History Of Soviet Atheism In Theory And Practice And The Believer Soviet Antireligious Campaigns And Persecutions V 2

"Godless Communists" offers a fresh interpretation of early Soviet efforts to create an atheist, scientific society. Husband shows that religion, contrary to Bolshevik assertions, was not merely an expression of gullibility and ignorance but a firmly entrenched system for ordering family and community relationships. The Bolsheviks' efforts to abolish the Church failed because they underestimated how tightly religious beliefs were woven into the fabric of the Russians' daily lives. Exploring the confrontation between secularism and the lower classes' traditional beliefs, "Godless Communists" illustrates how developments between 1917 and 1932 shaped the attitudes toward religion and atheism that endure in Russia today.

Emily B. Baran offers a gripping history of how a small, American-based religious community, the Jehovah's Witnesses, found its way into the Soviet Union after World War II, survived decades of brutal persecution, and emerged as one of the region's fastest growing religions after the Soviet Union's collapse in 1991. In telling the story of this often misunderstood faith, Baran explores the shifting boundaries of religious dissent, non-conformity, and human rights in the Soviet Union and its successor states. Soviet Jehovah's Witnesses present a fascinating case study of dissent beyond urban, intellectual nonconformists. Witnesses, who were generally rural, poorly educated, and utterly marginalized from society, resisted state pressure to conform. They instead constructed alternative communities based on adherence to religious principles established by the Witnesses' international center in Brooklyn, New York. The Soviet state considered Witnesses to be the most reactionary of all underground religious movements, and used extraordinary measures to try to eliminate this threat. Yet Witnesses survived, while the Soviet system did not. After 1991, they faced continuing challenges to their right to practice their faith in post-Soviet states, as these states struggled to reconcile the proper limits on freedom of conscience with European norms and domestic concerns. Dissent on the Margins provides a new and important perspective on one of America's most understudied religious movements.

The series Religion and Society (RS) contributes to the exploration of religions as social systems—both in Western and non-Western societies; in particular, it examines religions in their differentiation from, and interaction with, other cultural systems, such as art, economy, law and politics. Due attention is given to paradigmatic case or comparative studies that exhibit a clear theoretical orientation with the empirical and historical data of religion and such aspects of religion as ritual, the religious imagination, constructions of tradition, iconography, or media. In addition, the formation of religious communities, their construction of identity, and their relation to society and the wider public are key issues of this series.

After decades of official atheism, a religious renaissance swept through much of the former Soviet Union beginning in the late 1980s. The Calvinist-like austerity and fundamentalist ethos that had evolved among sequestered and frequently persecuted Soviet evangelicals gave way to a charismatic embrace of ecstatic experience, replete with a belief in faith healing. Catherine Wanner's historically informed ethnography, the first book on evangelism in the former Soviet Union, shows how once-marginal Ukrainian evangelical communities are now thriving and growing in social and political prominence. Many Soviet evangelicals relocated to the United States after the fall of the Soviet Union, expanding the spectrum of evangelicalism in the United States and altering religious life in Ukraine. Migration has created new transnational evangelical communities that are now asserting a new public role for religion in the resolution of numerous social problems. Hundreds of American evangelical missionaries have engaged in "church planting" in Ukraine, which is today home to some of the most active and robust evangelical communities in all of Europe. Thanks to massive assistance from the West, Ukraine has become a hub for clerical and missionary training in Eurasia. Many Ukrainians travel as missionaries to Russia and throughout the former Soviet Union. In revealing the phenomenal transformation of religious life in a land once thought to be militantly godless, Wanner shows how formerly socialist countries experience evangelical revival. Communities of the Converted engages issues of migration, morality, secularization, and global evangelism, while highlighting how they have been shaped by socialism.

An array of essays explores how religion affected the ideological and military clashes around the globe during the 20th century's Cold War. Simultaneous. Book available.

Since its founding by Jacques Waardenburg in 1971, Religion and Reason has been a leading forum for contributions on theories, theoretical issues and agendas related to the phenomenon and the study of religion. Topics include (among others) category formation, comparison, ethnosophy, hermeneutics, methodology, myth, phenomenology, philosophy of science, scientific atheism, structuralism, and theories of religion. From time to time the series publishes volumes that map the state of the art and the history of the discipline.

