

SYNOPSIS OF EVENTS IN THE PERSECUTION OF THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX AUTONOMOUS CHURCH (ROAC)

(2001-2012)

April 30th, 2001 - A priest by the name of Andrei Osetrov is removed from his position as Secretary of the Synod of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Autonomous Church. Leaving the synod meeting, he uttered the threat to get even with Metropolitan Valentine, using his old contacts in the KGB and the Russian Orthodox Church-Moscow Patriarchate (ROC-MP).

Early May, 2001 - Andrei Osetrov, together with a group of his followers, also suspended from their clerical positions for one reason or another, prepared a video containing “incriminating information” against Metropolitan Valentine, establishing the facts of his supposed sodomy with children. **Fr. Andrei Osetrov gave this video to the local administration of the Federal Security Service (FSB, formerly known as KGB during the Soviet period), to the Department of the Interior, to the Vladimir Diocesan Administration of the Russian Orthodox Church-Moscow Patriarchate, and to the mayor of Suzdal.**

May 19th, 2001 - Major Naumov, an agent of the Suzdal Regional Military Commissariat, entered the church of the Dormition of the Mother of God in Suzdal and attempted to hand the nun on watch, Mother Glafyra, 30 military cartridges. Major Naumov appealed to Mother Glafyra and Subdeacon Alexei Chestnokov, also present in the church, to “shoot Valentine,” promising to bring a gun for that purpose in the near future. The Suzdal Diocesan Administration of the ROAC called in several officers of the local police to the Dormition Church, who took the cartridges and quickly apprehended Major Naumov.

May 27th, 2001 - Protodeacon Dimitry Krasovsky, a former cleric of the Suzdal Diocese of the ROAC under suspension, beat up Subdeacon Andrei Smirnov in the entryway of the Tsar Constantine Cathedral in Suzdal, as he was leaving the church after the Divine Liturgy. According to information coming from Suzdal, this incident came as a result of the subdeacon’s categorical refusal to give this suspended cleric “incriminating information” against the Chief Hierarchy of the ROAC. As a result of this beating, Subdeacon Andrei Smirnov received a concussion and was admitted to the hospital. Years later, he will also come to leave the ROAC, out of fear over new beatings.

June, 2001 - The governor of the Vladimir region, N. V. Vinogradov, and the Vladimir regional authorities, at a closed meeting with representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church-Moscow Patriarchate, resolved to assist the group headed by Andrei Osetrov against the ROAC and Metropolitan Valentine (Rusantsov).

June 8th, 2001 - One of ROAC’s churches in Suzdal, dedicated to the icon of the Mother of God known as “The Joy of All Who Sorrow,” was broken into by unknown perpetrators. A valuable antique icon was stolen from the church, but the police officers who arrived on the scene of the crime refused to take any measures to look for or apprehend the thieves. Several representatives

from local law enforcement announced that they suspected Metropolitan Valentine (Rusantsov) himself in the theft of the icon, thus causing no small amount of psychological distress.

June 9th, 2001 - A “passport inspection” (in Russia, all citizens have internal passports) was organized at the diocesan building on Vasilievskaya Street. At ten o’clock at night, several persons entered the building – two in civilian clothes (possibly agents of the secret service), and two in police uniform, as well as several young people who came along with them. These people demanded to see the tenant register and the passports of all those who were living in the house, including the nuns, whom the visitors suspected of not having been registered as legal residents of Suzdal. Metropolitan Valentine explained that the tenant register for the house had not yet been established as the building was newly constructed. At this, the law enforcement officials threatened that they would “figure out some other way.” Again, psychological pressure.

June 28th, 2001 - In one of the Vladimir newspapers called *Prizyv (Call-up)* there was a paid article, entitled *Holy Outcasts*, which served as the first volley in a slander campaign undertaken by this newspaper against Metropolitan Valentine (the last paid article in this series of publications of *Prizyv (Call-up)* appeared on October 11th, 2001; there were dozens of such articles published in all). In the article *Holy Outcasts*, as well as in subsequent articles from various means of mass media on local, regional, and national levels, there was mention of the “ongoing perversion of underaged children.” In answer to the newspaper articles, several readers demanded that Metropolitan Valentine (Rusantsov) be **shot**, inasmuch as “the death penalty has not yet been done away with in Russia.” Metropolitan Valentine was also threatened with the videocassette of Andrei Osetrov being shown on television, unless he paid enormous sums of money to certain persons. In this way, in addition to slander and outright insults, the Chief Hierarch of the ROAC was subjected to blatant attempts to blackmail him.

