks, but as it eventually became a monastic center for all of the Orthodox world, other ethnic groups established their own monasteries there -- Bulgarians, Rumanians, Georgians, and Serbians, as well as Russians. The latter were among the last to come to Athos in significant numbers so at first had no political power on the peninsula. But soon they outnumbered the Greeks at one of the twenty ruling monasteries, installed a Russian abbot, and turned it into an officially and exclusively Russian monastery. That was the Rossikon, and it grew to be the largest on Athos, with a population at its peak of around 1,700 monks. The Russians continued to immigrate, and they built two other large monasteries which, being new, had to be placed under the direct authority of (Greek) ruling monasteries and so had to be called "sketes". These were the sketes of St. Elijah

and St. Andrew. Each was comprised of several hundred monks, a number greater than that of many of the ruling monasteries. During the nineteenth century Russians continued to fill many other smaller monastic settlements and hermitages, their numbers eventually exceeding even that of the Greeks. Yet with all these changes they still had only a one twentieth say in governing the affairs of the peninsula. And so the Russians resented the Greeks for maintaining political power and using it to their advantage though being numerically in the minority.

The Greeks in turn resented the Russians. They felt like a small nation about to be swallowed up by a gigantic imperialist power and resented the fact that many of their financial resources, largely in the form of wealthy pilgrims who would leave donations behind them, were being diverted from their own monasteries to those of the Russians. That was an unavoidable eventuality since the wealthiest Orthodox country was Russia, and most of the wealthy pilgrims were Russian.

Then suddenly in November of 1912 Athos was freed by Greece from the political control of the Ottoman Empire, an event both sides saw to be fraught with both danger and opportunity. The Turks had at least been neutral in Russo-Greek squabbles, but the Russians feared that such would not be the case if the Greek state took political control of Athos. Hence the Russian government proposed to the Greek government a plan for giving control of Athos to an international protectorate under a consortium of six Orthodox countries, naturally with Russia at its head. The Russian monks of Athos supported the plan wholeheartedly and made no secret of their intention to use it as an opportunity to remedy inequities in the Holy Mountain's system of local government. Ideally they hoped to institute a direct-election system whereby each monk would have one vote, but they at least hoped to raise their two large sketes of St. Elijah and St. Andrew to the status of ruling monasteries.

Initially the Greek government was inclined to go along with the Russian plan, but upon encountering vociferous opposition to the idea from the Greek monasteries of Athos, it decided to leave the decision up to the conference of Great Powers being held in London. To that conference the Greek monasteries sent delegations lobbying against the international protectorate and in favor of making Athos part of the Greek state. The Russian monastery sent its own delegation arguing in favor of the international protectorate and against making Athos part of the

Greek state. And so Russo-Greek tensions on Athos were at an all-time high during the very period of this theological controversy.

St. Andrew's was subordinated to the Greek monastery Vatopedi, so any action as important as replacing the abbot required its official approval. And so the imyaslavtsy were concerned that if the Greeks became aware that behind the events at St. Andrew's was a theological controversy, they would use it against the Russians in any way they could. Besides that, it was felt that the Greeks' low level of spiritual life disqualified them from acting as judges in a theological controversy anyway. And since for the removal of an abbot the skete's charter required only the brotherhood's dissatisfaction with him, the second petition citing "loss of love and trust" was all that had to be explained to Vatopedi. The first explaining the theological reasons was to be sent later to the Russian Holy Synod for confirmation of its validity.

Both petitions were signed by 302 monks, with only 70 refusing. An impressive margin, but perhaps due in part to a degree of coercion since each monk had to approach the table in the presence of the entire brotherhood and publicly sign or not sign. Given the obviously strong feelings of a vocal majority (or even minority) it would take a strong-willed person not to do so, and one may imagine that there could have been some among the 302 who simply found signing the easiest route to take. Had a secret ballot been used as was stipulated in the charter, the results might have been more favorable for Jerome.

