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Church–state relations have undergone a number of changes during the seven decades of the existence of the Soviet Union. In the 1920s the state was politically and financially weak and its edicts often ignored, but the 1930s saw the beginning of an era of systematic anti-religious persecution. There was some relaxation in the last decade of Stalin’s rule, but under Khrushchev, the pressure on the church was again stepped up. In the Brezhnev period this was moderated to a policy of slow strangulation, and Gorbachev’s leadership saw a thorough liberalisation and re-legitimation of religion. This book brings together fifteen of the West’s leading scholars of religion in the USSR, and provides the most comprehensive analysis of the subject yet undertaken. Bringing much hitherto unknown material to light, the authors discuss the policy apparatus, programmes of atheisation and socialisation, cults and sects, and the world of Christianity.

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*Religious policy
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Frontmatter
[More information](#)

*For Jack Dull, friend:
You helped to get me through
a difficult year*

Contents

<i>Notes on contributors</i>	<i>page xi</i>
<i>Preface</i>	<i>xvii</i>
SABRINA PETRA RAMET	
Part I Introduction	
1. A survey of Soviet religious policy	3
PHILIP WALTERS	
2. Religious policy in the era of Gorbachev	31
SABRINA PETRA RAMET	
Part II Policy apparatus	
3. The Council for Religious Affairs	55
OTTO LUCHTERHANDT	
4. Some reflections about religious policy under Kharchev	84
JANE ELLIS	
5. The state, the church, and the oikumene: the Russian Orthodox Church and the World Council of Churches, 1948–1985	105
J. A. HEBLY	
Part III Education, socialisation, and values	
6. Fear no evil: schools and religion in Soviet Russia, 1917–1941	125
LARRY E. HOLMES	
7. Soviet schools, atheism and religion	158
JOHN DUNSTAN	
8. The Ten Commandments as values in Soviet people's consciousness	187
SAMUEL A. KLIGER and PAUL H. DE VRIES	

9. Out of the kitchen, out of the temple: religion, atheism and women in the Soviet Union 206
 JOHN ANDERSON

Part IV Cults and sects

10. Dilemmas of the spirit: religion and atheism in the Yakut-Sakha Republic 231
 MARJORIE MANDELSTAM BALZER
11. The spread of modern cults in the USSR 252
 OXANA ANTIC

Part V The world of Christianity

12. The Russian Orthodox Renovatianist Movement and its Russian historiography during the Soviet period 273
 ANATOLII LEVITIN-KRASNOV
13. The re-emergence of the Ukrainian (Greek) Catholic Church in the USSR 292
 MYROSLAW TATARYN
14. Protestantism in the USSR 319
 WALTER SAWATSKY
15. Epilogue: religion after the collapse 350
 SABRINA PETRA RAMET

APPENDIX: Religious groups numbering 2,000 or more, in the USSR 355

Index 357

Cambridge University Press
0521416434 - Religious Policy in the Soviet Union
Edited by Sabrina Petra Ramet
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

Notes on contributors

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[More information](#)

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SAMUEL A. KLIGER was born in Brichany, Moldavia. He is the chair of the International Research Institute on Values Changes, a scientific society incorporated in New York. He is also Senior Researcher for the Book Institute of the All-Union Book Chamber in Moscow. He completed his doctoral studies at the Academy of the Sciences in Moscow, and specialises in research methodology and social structure.

ANATOLII LEVITIN-KRASNOV was born in Russia in 1915, and spent seven years in a Soviet prison during the Stalin era. After his rehabilitation in 1956, he began to write essays criticising the suppression of religion in his country. In 1974, he was allowed to emigrate, and moved to Lucerne, Switzerland. Subsequently, he authored two classic works dealing with the Renovatist Church: *Ocherki po istorii russkoi tserkovnoi smuty* (co-authored with Vadim

Cambridge University Press
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 Edited by Sabrina Petra Ramet
 Frontmatter
[More information](#)

Savrov, Kusunacht, Switzerland, 1977) and *Likhie gody, 1925–1941* (Paris, 1977). He also wrote a biography of Orthodox Bishop Vvedenskii. He died on 5 April 1991.

OTTO LUCHTERHANDT was born in Celle/Hannover, in Germany, and studied at the Universities of Freiburg, Bonn, and Hamburg, receiving his Doctor of Jurisprudence from Bonn in 1975. He is currently Professor of Public Law and Eastern Law at the University of Hamburg. His principal publications are: *Der Sowjetstaat und die Russisch-Orthodoxe Kirche* (Cologne, 1976) and *UN-Menschenrechtskonvention-Sowjetrecht-Sowjet-wirklichkeit. Ein kritischer Vergleich* (1980). His many articles dealing with human rights and religious freedom in Eastern Europe and the Balkans have been published in various journals.