July, 2001 - Open letter from the parents of the children affected by Andrei Osetrov’s persistent harassment to the editor of *Prizyv (Call-up)*, other mass media, and the Prosecutor for the region of Vladimir containing evidence that the “victims” had been bribed. A shorter, edited, copy was sent to the members of the Suzdal City Council.

August 19th, 2001 - During the night, on the eve of the feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord, Osetrov sympathizers covered the walls of the chapel dedicated to the Equal-to-the-Apostles Grand Prince St. Vladimir, which was under construction at the time in the new cemetery of the city of Suzdal, with blasphemous graffiti. Law enforcement took no action.

August 23-24th, 2001 - Investigators from the prosecutor’s office of Vladimir conducted an investigation in Suzdal, questioning several members of the clergy and laity. As part of this investigation a ten year old boy, Vanya Saveliev, one of the altar boys at the Tsar Constantine Cathedral, was subjected to questioning. The investigator asked Vanya provocative questions, trying to obtain confirmation from him that the accusations of sodomy against Metropolitan Valentine were true. The child, in his innocence, had no inkling that such things even existed. As a result of this interrogation, the boy suffered deep psychological trauma, and remained in a state of shock for an extended period.

August 24th, 2001 - The prosecutor’s office conducted a full audit of the financial and housekeeping documentation of the ROAC, trying to dig up new “incriminating evidence”

against Metropolitan Valentine. No violations were found. The condition of the sixty year old Chief Hierarch's health continued to decline.

September 3rd, 2001 - Press conference on the theme: "Who wants Metropolitan Valentine (Rusantsov) of Suzdal arrested, and why?" This press conference took place in the Marble Hall of the Center for Journalism Building in Moscow. It was put on by the Director of Affairs of the Synod of Bishops of the ROAC, Archbishop Theodore (Gineevsky) of Borisovskoye and Sanina, together with the Secretary of the Synod of Bishops of the ROAC, Archpriest Arkady Makovetsky, and with the rector of the ROAC community in Saint Petersburg, Hieromonk Gregory (Lurye). Also taking part in the press conference were the lawyer for the Suzdal Diocesan Administration of the ROAC, Sergey Mochonov, and the **parents of the children** that Metropolitan Valentine (Rusantsov) is supposed to have "perverted," according to the mass media of the Vladimir region. Representing the mass media at this press conference were correspondents from television companies; radio companies: *Mayak (Lighthouse)* and *Radio Russia*; informational agencies: *ITAR-TASS*, *Interfax*, *Blagovest-Info* and *AiF-Novosti*; internet publications: *SMI.Ru* and *Romanitas*; newspapers: *Moscow News*, *Express-chronika*, *Novye Ivestia*, *Vechernaya Moskva* and *Komsomolskaya Pravda*; magazines: *Frontier* (Great Britain) and *Vertograd*.

September 5th, 2001 - Metropolitan Valentine is summoned to the prosecutor's office for the Vladimir region under subpoena. In the presence of his lawyer, the Metropolitan is apprised of the official accusation against him, citing a lengthy list of articles from the criminal code. With the approval of the regional prosecutor, his signature confirming that he would not leave the country was taken, which limited the hierarch's freedom of movement.

September 6th, 2001 - Mass interrogation of the Sunday School students, clergy and parishioners of ROAC parishes in Suzdal and its environs was renewed by Investigator Egorov.

September 27th, 2001 - The Oktyabrsky regional court of the city of Vladimir handed down a decision forbidding the *Prizyv (Call-up)* newspaper to publish any accusations against Metropolitan Valentine. Earlier, this Vladimir newspaper had published no less than ten obscene articles by order of "someone" in a high position in the government, accusing the Chief Hierarch of the ROAC of all kinds of "criminal activity."

September 30th, 2001 - Arson attacks on the building housing the Church's center, and on a chapel then under construction in Suzdal. Around town anonymous posters were put up calling for **physical reprisals** against Metropolitan Valentine (Rusantsov). Law enforcement took no action.

October 1st, 2001 - Metropolitan Valentine sent a Statement addressed to the head of the Suzdal Regional Administration, the prosecutor for the city of Suzdal and the chief of the Suzdal Department of Internal Affairs, informing them of the slander and harassment campaign against the ROAC and its Chief Hierarch, as well as numerous facts concerning the defilement of our churches and violent acts perpetrated upon the clergy of the Russian Orthodox Autonomous Church. In his statement, he pointed out the almost complete failure of the Department of Interior Affairs to take any action whatsoever.