A similar process was used for choosing the new abbot. Fr. Antony says he at first suggested nominating candidates and choosing among them by secret ballot, but then:

The elders and the whole brotherhood in one voice objected, "What other candidates are there, we all ask for Fr. David." "Whoever wants Fr. David -- move over to the right; whoever doesn't want him, move to the left" exclaimed Fr. Sergius, and all three hundred persons turned up on the right side. (Моя Борьба 141)

The process of getting confirmation for these proceedings from Vatopedi turned out not to be so simple.

Immediately after the meeting on the morning of the ninth at which the brotherhood had expressed its desire to remove him, Jerome had dispatched to Vatopedi a complaint charging his opponents with rebellion and heresy. Vatopedi then sent four representatives to investigate, who arrived that evening while the meeting to choose Jerome's successor was going on. They began

their investigation by talking to Jerome and his partisans. In those conversations, as later in writing, Jerome resorted to a misrepresentation of his opponents' position similar in nature to the way some of them had misrepresented his own. He claimed that David "stubbornly affirms that the very name of the second hypostasis of the Holy Trinity is God himself by essence ...". (See *Моя Борьба* 145-6) This clearly implied a position confusing the name as letters and sounds with the essence of God, something none of the imyaslavtsy ever advocated. In any case, whether they were convinced by this or by his appeals to the condemnations of *Na Gorakh Kavkaza* made by Abp. Antony and Patr. Joachim, Vatopedi's representatives were inclined to side with Jerome.

The imyaslavtsy were unpleasantly surprised to learn of the Greeks' presence when the latter asked to interview the leaders of the former. They consented to speak with them, but to questions about theological issues they merely responded that they had become dissatisfied with Jerome, that that was all the skete's charter required, and that that was all Vatopedi needed to know. Moreover, the skete's charter had been designed to minimize Greek interference in Russian affairs and specified that representatives from Vatopedi could come only in response to an official request signed by the abbot and four epitropoi -- so they were there illegally. Recognizing the truth of that, the Greeks started treating the "rebels" more respectfully, gave up trying to discuss theology with them, and merely specified some changes in format for the petitions concerning Fr. David's election. The new petitions were duly signed on the eleventh at a meeting observed by the monks from Vatopedi and to the procedures of which they expressed no objections. But their sympathies were with Jerome, and when they left later that day they carried with them a written complaint from him signed by seventy monks of St. Andrew's.

The delegation of four from St. Andrew's, headed by Fr. Antony himself, which was then sent to Vatopedi to seek confirmation of David as abbot was aware neither of those sentiments nor of that complaint. Some difficulties were expected since Jerome's refusal to give up the key to the skete's vault had made it impossible to validate their petitions with its official seal, but the response they actually met with was completely unexpected.

All seemed to go well at first. They were received with honor by Vatopedi's governing council of twelve and were told that all was in order despite some dissatisfaction with the absence of the skete's seal on the petitions and the fact that the election had not been by secret ballot. Then they were given a sealed envelope which they were told contained all that had been said at the

meeting and included a promise to send representatives to ceremonially install David as abbot in the near future. They had not been shown the letter itself, though, and were advised not to open the envelope until they got back to St. Andrew's.

Fr. Antony suspected foul play in such a request, so decided to open it anyway -- and found his suspicions justified. In the letter Vatopedi objected strongly to the election's having been conducted "not by the rules and customs of the skete" but "in such a way that is used nowhere in the world, for this way is considered by all to be coercive". (Климент 771) It advised the brotherhood to consider Jerome as orthodox and warned that Fr. Antony and all those accepting the "new faith" taught by *Na Gorakh Kavkaza* would be condemned, excommunicated, and expelled from the Holy Mountain. On the other hand, while suggesting that the brotherhood "drive from the skete this heresy of Ieromonakh Antony Bulatovich,"¹⁷ it did not identify David as a heretic. And in advising them to go ahead and choose a new abbot in the correct manner by secret ballot it at least tacitly affirmed the legality of Jerome's deposition.

