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The Old Calendrist pts. 1-3

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2014

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a goddess who likes Isis. She presides over the first day of the year, when the Nile begins to rise and fecundate the fields; the last day is represented by Orion the hunter or giant. Over the entire system, Thoth (Hermes) rules as god of Wisdom, along with Sechat, the goddess of Scripture and Mistress of the Annals, which “will last for millions of years.”⁵

The closest we might come to this Hermetic calendar (short of adopting the ancient Egyptian system wholesale) would be to revert to the Julian year, which resulted from Julius Caesar’s calendric revelations in Cleopatra’s Alexandria. Oddly enough this “pagan” year has been preserved to this very day by the Eastern Orthodox Christian *Old Calendrists*, who consider the Gregorian calendar to be sinful! All we need to do is adopt their system and we will find ourselves back in synchronicity not only with authentic Judeo-Christian Time but also with the pagan Greco-Roman-Egyptian calendar. As Hermeticists we could then demand

GIVE US BACK OUR 1460 YEARS!

⁵ For full explications and the actual arithmetic of all this, see A.S. von Bombard, *The Egyptian Calendar: A Work for Eternity* (London, 1999).

1.

Our case: *abolition* of the world’s present “Gregorian” calendar system and *reversion* to the Old Julian calendar.

Gregory was a Pope. His system was designed as a monotheistic mind trap. But the Julian system is based on Julius Caesar’s revelation in Egypt, where Cleopatra’s Court Astrologer explained to him the Sothic Year (based on the star Sirius). The Alexandrian (probably neoplatonic) philosopher Sosigenes later advised Caesar on the reform. We call this system *pagan time*. The very word “Julian” also evokes for us our hero Emperor Julian “the Apostate,” a renegade from Xtianity, the last pagan philosopher to rule the Roman Empire (d. 362 AD).

In 1582 AD the Vatican under Pope Gregory XIII imposed a new calendar on Counter-Reformation Europe. The Orthodox East and the Protestant West both refused it and remained loyal (for a while anyway) to the Julian Year. Eighteen years later in 1600 the Vatican burned Giordano Bruno, the Hermetic martyr, at the stake in Rome. *Whose side are you on?*

The Calendar is the oldest of all ideological constructs, as Alexander Marshack points out (in *The Roots of Civilization*) apropos of Paleolithic lunar calendrics. In the Neolithic, the calendar and its rituals already “regulate” the sacred year.

See Frazer’s *Golden Bough* or Theodore Gaster’s great *Thespis* for elaborations of the calendrical ideologies of the emergent STATE and urban civilization in the ancient Near East. Here, the unstriated common organic time of the Stone Age became the structured encrusted time of power and work.

Of course we’d love to abolish all calendars except the world itself (“anarchist time”) but since this seems impossible or at least unlikely, we’ll settle for pagan time over monotheistic CAPITALIST TIME. Restore the sacred year of Greco-Egyptian *Hermetic* chronosophy, and by its influence a pagan mentality

will begin to re-infuse human consciousness. We call this process the *re-paganization of monotheism*.

At present the last European hold-outs of Julian calendricism constitute a schismatic minority within the Greek Orthodox Church of Constantinople (including the monks of Mt. Athos) who are known as *Palaiomerologitai* or “Old Calendrists.”

We’ve adopted this name in their honor. After all, we’re not anti-Xtian. Like the pagan practitioners of Voudoun and Santeria, we love all the saints and miracles of old-fashioned Xtianity—it’s just the dogma and morals we reject. We’re not against the modern calendar because it’s Xtian but because it has become the mechanistic clock time of Capitalism, the last world ideology—the rule of pure money.

England and America held out against the Gregorian misasma until 1752, when a bill to abolish the Julian Year passed in Parliament. The Church of England had given up its anti-Papist objections and the reform was touted as beneficial to the spread of trade and Empire, not to the enlargement of the human soul. According to the scientists, the Julian Year had “drifted” eleven days from the “true” astronomical date since Caesar’s reform. Accordingly it was decreed that September 2 to 13 would simply vanish from the year 1752.