October 13-30th, 2001 - Metropolitan Valentine visited parishes belonging to the ROAC in the USA. Although he could have easily stayed in the US, and applied for political asylum on the basis of religious persecution, he nevertheless returned to the Russian Federation.

November 1st, 2001 - In the Center for Journalism Building in Moscow, there was a press conference concerning the results of Metropolitan Valentine's pastoral visit to the USA. Those taking part in the press conference called the criminal charges made against Metropolitan Valentine in September a fabrication.

November 20th, 2001 - A Vladimir municipal court set aside the earlier decision prohibiting publication of "incriminating evidence" against Metropolitan Valentine in the Vladimir press, and a new wave of slander and verbal attacks against the ROAC and its Chief Hierarch began.

December 17th, 2001 - Press conference about the ROAC in the city of Vladimir: "What is behind the new persecutions of the ROAC?"

2002

February 7-13th, 2002 - First session of the Suzdal Regional Court in the case against Metropolitan Valentine. Refusal of the "victims" to show any physical signs of their "abuse."

February 25th, 2002 - During the night, a special edition of *Prizyv (Call-up)* newspaper, with slanderous accusations directed at Metropolitan Valentine and Mayor Illarionov, were distributed throughout Suzdal.

March 17th, 2002 - Andrei Osetrov was detained by police during the daytime in front of the main shopping mall of Suzdal, at the height of the "Mardi Gras" festivities, for passing out leaflets containing lewd and obscene material, impugning the clergy of the ROAC, and Metropolitan Valentine in particular, as well as defaming the acting Mayor Illarionov. During questioning, Osetrov insisted that he was only carrying out orders from one of the candidates for mayor of Suzdal, Andrei Ryzhov, Chief of the Criminal Department of the FSB.

May 1st, 2002 - Hooligans from the so-called "patriotic" organization *Nashe Delo (Cosa Nostra)* broke out the windows at the residence of Metropolitan in the Synodal headquarters building. The organization called *Nashe Delo (Cosa Nostra)* is an organized group of criminals in Moscow, having a direct link with the FSB, and openly collaborating in Suzdal with clergy belonging to the Russian Orthodox Church-Moscow Patriarchate, Andrei Osetrov and Dimitry Letka (who, by the way, worked for the KGB for 15 years, and presently collaborates with the FSB). The members of this group met with Investigator Egorov, with the prosecutor for the nearby city of Vladimir, with the chief of police for Suzdal, A. U. Ryzhov, then a local chief of the FSB, but later the new mayor of Suzdal, and they made plans for meeting with Judge I. Mysyagina. Everywhere, this group asked authorities in Suzdal not to interfere with the then beginning process of "sorting out" the matter with the head of the ROAC, and in each place received agreement, as the circumstances demonstrated. Armed with protection by the authorities, the "warriors" of *Cosa Nostra* showed no hesitancy in their actions; among the

activities attributed to them are beatings of clergymen, attempts at kidnapping, threats and psychological pressure directed against the clergy and other citizens of the city. Strange as it may seem, these people made no attempt to hide what they were up to, but even published an article in the *Russky Vestnik (Russian Herald)* newspaper (№ 17-18), in which they not only threaten Metropolitan Valentine with physical reprisals and ask the public for its help in this vein, but even left a telephone number for such volunteers to call. (Source: <http://www.romanitas.ru/Actual/ggg.htm>).

May 2nd, 2002 - Attack by D. Krasovsky upon female parishioner P. F. Chicherova and Protodeacon Sergey Slonov.

May 2nd, 2002 - Official reception of the defrocked ROAC priest Andrei Osetrov into the Russian Orthodox Church-Moscow Patriarchate.

May 14th, 2002 - With the knowledge of the mayor of Suzdal, A. Ryzhov, a video is presented entitled *Gay Brotherhood on the Bones of Children* in the main Tourist Complex of the city of Suzdal.