Central Asia was the sole Muslim region of the former Russian Empire lacking a centralized Islamic organization, or muftiate. When the Soviet leader Joseph Stalin created such a body for the region as part of his religious reforms during World War II, he acknowledged that the Muslim faith could enjoy some legal protection under Communist rule. From a skeletal and disorganized body run by one family of Islamic scholars out of a modest house in Tashkent's old city, this muftiate acquired great political importance in the eyes of Soviet policymakers and equally significant symbolic significance for many Muslims. Relying on recently declassified Central Asian archival sources, most of them never seen before by historians, Eren Tasar argues that Islam did not merely "survive" the decades from World War II until the Soviet collapse in 1991, but actively shaped the political and social context of Soviet Central Asia. Muslim figures, institutions, and practices evolved in response to the social and political reality of Communist rule. Through an analysis that spans all aspects of Islam under Soviet rule—from debates about religion inside the Communist Party, to the muftiate's efforts to acquire control over mosques across Central Asia, in Islamic practices and dogma, and overseas propaganda targeting the Islamic World—Soviet and Muslim offers a radical new reading of Islam's resilience and evolution under atheist rule.

When the Bolsheviks set out to build a new world in the wake of the Russian Revolution, they expected religion to die off. Soviet power used a variety of tools—from education to propaganda to terror—to turn its vision of a Communist world without religion into reality. Yet even with its monopoly on ideology and power, the Soviet Communist Party never succeeded in overcoming religion and creating an atheist society. A Sacred Space Is Never Empty presents the first history of Soviet atheism from the 1917 revolution to the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991. Drawing on a wealth of archival material and in-depth interviews with those who were on the front lines of Communist ideological campaigns, Victoria Smolkin argues that to understand the Soviet experiment, we must make sense of Soviet atheism. Smolkin shows how atheism was reimagined as an alternative cosmology with its own set of positive beliefs, practices, and spiritual commitments. Through its engagements with religion, the Soviet leadership realized that removing religion from the "sacred spaces" of Soviet life was not enough. Then, in the final years of the Soviet experiment, Mikhail Gorbachev—in a stunning and unexpected reversal—abandoned atheism and reintroduced religion into Soviet public life. A Sacred Space Is Never Empty explores the meaning of atheism for religious life, for Communist ideology, and for Soviet politics.

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Revolution, when Soviet plans for a new Marxist utopia included the total eradication of all religion. Even though the Soviet Union's attempt to secularize its society was quite successful at crushing the institutional and ritual manifestations of religion, its leaders were surprised at the persistence of religious belief. Froese's account reveals how atheism, when taken to its extreme, can become as dogmatic and oppressive as any religious faith and illuminates the struggle for individual expression in the face of social repression.

**A Sacred Space Is Never Empty**

A History of Soviet Atheism

Princeton University Press

A member of the first generation of scholars allowed access to formerly closed Soviet archives, Daniel Peris offers a new perspective on the Bolshevik regime's antireligious policy from 1917 until 1941. He focuses on the activities of the League of the Militant Godless, the organization founded by the regime in 1925 to spearhead its efforts to promote atheism and he presents the League's propaganda, activities, and personnel at both the central and the provincial levels. On the basis of his research in archives in rural Pskov and industrial Iaroslav', as well as in the central party and state archives in Moscow, Peris emphasizes the transformation of the ideological agenda formulated in Moscow as it moved to its intended audience. Storming the Heavens places the League within the broader context of a Bolshevik political culture that often acted across the regime's stated goals. The League's lack of success, argues Peris, reflects the bureaucratic orientation of Bolshevik political culture, particularly in how it pursued the radical social vision of 1917. His book provides a framework for understanding secularization in revolutionary contexts as well as contributing to the on-going reassessments of the Bolshevik era.

How do specific secular and religious ideologies—such as nationalism, neoliberalism, atheism, Pentecostalism, Tablighi Islam, and shamanism—gain popularity and when do they lose traction? To answer these questions, Mathis Pelkmans critically examines the trajectories of a range of ideologies as they move into the post-Soviet frontier in Central Asia. Ethnographically rooted in the everyday life of a former mining town in southern Kyrgyzstan, Fragile Conviction shows how residents have dealt with the existential and epistemic crises that arose after the collapse of the Soviet Empire. Residents became enchanted by the truths of Muslim and Christian missionaries, embraced the teachings of neoliberal and nationalist ideologies, and were riveted by the visions of shamanic healers. But no matter how much enthusiasm and hope these ideas first engendered, the commitment to any of them rarely lasted very long. Pelkmans finds that there is an inverse relationship between the tenacity and the effervescence of collective ideas, between their strength to persist and their ability to trigger committed action. Introducing the concept of pulsation, he argues in Fragile Conviction that ideational power must be understood in relation to three aspects: the voicing of the idea, its tension with everyday reality, and its reverberation within groups of listeners. The conclusion that the power of conviction is rooted in the instability of sociocultural contexts is a message that has relevance far beyond urban Central Asia.