Riots broke out. As one contemporary writer noted, great “difficulty was... found in appeasing the clamour of the people against the supposed profaneness, of changing the saints’ days in the Calendar, and altering the time of all the immovable feasts.”¹

In London and elsewhere mobs chanted “Gives us back our eleven days!” In Bristol a few people were killed in these Time Riots. The famous Glastonbury Thorn, said to blossom only and always on Christmas Day, “contemptuously ignored the

¹ From *The Calendar* (1998) by B. E. Duncan, a book we disliked for its scientific triumphalism, but found useful for its facts.

the annual rising of the Nile on July 19⁴, a cycle which repeats almost exactly every 365 1/4 days. This year was juxtaposed to another “vague” or mobile year of 365 days which “glided” in relation to the fixed Sothic year. The vague year had twelve months of 30 days each, ruled by 36 Decans or deities of the ten-week days (360° of the sky), plus five intercalary days *outside Time* devoted to Isis, Osiris, Horus, Set and Thoth.

The vague year “drifted,” somewhat like the Islamic year, so the Solstices and Equinoxes would appear on different days each year. The Islamic calendar, being lunar, never “catches up” with the natural seasons or the solar cycle. (In Iran this problem is solved in a charmingly inefficient way by using the Zoroastrian solar calendar as well as the Arabic lunar one.) But the Egyptian mobile year *does* “come back” in line with the Sothic year—once every 1460 years. This period, like those of the interlocking Mayan cycles, defines a “Great Year” or Aeon.

The Egyptians also used a lunar calendar—primarily to calculate feasts for the lunar phases—but apparently made no attempt to harmonize it with the vague and Sothic systems.

Parenthetically we should note that one of the oldest and most wide-spread systems of time-measurement, based on the 28 (or 27) *Lunar Mansions*, probably dates back to the Stone Age, since we find almost identical versions in China, Mesopotamia, India, Arabia and even in Cornelius Agrippa’s *Three Books of Occult Philosophy*. The Mansions are defined by the Moon’s apparent motion through a set of constellations, each one of course a deity or angel.

The important angels or deities of the Egyptian calendar include the Decans, but only later the Zodiacal signs, which probably came from Mesopotamia. Sirius is not a dog in Egypt, but

⁴ Scholars seem to disagree on this date; Herodotus and the editors of *The Landmark Herodotus* say the Nile used to flood on the Summer Solstice, June 21—but the heliacal rising of Sothis happens on July 19/20. Of course thanks to the Aswan Dam, the Flood no longer occurs, and Egypt is already facing a water crisis.

PAGAN FUNDAMENTALISM.

Actually we'll take any system rather than the current Capitalist Utilitarian calendrical enchainment—lunar, solar, Mayan, Egyptian, Hindu, Chinese, Jewish, shamanico-animist, etc. Let 1000 calendars bloom. But let them be *holy and festive*.

We demand *days off* for all major Greco-Roman, Celtic, Norse, African, American Indian, Hindu, Taoist and other pagan holydays. We intend to revive the SATURNALIA³, a period of days in midwinter *outside Time itself*, not counted as part of the year, devoted to a festal re-enactment of the Saturnian “Golden Age” of egalitarian original *paleolithic anarchy*. As Nietzsche said, “We are the Hyperboreans.”

GIVE US BACK OUR 111 DAYS.

3.

We advocate abolishing the Gregorian calendar because it has become the time-system of (post)industrial Capitalism, the reign of Work as alienation and the “cruel instrumentality of Reason.” We insist on a “return” to some holy and *inefficient* calendar—any system so long as it's *old*—and we especially support the Julian calendar, which England and America followed till 1752. The point is to re-enchant Time itself, to make it sacred again, more in harmony with Nature, more “organic.”

Since the Julian calendar was influenced by the ancient Egyptian system we should take that system for our Hermetic inspiration as Old Calendrists; we should be esoterically aware of our Egyptian heritage.

The *Sothic Year* derives from the annual heliacal rising of Sirius (called the Dog Star by the ancient Greeks because it marks the “dog days” of maximum heat) which coincides with

new style” and bloomed on 5th January (new style)—which is of course December 25th old style.

Another unpopular reform was the shift of New Year's Day from March 25 (the Old Spring Equinox) to January 1st. In England and America, Spring *feels* like the re-birth of the year, an aesthetic perception shared by Zoroastrians and modern Persians who still celebrate New Year on the Vernal Equinox. Nevertheless, we accept January 1st as New Year because it's the Saturnalian Old Winter Solstice (re-birth of the Sun—a Roman holiday in honor of the uncanny two-face Time god Janus the Doorkeeper of the Year)—even though this date has “drifted” eleven days from the “true” astronomical solstice; and according to the Xtian calendar it's merely the Feast of the Circumcision—the arbitrary cutting off of the year. (See Ovid, *Fasti*, I, and Macrobius, *Saturnalia*, I.)