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Cambridge University Press
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Edited by Sabrina Petra Ramet
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

Notes on contributors

xv

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PHILIP WALTERS was born in Cambridge, England, and is head of research at Keston College and a former research fellow (1976–9) at Cambridge University. He has written current affairs talks for the BBC and has edited the journal *Religion in Communist Lands*. He is editor of *Light Through the Curtain* (1985) and *World Christianity: Eastern Europe* (1989). His articles have appeared in *Religion in Communist Lands*, *Soviet Studies*, *Slavonic Review*, and other journals. He has contributed chapters to *Eastern Christianity and Politics in the Twentieth Century* (1988), *Candle in the Wind* (1989), and *Christianity and Russian Culture in Soviet Society* (1990).

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0521416434 - Religious Policy in the Soviet Union
Edited by Sabrina Petra Ramet
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

Preface

This is a book about religious policy and policy makers in the USSR. Its purpose is to shed light on the thinking, goals, assumptions, methods, and instruments of policy. The essays collected herein embrace a wide range of subjects, covering both historical and contemporary themes. Several chapters examine the institutions and mechanics of Soviet religious policy, especially Otto Luchterhandt's chapter on the Council of Religious Affairs, Jane Ellis' chapter on Kharchev's revelations, and John Dunstan's chapter on education. Other chapters concentrate rather on policy decisions and actions, trying to account for changes and stabilities in the evolution of Soviet religious policy. These include Philip Walters' chapter, along with Larry Holmes' chapter on schools and religion in the period 1917–41, John Anderson's chapter on women and religious policy, and my own chapter on the Gorbachev era. Still other chapters focus on the perspectives and drives of the religious organisations themselves, such as Oxana Antic's chapter on modern cults, Jan Hebly's chapter on the Russian Orthodox Church and ecumenism, Myroslaw Tataryn's chapter on the re-emergence of the Greek-Rite Catholic Church in Ukraine, and Marjorie Balzer's chapter on religion in Yakutia. The contribution by Samuel Kliger and Paul de Vries takes a different road, drawing upon extensive interview data to examine values and normative attitudes among Soviet people. Finally, Anatolii Levitin-Krasnov's chapter on the Living Church re-examines some of the long-standing controversies surrounding this regime-backed schismatic movement. Taken collectively, these chapters cover a wide-ranging array of subjects, many of them hitherto neglected in the past.

It is by now a stock phrase to say that the questions raised in a particular field are as important as the answers. In practice, of course, some answers are more important than others, and some answers are more important than some questions. But, where the latter are con-

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 Edited by Sabrina Petra Ramet
 Frontmatter
[More information](#)

xviii

PREFACE

cerned, those which are most useful are those which organise the material coherently and which take us closer to the inner spirit of the subject. Such questions would include: What were Gorbachev's ultimate goals in his religious policy? How was Soviet religious policy related to policies in other spheres? Why were the Greek-Rite Catholics, suppressed for more than 40 years, granted legalisation in 1989? What do the structures and procedures of the Council for Religious Affairs tell us about Soviet religious policy? How did changes in Soviet sociological assessments of religion correlate with changes in Soviet religious policy?

It is fashionable nowadays to question whether communism has any future, and the ambiguous term 'post-communism' has come into vogue. For a while, the old leaders in some countries (eg., the USSR, Bulgaria, Albania) held onto their positions even as the entire power structure was being transformed all around them. The tidal wave that overthrew communism achieved its first successes in what was then called the German Democratic Republic, as well as Poland, and Czechoslovakia. The transition to pluralism took longer in the other East European countries, as well as in the Soviet Union itself.

As dramatic as the changes are, however, Gorbachev's reforms, and for that matter, his vision, did not spring *ex nihilo*; nor did they unfold in a void. The system in which his reforms worked was a system built on certain assumptions and which continued to reflect the residue of those assumptions, even where they were being abandoned. This was certainly the case until summer 1991; until then, neither the CPSU monopoly nor the nomenklatura system had been abandoned, corruption and the resistance of middle-level officials remained problems despite Gorbachev's efforts to overcome them, and the notion that there should be an office for religious affairs in the first place seemed not to be questioned. The system bequeathed to Gorbachev set the agenda for reform, it conditioned the assumptions about what were the central issues, it set the limits to reform (though these limits have expanded steadily over time).

This book was launched at the end of 1986, when I was living in Washington DC, and when the direction of Gorbachev's reforms in the religious sphere, not to mention how long he would survive in office, was not yet clear. The book was essentially complete only three years later, and was later revised and updated in late 1990 and early 1991. The 14 chapters assembled in this book therefore reflect reality as it was in December 1990 or January 1991. Three chapters were subsequently updated slightly, to reflect the post-coup changes and the fall of Gorbachev, but without the possibility of a substantial

Cambridge University Press
0521416434 - Religious Policy in the Soviet Union
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Frontmatter
[More information](#)

Preface

xix

expansion of the text. The epilogue was added in January 1992 in order to take some account of the impact of the intervening changes.

I am deeply indebted to Margaret Brown for translating Otto Luchterhandt's chapter from German and to George E. Rennar for translating Anatolii Levitin-Krasnov's chapter from Russian. The data included in the appendix was originally collected for inclusion as a supplement to my own chapter (2), but, given its general utility, I have decided to place it in a separate appendix.

Sabrina Petra Ramet