May 14th, 2002 - Article by the *Nashe Delo (Cosa Nostra)* gang leader, I. Makhov, *Upyri (Vampires)* in the *Russky Vestnik (Russian Herald)* newspaper (№ 17-18). The editor in chief of this newspaper, A. Senin, is a former member of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, a secret collaborator with the KGB; during the 1980s worked in the apparatus of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Born October 7th, 1945; ethnic Russian. Was a member of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. During the Brezhnev years, performed supervisory duties for the publication *Molodaya Gvardia (Young Guard)*, then switched to professional party work. From 1984 to 1989, worked in the apparatus of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union; began as an instructor in the Department of International Information; in 1988, worked in the Department of Propaganda of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. In December, 1990, accompanied by the sculptor, Vyacheslav Klykov, established the national/patriotic newspaper *Russky Vestnik (Russian Herald)*, and became its editor in chief. The official founder of this newspaper is the *V. Klykov International Fund for Slavic Literature*. The *Russky Vestnik (Russian Herald)* newspaper became, at one and the same time, a Stalinist, and Orthodox/Nationalist, newspaper (with a gradual increase in its dose of Orthodoxy, and the incremental replacement of the Stalinist component with one favoring monarchy). The newspaper lobbies against Zionism and the powers-that-be behind international capital, and for the re-establishment of the borders of Russia to those that it had during the Soviet period.

May 28th, 2002 - Community meeting with Mayor A. U. Ryzhov and representatives of law enforcement agencies. Fruitless, since Mayor Ryzhov was covering for *Nashe Delo (Cosa Nostra)*. The former chief of the Suzdal FSB, now mayor of the city of Suzdal, A. Ryzhov, made contact with the warriors of *Nashe Delo (Cosa Nostra)*; with representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church-Moscow Patriarchate, Archbishop Evlogy of Vladimir; with the rector of the Our Lady of Kazan Church in Suzdal and FSB collaborator, Fr. Dimitry Letka; with the organizers of the shameful goings-on in Suzdal, D. Krasovsky, and Fr. Andrei Osetrov.

May 24th, 2002 - Attempt at kidnapping Subdeacon A. Smirnov by the warriors of *Nashe Delo (Cosa Nostra)*.

May 29th, 2002 - Unknown perpetrators defaced a church belonging to the ROAC in the village of Krapivye.

June 10th, 2002 - Meeting between several members of the laity with a member of parliament, G. I. Churkin, former member of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union; graduate of the Academy of Social Sciences attached to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union; leader of the pro-Communist Vladimir regional organization *Agrarnaya Partiya (Agrarian Party)* (Source: <http://ru.wikipedia.org/>). Churkin called upon those present to “squeeze” the ROAC out of Suzdal and the region.

June 22nd, 2002 - Hooligans of *Nashe Delo (Cosa Nostra)* beat up the seventeen year old Pavel Nonchin, one of Metropolitan Valentine’s (Rusantsov) subdeacons, and son of ROAC priest Valentine Nonchin.

June 25th, 2002 - Hooligans of *Nashe Delo (Cosa Nostra)* beat up Hierodeacon Cyprian (Sergey Bazyuk).

June 26th, 2002 - The Suzdal regional court, fearing repercussions from the citizens of the city who are believers, transferred the case against the Metropolitan to the regional center in the city of Kameshkovo.

July 1st, 2002 - The “Deposition of the Sash” Monastery at 4 Vasilievskaya Street is set on fire. After the fire inspectors established the fact that the fire was deliberately set, they handed the case to the Suzdal Regional Department of Interior Affairs, but here also the officials in this office refused to open a criminal case, citing “the absence of any proof that a crime had been committed.”

July 2nd, 2002 - Announcement by Metropolitan Valentine (Rusantsov) that he was renouncing his ecclesiastical (received from his days in the ROC-MP) and civic awards in connection with the unending pressure upon the ROAC.

Early August, 2002 - A paid article *In Bed with the Metropolitan* appeared in *Sovershenno Sekretno (Top Secret)* newspaper № 8 (159) 2002, written by Larisa Kislinskaya, famous for defending the interests of the Ministry of Interior Affairs and other operational and investigative agencies (Source: http://www.compromat.ru/page_27033.htm). *Sovershenno Sekretno (Top Secret)* newspaper is distributed across the Russian Federation, former republics of the USSR, and abroad, including the USA.

August 14-23rd, 2002 - Third session of the Suzdal regional court and guilty verdict against Metropolitan Valentine (Rusantsov). Facts of the hearing: out of thirteen teenage “victims,” twelve recanted their original accusations. The guilty verdict was reached on the testimony of a single “victim,” a youth with a serious psychiatric diagnosis (“acute debilitating oligophrenia; a mental disorder of underdeveloped mental capacity; feeble-mindedness”), unable to intelligibly explain what, when or where something happened to him. The judge was unable to establish any exact dates, places or circumstances for the “crimes committed.”

