

Archbishop Auxentius's "Deposition"

Some years ago, a review was published of the book, *The Struggle Against Ecumenism*. This review, written by Vladimir Moss, was favorable for the most part, calling the book "objective", "the best on its subject to have appeared in English, and quite possibly in any language", and observing that points in the book are "treated with admirable fairness".

The reviewer, at the same time, offered the opinion that the defense which the book makes for the late Archbishop Auxentius of Athens is "sketchy and biased". He maintained that *The Struggle Against Ecumenism* "slanders those other Orthodox bishops who tried to introduce canonical order into the church" when they "deposed" Archbishop Auxentius.

It was good that Mr. Moss qualified these remarks with the words "in the opinion of this reviewer." This qualification is important, because it highlights some problems in his observations.

The first problem is that the reviewer, as he has admitted elsewhere, has no knowledge of the Greek language. Therefore, all his information on questions pertaining to the traditional Orthodox Christians of Greece was and remains second-hand at best. He could not have read the many pages of evidence, testimony, and signed affidavits that were distributed widely, and which demonstrated the Archbishop's innocence.

Also, our reviewer failed to mention a letter signed by him (dated June 20/July 3, 1994), in which he separated himself from those very bishops that supposedly "deposed" Archbishop Auxentius. The reasons given in this letter for Mr. Moss's departure from these bishops were their *canonical and dogmatic infractions*.

Further, since he was not present and does not speak the Greek language, Mr. Moss could not have known first-hand that Bishop Stephanos of Chios – one of the bishops which "deposed" the Archbishop – came to Archbishop Auxentius's funeral, tearfully begging forgiveness of the now-reposed Archbishop and saying in the presence of all, "Forgive us, Father, for we have sinned against you. We embittered you, we slandered you...." The photograph that captured this particular moment was published on page 129 of *The Struggle*

Against Ecumenism.

Neither did our reviewer mention the fact that, “for the sake of the unity of the Church,” the very bishops who “deposed” Archbishop Auxentius later “lifted” the deposition on September 18, 1998.

Nor did Mr. Moss mention yet two other bishops – Kallinikos of Lamia and Euthymios of Thessalonica, who, with the others had “deposed” the Archbishop, and later went on to form their own “Synod”. These bishops, too, admitted officially (in an Encyclical dated April 1/14, 1997, protocol number 73) that the Archbishop’s deposition “arose from the plots of third parties,” that it was “uncanonical, invalid and void”, and that they recognize “the blessedly reposed hierarch” “as the rightful and canonical” ruler of his throne.

These incontrovertible facts, we believe, clarify and settle this matter.