

Super-Excellent Info #9
Late USSR & Early Post-Soviet Years

Super-Awesome Timeline

1959-64		Anti-religious campaigns under Khrushchev
1965		Gov't councils for Orthodox & non-Orthodox Affairs combined
1970	Apr	Death of ROC Patriarch Aleksii I (elected 1944)
1971	June	Election of Metropolitan Pimen (Izvekov) as new patriarch of ROC
1977	Oct	Brezhnev constitution promises freedom of conscience to Soviet citizens
1986	March	Mikhail Gorbachev becomes General Secretary of Communist Party
1988	April	Gorbachev receives Patriarch Pimen & other hierarchs for discussions
	June	Celebration of millennium of Christianity in USSR. ¹
1989	Apr	Soviet authorities allow restoration of Catholic hierarchy in Lithuania
	month?	Metropolitan Aleksii & three other clerics elected to new Soviet parliament. ²
	Oct	Proclamation of Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church. ³
	Dec	Gorbachev meets with Pope John Paul II
1990	May	Patriarch of ROC Pimen dies [elected 1971]
	June	Election of Aleksii II (Ridiger) as new Patriarch [dies in 2008]
	Oct	ROC agrees to creation to a quasi-independent Ukrainian church
		Soviet gov't passes new law on Freedom of Conscience & Religious Orgs
		Russian Republic (within USSR) passes own law on Freedom of Religion
1991	March	Referendum on retention of a democratic USSR
	Aug	Attempted coup against Gorbachev by hard-line conservatives
	Dec	Formal termination of USSR, replaced by 15 union republics, now independent
1993	Dec	New Russian constitution grants freedom of conscience
	Aug	Unsuccessful effort to revise 1990 Russian law on religious freedom
1994		Construction begins of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior in Moscow. ⁴
1996		Patriarch Aleksii II openly supports Yeltsin's re-election
1997	Oct	New Russian Law "On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations" ⁵
1999	Dec	Yelstin resigns as president, appoints Vladimir Putin as acting replacement
2000	Mar	Putin elected president of Russia
	Aug	Formal canonization of Nicholas II & family
2004	March	Re-election of Putin to second terms as Russian president
2007	May	Reestablishment of communion between ROC (Moscow) & Church Abroad
2008	Mar	Dmitrii Medvedev elected president to succeed Putin
2009	Jan	Kirill elected Patriarch of ROC after death of Aleksii in Dec 2008

Russian Orthodox Church "Symphonic ideal" The Russian state	Soviet religious policy Russian Orthodox Church Post-Soviet Russia
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¹ This celebration applied equally to Russia, Ukraine & Belarus , which all traced their history back to Rus'.

² The Congress of People's Deputies.

³ Excommunicated by the ROC's Holy Synod. That'll teach 'em!

⁴ Originally constructed 1831-1881; destroyed by the Bolsheviks in 1931; consecrated in 1997, opened in 2000.

⁵ Quite similar to the proposed (but unsuccessful) 1993 law; vetoed by Yeltsin but then later signed.

Late-Soviet and Post-Soviet Presidents & Patriarchs

Presidents	Patriarchs of ROC
Mikhail Gorbachev [USSR], ⁶ 1985-1991 Boris Yeltsin, 1991-1999 Vladimir Putin, 1999-2008 Dmitrii Medvedev, 2008-	Pimen (Izvekov), 1971-1990 Aleksii II (Ridiger), 1990-2008 Kirill (Gundiaev), 2009-

Some Language on Freedom of Conscience & Religion in post-Soviet Legal Sources

I. Constitution of Russian Federation (Dec 1993)

ART. 14. § 1. The Russian Federation is a secular state. No religion may be established as a state or obligatory one. **§ 2.** Religious associations shall be separated from the State and shall be equal before the law.

ART. 19. § 1. All people shall be equal before the law and in the court of law. **§ 2.** The state shall guarantee the equality of rights and liberties regardless of sex, race, nationality, language, origin, property or employment status, residence, attitude to religion, convictions, membership of public associations or any other circumstance. Any restrictions of the rights of citizens on social, racial, national, linguistic or religious grounds shall be forbidden. **§ 3.** Man and woman shall have equal rights and liberties and equal opportunities for their pursuit.

ART. 28. Everyone shall be guaranteed the freedom of conscience, the freedom of religion, including the right to profess individually or together with other any religion or to profess no religion at all, to freely choose, possess and disseminate religious and other views and act according to them.

II. Preamble to Law of the Russian Federation Russian Federation, Federal Law, "On Freedom of Conscience and on Religious Associations" (Sept 1997)

Confirming the right of each to freedom of conscience and freedom of creed, and also to equality before the law regardless of his attitudes to religion and his convictions; Basing itself on the fact that the Russian Federation is a secular state; Recognizing the special contribution of Orthodoxy to the history of Russia and to the establishment and development of Russia's spirituality and culture; Respecting Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Judaism and other religions which constitute an inseparable part of the historical heritage of Russia's peoples; Considering it important to promote the achievement of mutual understanding, tolerance and respect in questions of freedom of conscience and freedom of creed; Hereby adopts this federal law.

⁶ Initially General Secretary of the Soviet Union's Communist Party, later President of the USSR. When the USSR collapsed, so did Gorbachev's office.