What do we want? We want those golden days of September stolen from us by the idolaters of science and rationalist utilitarianism. We hope that the restoration of sacred pagan time will induce a new wide-spread consciousness open to a radical critique of technology as alienation. Stage by stage we'd like to regress toward the status quo ante 1752. Abolish the Industrial Revolution and the post-Industrial reign of time as money. Abolish not only electricity and infernal combustion but also the steam engine. Bring back agrarian green artisanal social time. Abandon the Capitalist Hell Realm. And by the way, let's also get rid of Daylight Saving Time. Down with all Time Lords. Free Time.

In what form shall we *take back* our lost time? What about a great Saturnalia, a space of time *outside* the calendar, a golden time, hyperborean, utopian and festive? It would be like eleven Christmases in a row—or eleven Halloweens—that great pagan holiday. But in whatever form—and by any means necessary—

GIVE US BACK OUR ELEVEN DAYS.

³ See Macrobius, *Saturnalia* I (Loeb Library).

2.

We've heard people say that in "the Middle Ages," one hundred and eleven (111) holidays each year were observed and celebrated by *taking off work* and enjoying a festival of some sort. We don't know a source for this figure; it may be literally true or not—but it's interesting that people believe it.

We're reminded of Bakhtin's carnivalesque book on Breughel, who painted such a wonderful Pantagruelian picture of ZeroWork attitudes in the Rabelaisian era. William Morris also springs to mind, with his strange and attractive blend of anarchism and medievalism. In the 18th and 19th centuries, workers used to slack off and take an extra fee day after the weekend, telling their bosses they had to celebrate the holy day of "Saint Monday."

It is believed by some scholars that the Roman Empire in Late Antiquity had accumulated 193 holidays a year. According to legend, the Romans were busy carousing on one of these occasions when the Huns invaded the City. Reading Ovid's charming (but sadly unfinished) calendar poem the *Fasti* in which he lists and describes the holidays of his era, we can begin to visualize ancient ROMA under its secret name AMOR, a land of festal love rather than (or rather as well as) brutal imperialism. The frescos at Pompeii reveal this lost Rome devoted to Venus (ancestress of Aeneas) as opposed to Mars (father of Romulus and Remus).

Note that after 6000 years of Civilization and just a few centuries of Democratic Capitalism and "human rights," we now have *twelve* holidays a year, with maybe two weeks off in Summer (if we're 'lucky' enough to be wage slaves, that is).

This is Progress?

Frankly we're more interested in Regress. We favor Reversion to "earlier conditions"², with revivals of appropriate technology loyal to the luddite critique whereby everything is measured according to actual human values rather than money. We are not Futurists—we are Pastists. We stand for

ARMED NOSTALGIA.

Nostalgia, unlike mere sentimentality, describes the authentic emotion we feel in contemplating the objective fact that in many respects things were better in the past. Sentimentality sighs for a long-ago that never really existed, but nostalgia is simply a form of social realism. 111 holidays a year are better than twelve holidays a year; *q.e.d.*

We have decided to pretend that "another world is possible"—even if it isn't. Perhaps the World already came to an end in 1997 (as William Blake predicted)—perhaps now "There is no such thing as Society," as the late Baroness Thatcher famously declared. Perhaps *this is the Future* and Armageddon has already transpired as whimper rather than bang: an eternity of half-life in the ruins of some infinite shopping mall or cosmic airport waiting hall (as J.G. Ballard predicted). Or maybe, as P.K. Dick foretold, it's now all just one big hallucination! Maybe. But we refuse to give up hope for the Past.

Our idea is that the Calendar is an art-form, not a scientific document. A calendar that claims universal objectivity constitutes a crypto-ideological act of tyrannical image-magic, an attempt to impose mechanical Time over organic Time and finally to erase Nature altogether. We reject the Jesuit monotonothist conspiracy of the "Gregorian" calendar and call for restoration of the polytheistic Julian calendar. Why? Because we believe in

² In his brilliant book on Luddism, *Rebels Against the Future*, Kirkpatrick Sale says, "Of course you can turn the clock back. You do it every Fall—by one hour."