August 27th, 2002 - Attempted burglary of the Tsar Constantine Cathedral.

September 5th, 2002 - Vandalization of ROAC shops in Vladimir where church goods were sold.

September 16th, 2002 - Burglary at the ROAC church in the village of Borisovskoye. Law enforcement agents took no action.

November 12th, 2002 - The Vladimir regional appeals court hearing left in force the sentence handed down by the regional court concerning Metropolitan Valentine (Rusantsov). When the lawyer for the convicted Metropolitan requested to be allowed to submit additional important materials that might have a bearing on the case, he was denied.

November 19th, 2002 - The Suzdal City Council, under pressure from the mayor of the city, A. Ryzhov, and the governor of the region, N. Vinogradov, stripped Metropolitan Valentine of his authority as a People's Deputy.

December, 2002 - Warriors from the criminal gang *Nashe Delo (Cosa Nostra)* made death threats against a law consultant for the Suzdal Diocese, a deputy Suzdal City Council member, S. K. Mochonov, if he didn't cease helping the ROAC with their legal problems.

December 17th, 2002 - The Suzdal City Council, under pressure from the mayor, A. Ryzhov, stripped Metropolitan Valentine of his rank of "honorable citizen." This title had been given to Metropolitan Valentine out of respect and appreciation in recognition for all that he did for the benefit and prosperity of Suzdal: he resurrected from ruins and restored eighteen churches; he established a friendly and mutually beneficial relationship between Suzdal and the German city of Rothenburg-on-Taube (sister cities); he brought money and foodstuffs to local schools, orphanages and poor families; he organized a Sunday School for the children of the city; he organized summer trips and vacations to Germany for them; he had a Christmas party for them every year.

2003

January 27th, 2003 - Members of the "Committee for the Fight Against the ROAC" again vandalized the chapel dedicated to the Equal-to-the-Apostles Grand Prince St. Vladimir located at the Suzdal City cemetery, this time using melted pitch to write their filthy and blasphemous graffiti, and thereby insult the ROAC. Law enforcement agents took no action.

August 3rd, 2003 - Members of the "Committee for the Fight Against the ROAC" in Suzdal, set fire to two churches, the diocesan garage adjacent to the Synodal Headquarters Building on Teremki Street, and the garage of the "Deposition of the Robe" Convent on Vaslievskaya Street in Suzdal.

September 27th, 2003 - During the night, members of the "Committee for the Fight Against the ROAC" desecrated the chapel dedicated to the Equal-to-the-Apostles Grand Prince St. Vladimir located at the Suzdal City cemetery for the fourth time.

September 29th, 2003 - During the night, members of the “Committee for the Fight Against the ROAC” threw stones at the windows of the “Deposition of the Robe” convent, and broke two windows. In the words of Abbess Euphemia, the police do not react when we report incidents of vandalism to them, saying, “If there are no dead bodies, we won’t come. When you have a dead body, then we’ll come.” (Source: <http://www.sova-center.ru/religion/news/extremism/vandalism/2003/10/d1083/>).

(Later, in 2011, it came to light that Mayor A. Ryzhov had arranged ahead of time to rent the property of the “Deposition of the Robe” Convent to himself (for 49 years!) under extremely favorable (to himself) conditions with the idea of using the well maintained building as a hotel. Source: <http://www.kuzin-partners.ru/node/1010>).

October 4th, 2003 - Members of the “Committee for the Fight Against the ROAC” cover the church of the holy New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia, in a sleepy part of town on Sovietskaya Street, from the cupola down with filthy, lewd, and insulting graffiti.

2004

January-March, 2004 - In the name of the Suzdal regional court, the “Committee for the Fight Against the ROAC” sent out copies of the infamous “sentence of the court” to addresses of ROAC parishioners, as well as to the heads of city administrations where churches belonging to the ROAC were to be found, including abroad. These mailings continue to this day.

March 2nd, 2004 - The Tsar Constantine Cathedral in Suzdal was again burglarized. Three icons were taken from the church: a miracle working icon of Our Lady of Kazan, a large icon of St. George the Trophy-bearer, and another icon of the Mother of God, with a silver cover.