A Melee at St. Andrew's Skete

The representatives from St. Andrew's complained to the Vatopedi authorities, but the latter were only angry that their directions had not been followed. They stood firm in their decision. So a disappointed party of four set out for home on January 12, recognizing that despite a partially favorable decision they had been placed in an impossible predicament. Although they had been granted the right to choose a new abbot, whomever they chose could never be confirmed. Jerome would need only accuse the new abbot and his supporters of believing the heresy taught by *Na Gorakh Kavkaza* and they would be back to square one. While discussing this hopeless situation on the way back, the group was met by a messenger with news that Jerome's partisans were going from cell to cell talking to relatively uncommitted monks, and he was gaining more supporters hourly.¹⁸ Fr. Antony recounts his thoughts at that moment:

¹⁷Some printed versions insert a comma that changes the meaning to "... drive out this heresy, [and] Fr. Antony Bulatovich ...".

¹⁸Supposedly through bribery and/or threats, but both sides were remarkably free with such accusations. There may have been a grain of truth in them but if so it is likely a small one.

An agonizing question -- "What to do?" -- oppressed the soul. If the party of Jerome gained the upper hand, imyaborchestvo would triumph completely over the whole Holy mountain too. The most zealous confessors of the orthodox confession of faith in the divine dignity of the name of the Lord would be driven away, the more faint-hearted would be oppressed and forced into a repudiation ... But where to seek a defense? Where to seek a just judge? (Моя Борьба 150)

Fr. Antony prayed for guidance and asked his companions for advice. Fr. Sergius' suggestion that they simply drive out Jerome was rejected at first, but then as they reached the skete and heard more about Jerome's increasing strength, he thought again:

It was necessary to act. The brotherhood had entrusted themselves to me and expected a decision from me. It was impossible to delay, for with each second of delay the situation could only get worse and more complicated and bring the sides to the point where each would arm itself with what it could, and the matter would go as far as the shedding of blood. In this moment as I thought, a deacon suggested, "Well, what then, Father, purge?" "Vox populi -- vox Dei." I thought to myself, and decisively answered, "Yes, yes, purge." (151)

With that he and about thirty or forty of his most zealous followers rushed to the abbot's cell. Jerome was ready for him. When Vatopedi had given Fr. Antony the aforementioned letter, they had also sent one of their own couriers on ahead to St. Andrew's to give Jerome a copy. The courier had found imyaslavtsy guarding the gate¹⁹ and was not allowed access, but some of Jerome's partisan's had yelled to him from a balcony to ask what he had come for. Upon learning who they were he had read aloud to them the contents of the letter. And so Fr. Antony and his followers found Fr. Jerome in his meeting hall sitting behind his desk and surrounded by a crowd of his own followers confident of their own position in the dispute.

Upon entering, Fr. Antony turned to an icon of the Theotokos, crossed himself and prayed a short prayer, then turned to Fr. Jerome and asked if he would voluntarily acknowledge his deposition and leave the abbot's cell. Jerome responded that he, Antony, himself did not belong in and had no part in St. Andrew's skete, having voluntarily left it back in July. To Jerome's "you left ... you're not ours ..." the imyaslavtsy cried out "Ours! Ours! Fr. Antony is ours!" Fr. Antony

¹⁹Athonite monasteries are built like medieval castles, i.e., like one massive building with a large courtyard in the center where the church and often other buildings are located. There is usually one main gate which serves as the only way in.

repeated his question. Jerome asked, "Where is the paper? Show me the paper." This, of course, Fr. Antony was not inclined to do. He asked a third time if Jerome would voluntarily give up his office. The answer was negative.

Fr. Antony turned once more for a brief prayer toward an icon of the Mother of God, then after a period of silence crossed himself and said "In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit ... **URA!**" and leaped towards the abbot's desk. Two of Jerome's men, Gabriel and Jacob by name, immediately seized him and began to choke him, and at that same time from Fr. Antony's side responded by attacking those two. An eyewitness reports:

They gave Gabriel a whack and he in a rage let go of Fr. Antony. Then Fr. Athanasius threw himself on Jacob and, grabbing him by the beard, dragged him away from Fr. Antony, and the latter remained unhurt. At this point the brothers were filled with excessive anger and rushed "To URA!" There was a great fight from both sides. At first with fists, and then they started dragging each other by the hair. (Kosvintsev 151)

