

# From Gorbachev to Yeltsin to Putin, 1985-2019

## Handout #6, 15 February 2019

### Leonard G. Friesen

#### Two Inter-related Puzzles to Start

Why don't Russians seem to like the Russian leaders we like(d)?  
Why do they seem to like more the ones we don't like?

#### The Lecture in a Nutshell: The period from Gorbachev to Yeltsin to Putin:

Part One: Gorbachev and Yeltsin as Russia's second "Time of Troubles," 1985-1999.

Part Two: Russia Resurgent (Putin, 2000-2019 and counting), or what happens when you poke the bear.

#### Part I:

##### The Gorbachev Era: 1985-1991

- Stage One: Promises and Discipline under *Perestroika*, 1985-1986
- State Two: *Glasnost'* Unleashed, 1986-1988
- State Three: The Soviet Union Unravels, 1989-1991
- A shaken Gorbachev resigns, 31 December 1991: the USSR is no more.

#### Part II:

##### The reign of Boris Yeltsin: 1991-1999

- Against all Expectations: unimagined economic hardship for most
- The *Wild West* revisited: Rise of the Oligarchs, and associated corruption amidst.
- The return of the Imperial Presidency.
- The United States, the New World Order, and the reluctance to play ball.

#### Part III:

##### The Reign of Vladimir Putin, 2000-2019 and counting

- His background and rise to power (what we need to understand).
- Moscow reasserts control, and pays the pensioners (a bit at least) but...
- his economic policies are pro-capitalist (neo-liberal)
- The West's Expansion of NATO: who is threatening who? How would we respond? (and the direct interference of Moscow in Ukraine, 2014)
- The Context for the Annexation of Crimea.
- Whither Russia after (the strongly popular) Putin?

**In Conclusion: It's high time that we rethink stereotypes of Russia and Russians.**

#### Sources?

Peter Conradi, **Who Lost Russia? How the World Entered a New Cold War.**

William Taubman. **Gorbachev: His Life and Times.**

Tony Wood, **Russia without Putin: Money, Power and the Myths of the New Cold War.**