Local authorities (Mayor A. U. Ryzhov; Chief of the GROVD (Ministry of Internal Affairs) S. V. Belousov; the prosecuting attorney of Suzdal, A. A. Smirnov; regional prosecutor, A. V. Shaykov; Governor of the Vladimir region, N. V. Vinogradov) did absolutely **NOTHING** to help defend the rights of the faithful. All criminal investigations were closed. All written appeals, whether sent to municipal, or to regional prosecutors, came back with the same pat response, “No evidence of any criminal activity found.” The monstrous campaign of slander against Metropolitan Valentine from the pages of newspapers like *Russky Vestnik (Russian Herald)*, *Sovershenno Sekretno (Top Secret)*, and *Prizyv (Call-up)*, with their calls to “physically annihilate,” “cut Metropolitan Valentine’s ears off and threaten him with cutting his head off as well,” “squeeze Metropolitan Valentine out,” (Vladimir regional newspaper *Prizyv (Call-up)* June 14, 2001), “to twist this animal’s head backwards,” (*Russky Vestnik (Russian Herald)* № 17-18, 2002), “to bring this saga to an end and rid the land of Suzdal of this blight,” (*Russky Vestnik (Russian Herald)* № 29-30, 2002), went completely unpunished. On July 5, 2001, *Prizyv (Call-up)* newspaper openly stated that, “Father Valentine needs to be shot. For his sake we should make a temporary moratorium on the ban against the death penalty, put a bullet in the back of his head, and show the whole thing on national television.”

2005

October 13th, 2005 - Metropolitan Valentine of Suzdal and Vladimir, Chief Hierarchy of the ROAC, while alone in his own home in Suzdal, was cruelly beaten. The Metropolitan, advanced in age and infirm, suffering from acute diabetes, sick, operated on over thirty times, with an ailing heart and deep diabetic wounds on his feet, was attacked by unknown criminals who wrapped him in a carpet, beat his feet, tied his hands and feet together, and taped over his mouth.

November 20th, 2005 - The Church of the holy New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia in Suzdal was again defaced with vulgar graffiti.

2006

March 3rd, 2006 - Court bailiffs sealed the church of St. Olga in the city of Zheleznovodsk (built by the parishioners themselves), and handed it over to the Russian Orthodox Church-Moscow Patriarchate. The ROAC parishioners (about 500) were forced out, and have been praying together since that time in a private house.

May 17th, 2006 - The churches in Suzdal and in the surrounding area were inspected by a commission of the Federal Agency for Maintenance of Federal Property. This inspection was initiated by P. Pozhigaylo, a member of parliament, and a representative of the pro-government *Edinaya Rossiya (United Russia)* party. The results of this inspection were positive for the ROAC.

September 22nd, 2006 - The authorized representative of the president in the Central Federal District, G. Poltavchenko, gave instructions to send yet another commission with the aim of “further inspecting” the churches. This commission accomplished its task on December 6th and 8th, 2006. Both times, the commissions took photographs, and looked over all of the documentation. As admitted by the government run television company *TV-6 Vladimir*, the appearance of these governmental commissions in these churches (of the ROAC) was not coincidental.

The Suzdal interregional prosecutor, Y. N. Morkovkin, accused the ROAC of violating the law “On the Cultural Heritage of the Peoples of the Russian Federation,” adopted long before in 2002. In all that time, the officials would not extend the contracts for rent-free use of the churches, and all ROAC attempts to do so met with refusal.

As a result, there was again administrative and psychological pressure placed on the clergy and the parishioners of the ROAC.

2007

On the whole, during the period from 1990 through 2006, ROAC parishes were thrown out of their churches in the following cities: Ussurijsk (Primorsky region), Noginsk (Moscow region), Moscow, Ryazan, Votkinsk (Republic of Udmurtiya), Oboyani (Kuskaya region), Kineshma (Ivanovskaya region), Michurinsk (Tamobovskaya region), et al. The fundamental constitutional rights of tens of thousands of Russian Federation citizens are being systematically violated.

The campaign for confiscation of churches from 2007-2011

From 2007 through 2011, the Vladimir regional territorial administration called *Rosimushchestvo (Russian Property)* and the Department of Property and Land Relations (DIZO) for the administration of the Vladimir region, under orders from Moscow, sued the ROAC in the court of arbitration for 13 churches in Suzdal and in six villages of the Suzdal region. (Source: <http://www.arsmi.ru/events/kollektivnyj-portret-svobody-sovesti-na-fon>).

2009

February 5th, 2009 - The Court of Arbitration for the Vladimir region, in a suit brought by *Rosimushchestvo (Russian Property)*, handed down its decision that thirteen churches must be confiscated from the ROAC since there was no contract establishing the ROAC's right to use them. Among the documents resulting from inspections of these churches presented to the court by *Rosimushchestvo (Russian Property)* were "noted violations of the proper use of religious buildings."