Fr. Antony once again with a cry of "URA!" rushed at the abbot's desk. Again he was attacked and again his attackers were dragged out of the room. He recounts that this was repeated several times:

... two of the stronger imyaslavtsy applied the following method: they ran to throw themselves upon one of the Jeromeites standing against me and grabbed him either by the sleeve or by the hair. After dragging him out into the corridor and handing him on to others, they would run back to drag out another. (Моя Борьба 153)

What happened to those dragged out is described by the same eyewitness quoted before:

They began to drag out of this heap [of fighting monks] one person at a time into the corridor, where the brotherhood stood in two lines, receiving the booty and passing it (Jeromeites) on: one by the hair another by the side and with a command, another they would beat for something to teach him a lesson. In this way they brought them to the stairs and then they let them down the stairs variously as each pleased: some went head first and some went feet first, counting the steps with the back of their head. They led them to the church square, then ceremoniously took them by the hand and led them out the gate. (Kosvintsev 151)

Many of the "Jeromeites" were beat as well as expelled, in recompense not only for their blasphemy against God's name but also for other grievances against them, as the monks expressed physically a variety of pent-up frustrations with their leadership.²⁰ Meanwhile Jerome himself, seeing the ranks of his supporters getting thin and recognizing the hopelessness of his position, finally consented to leave voluntarily. He was not treated roughly. Though offered a cell of his own within the skete he chose to leave, joining fifteen others who had been forcibly expelled and two others who were leaving voluntarily as he was. Fr. Antony saw him off:

When he had gone out of the gates, Fr. Jerome turned, crossed himself, and then, prostrating himself to the ground toward me, said, "Forgive." Together with him stood Fr. Clement, who did the same and said, "Forgive." I too did to them a prostration to the ground and asked forgiveness, and they left for Karyes. (Моя Борьба 154)

The first eighteen were followed in the course of the following months by about thirty more who left or were expelled. All were taken in by other Slavic monastic communities around Athos.

St. Andrew's and St. Panteleimon's in the Hands of the Imyaslavtsy

On the fourteenth a new meeting of the whole brotherhood was called to fulfill Vatopedi's request for an election by secret ballot, but once again Fr. David was chosen by acclamation. That evening two representatives set out for Vatopedi with 307 signatures amassed in David's favor. This time they were given a letter stating that although Vatopedi remained dissatisfied with the open balloting, it nevertheless recognized the election's canonicity and promised to send representatives on the nineteenth to officially install Fr. David.

Meanwhile a similar chain of events was taking place at the Rossikon and culminated in a general meeting of the brotherhood on January 23. At that meeting, called and controlled by the imyaslavtsy who were led by a certain Fr. Ireney, the entire brotherhood of the monastery signed a confession of faith nearly identical to the one signed at St. Andrew's. Even Abbot Misail signed,

²⁰There do not seem to have been any injuries worse than bruises and loss of hair, though there is an unconfirmed report of someone suffering a broken leg. As for Fr. Antony's role in the fight, he did not know about the beatings and expulsions taking place behind him and put a stop to them when he found out. His feigned attack and cry of "URA" he explains was merely designed to give those behind him the courage to do the required task; he himself never laid a hand on anyone.

presumably not wanting to share the fate of Jerome. At the same meeting the imyaslavtsy pronounced disciplinary measures against eight of their most active opponents, consisting in expulsion from the monastery for terms from one year to permanent. Kosvintsev describes the reactions to this turn of events:

The monastery celebrated this day like Holy Pascha. The brotherhood greeted one another with kisses and exclamations of "Christ is Risen!" They cried from joy. The whole day the bell never stopped its festive ringing. This day was justly called "the triumph of orthodoxy." (471)

The rejoicing was to be short-lived. Although the imyaslavtsy had gained commanding majorities among the simple Russian monks, the higher ecclesiastical and civil authorities -- both Russian and Greek -- were against them. Counter-measures had begun even before the celebration at St. Panteleimon's on January 23.