July 27th, 2009 - Bishop Andrew (Maklakov) of Pavlovskoye published an open letter to the president of the Russian Federation, Dimitry Medvedev, seeking a cessation of the juridical and anti-constitutional lawlessness on the part of the Vladimir regional authorities.

August 12th, 2009 - Bailiffs from the Federal Service of Court Bailiffs of the Vladimir region visited the Suzdal Diocesan Administration of the ROAC, and officially announced the commencement of enforcement proceedings concerning the Suzdal Diocese of the ROAC in favor of Vladimir territorial administration *Rosimushchestvo (Russian Property)*.

September 11th, 2009 - By decision of the court of arbitration for the Vladimir region, concerning the demand that ROAC parishes using ten churches in the city of Suzdal vacate them: the churches are officially completely confiscated from their former occupants; after the last services in the Tsar Constantine Cathedral (main cathedral of the ROAC), and after all removable

items had been taken out of the building, Elena Kostrova, the official representative of the Vladimir territorial administration *Rosimushchestvo (Russian Property)*, entered the cathedral and announced that the building was now under new management.

By October, 2009 - Fourteen churches in Suzdal were confiscated from the ROAC by the government, and six others, in outlying villages, were still in the process of being confiscated. The representative for *Rosimushchestvo (Russian Property)*, V. Gorlanov, announced that the buildings were falling apart, notwithstanding the influx of huge sums of money from abroad, sent for their restoration and upkeep.

End of November, 2009 - The acting head of the territorial administration *Rosimushchestvo (Russian Property)*, Vladimir Gorlanov, sent a letter to various law-enforcement agencies of Suzdal, requesting that a criminal case be initiated against the ROAC and its leader, Metropolitan Valentin (Rusantsov).

December 4th, 2009 - The ROAC initiated a human rights case in the Court of Europe.

December, 2009 - Three churches in Suzdal were taken away from the ROAC – the Church of the Holy Cross/St. Nicholas, St. Lazarus Church, and St. Antipius Church – and handed over to the Russian Orthodox Church-Moscow Patriarchate. Fr. Anatoly Sigida, residing in Vladimir, was appointed as temporary rector of all three churches. (Source: <http://www.sova-center.ru/religion/news/harassment/places-for-prayer/2009/12/d17647/>).

2010

February 16th, 2010 - The court of arbitration in Vladimir (Judge Irina Butina) handed down a decision to satisfy the claims of three cases brought by the Department of Property and Land Relations (DIZO) for the Vladimir regional administration against the communities of the ROAC. According to the court decision, the ROAC was required to surrender and transfer to the DIZO: the St. Ephraim the Syrian Church in the village Omutskoe; the church of St. George in the village of Krapiviye; and the church of St. Michael the Archangel in the village of Ivanovo, Suzdal region, district of Vladimir. (Source: <http://www.portal-credo.ru/site/?act=news&id=76217&topic=574>).

February 24th, 2010 - The court of arbitration for the Vladimir region ordered the confiscation of the St. Alexander Nevsky Church in the village of Ves', Suzdal region, from the ROAC. The faithful were then forced to vacate the church within five days, a church they had rebuilt from ruins with their own hands in the cemetery of the village of Ves', and pray in their homes.

June 9th, 2010 - The court of arbitration in Vladimir handed down a decision confiscating the churches of St. Basil the Great in the village of Borisovskoye, and of St. John the Baptist in the village of Pavlovskoye, Suzdal region, (this latter church was the cathedral of Bishop Andrew (Maklakov) of Pavlovskoye).

2011

February 15th, 2011 - The Administrator of the ROAC in the USA, Bishop Andrew (Maklakov), and the church warden of the ROAC parish in Geneva, Switzerland, Tatiana Beltchev, were interrogated in the building of the OVD (Ministry of Internal Affairs) for the Suzdal region, district of Vladimir, by agents of the FSB.

The subject of the interrogation were the objects of cultural and historic significance belonging to the Museum of the White Soldier, which had been transferred to the ROAC in accordance with the last will and testament of Mrs. Beltchev's mother, who had originally collected the items. Metropolitan Valentine (Rusantsov), the Chief Hierarch of the ROAC, commenting on the persistent intensification of the persecutions in Suzdal, did not exclude from the realm of possibility that the Museum of the White Soldier affair (the authorities are also trying to take this museum from the ROAC) might be used in some new attempt to criminally prosecute the leadership of the Church.

March 14th, 2011 - Court bailiffs entered the Synodal headquarters building during divine services, pointedly refusing to take off their hats in church. During a meeting with the Metropolitan, police officers demanded that Metropolitan Valentine forbid ROAC believers to pray in the church of St. John the Baptist in Pavlovskoye, threatening that otherwise they would begin a criminal prosecution of the Chief Hierarch of the ROAC. (Source: <http://www.portal-credo.ru/site/?act=news&id=82913&topic=574>).

June 17th, 2011 - The Board of the Supreme Arbitration Court of the Russian Federation refused to transfer the decisions and rulings of the lower courts to its authority, which had been handed down in the case against the ROAC brought by the Department of Property and Land Relations (DIZO) for the administration of the Vladimir region. This was a violation of the rights of Russian citizens and against Russian law pertaining to the right to a trial of controversial issues in the higher courts.

Most of the churches that the ROAC had previously been using for religious purposes are currently closed, and are slowly deteriorating due to lack of attention.

2012

January 16th, 2012 - Metropolitan Valentine (Rusantsov) reposed in Moscow, on his way to visit his doctor.

February 17th, 2012 - The court of arbitration for the Vladimir district (Judge Irina Butina) let a suit brought by the Vladimir territorial administration *Rosimushchestvo* (*Russian Property*)

against the ROAC, demanding that the “ossuary remains” of Saints Euphemios and Euphrosynia of Suzdal be returned to the government, proceed.

February 26th, 2012 - Orthodox residents of the city of Suzdal, parishioners of the Russian Orthodox Autonomous Church (ROAC), made an appeal via an open letter concerning the confiscation of the relics of Sts. Euphemios and Euphrosynia of Suzdal. (Source: <http://www.suzdalonline.ru/news/1330312380/>).

March 11, 2012 - The Diocese of Vladimir of the Russian Orthodox Church-Moscow Patriarch (ROC-MP) announced its support of the suit brought by the government against the ROAC concerning the confiscation of the relics of Sts. Euphemios and Euphrosynia. (Source: <http://newsru.com/religy/25may2012/reliquien.html>, <http://txt.newsru.com/religy/11mar2012/rpac.html> and http://rapsinews.ru/tags/tag_Religija/).

March 13th, 2012 - During the first part of the month of March, the Suzdal Central regional hospital closed the hospital’s chapel, where clergy from the ROAC had been serving divine services. The hospital administration also forbade clergy from the ROAC from further visitations to patients in the hospital. (Source: <http://www.sova-center.ru/religion/news/harassment/intervention/2012/03/d23876/>).

May 25th, 2012 - The court of arbitration for the Vladimir region (Judge Irina Butina) handed down a decision whereby the relics of Saints Euphmios and Euphrosynia of Suzdal must be surrendered by the ROAC. Now, they are to be transferred to the administration of *Rosimushchestvo* (*Russian Property*) for the Vladimir district, which, in the opinion of several experts, will most likely give them to the Russian Orthodox Church-Moscow Patriarchate (ROC-MP), as reported in *Kommersant* newspaper.

May 25th, 2012 - Public announcement by a government official, A. Makarkin, Deputy General Director of the Center for Political Technologies: “When Rusanov founded his independent religious organization, he made Saints Euphemios and Euphrosynia of Suzdal the main central sacred objects of the ROAC. He continued, “Their departure from the ROC-MP was nothing less than a hateful schism. And right after this schism, the Moscow Patriarchate began to take measures against the ROAC. Now the ROAC is being liquidated as an entity. For this, it is necessary to take away all of its essential resources – churches and their sacred objects. If there are no churches or sacred objects, then it will be an organization of no significance.” (Source: <http://www.gazeta.ru/social/2012/05/25/4601565.shtml>).

May 27th, 2012 - Bishop Andrew (Maklakov) issued a statement about the brutal persecution of the ROAC by the Russian government. (Source: [Http://metanthonymemorial.org/VernostNo175.html](http://metanthonymemorial.org/VernostNo175.html)) (in English).

May 29th, 2012 - A representative of the Russian Orthodox Church-Moscow Patriarchate (ROC-MP) in Vladimir reported that his church (the ROC-MP), will request the transfer of the relics of Saints Euphemios and Euphrosynia, which are subject to confiscation from the ROAC in Suzdal by court order, to it. (Source: *Rossiskaya Gazeta* (*The Russian Newspaper*) <http://www.rg.ru/2012/05/29/reg-cfo/suzdal.html>).