The 1960s were a time of explosive change and innovation in the Christian churches, as well as of charismatic leaders like Pope John XXIII and Martin Luther King. Using oral history, Hugh McLeod explains what happened to religion in the 1960s, why it happened, and how the events of that decade shaped the rest of the 20th century. The first state in history to be based explicitly on atheism, the Soviet Union endowed itself with the attributes of God. In this book, David Satter shows through individual stories what it meant to construct an entire state on the basis of a false idea, how people were forced to act out this fictitious reality, and the tragic human cost of the Soviet attempt to remake reality by force. “I had almost given up hope that any American could depict the true face of Russia and Soviet rule. In David Satter’s Age of Delirium, the world has received a chronicle of the calvary of the Russian people under communism that will last for generations.”—Vladimir Voinovich, author of The Life and Extraordinary Adventures of Private Ivan Chonkin “Spellbinding. . . . Gives one a visceral feel for what it was like to be trapped by the communist system.”—Jack Matlock, Washington Post “Satter deserves our gratitude. . . . He is an astute observer of people, with an eye for essential detail and for human behavior in a universe wholly different from his own experience in America.”—Paul Laqueur, Wall Street Journal “Every page of this splendid and eloquent and impassioned book reflects an extraordinarily acute understanding of the Soviet system.”—Greg Heilbrun, Washington Times

Drawing on the early atheist society Godless Godless and Goddess and postwar posters by Communist Party publishers, the author presents an unsettling truth of atheist ideology in the USSR.

Sonja Luehrmann explores the Soviet atheist effort to build a society without gods or spirits and its afterlife in post-Soviet religious revival. Combining archival research on atheist propaganda of the 1960s and 1970s with ethnographic fieldwork in the autonomous republic of Mari El in Russia’s Volga region, Luehrmann examines how secularist culture-building reshaped religious practice and interreligious relations. One of the most palpable legacies of atheist propaganda is a widespread didactic orientation among the population and a faith in standardized programs of personal transformation as solutions to wider social problems. This didactic trend has parallels in globalized forms of Protestantism and Islam but differs from older uses of religious knowledge in rural Russia. At a time when the secularist modernization projects of the 20th century are widely perceived to have failed, Secularism Soviet Style emphasizes the affinities and shared history of religious and atheist mobilizations. The two-volume Cambridge History of Atheism offers an authoritative and up to date account of a subject of contemporary interest. Comprised of sixty essays by an international team of scholars, this History is comprehensive in scope. The essays are written from a variety of disciplinary perspectives, including religious studies, philosophy, sociology, and classics. Offering a global overview of the subject, from antiquity to the present, the volumes examine the phenomenon of unbelief in the context of Christian, Islamic, Buddhist, Hindu, and Jewish societies. They explore atheism and the early modern Scientific Revolution, as well as the development of Charles Darwin's theory of evolution and its continuing implications. The History also includes general survey essays on the impact of scepticism, agnosticism and atheism, as well as contemporary assessments of thinking. Providing essential information on the nature and history of atheism, The Cambridge History of Atheism will be indispensable for both scholarship and teaching, at all levels.

During the Second World War, as the Soviet Red Army was locked in brutal combat against the Nazis, Joseph Stalin ended the state's violent, decades-long persecution of religion. In a stunning reversal, priests, imams, rabbis, and other religious elites—many of them newly-released from the Gulag—were tasked with rallying Soviet citizens to a "Holy War" against Hitler. To the delight of some citizens, and to the horror of others, Stalin's reversal encouraged a widespread perception that his war on religion was over. A revolution in Soviet religious life ensued: soldiers prayed on the battlefield, entire villages celebrated once-banned holidays, and state-backed religious leaders used their new positions not only to consolidate power over their communities, but also to petition for further religious freedoms. Offering a window on this wartime "religious revolution," God Save the USSR focuses on the Soviet Union's Muslims, using sources in several languages (including Russian, Tatar, Bashkir, Uzbek, and Persian). Drawing evidence from eyewitness accounts, interviews, soldiers' letters, frontline poetry, agents' reports, petitions, and the words of Soviet Muslim leaders, Jeff Eden argues that the religious revolution was fomented simultaneously by the state and by religious Soviet citizens: the state gave an inch, and many citizens took a mile, as atheist Soviet agents looked on in exasperation at the resurgence of
unconcealed devotional life. What can atheists tell us about religious life? Russian archives contain a wealth of information on religiosity during the Soviet era, but most of it is written from the hostile perspective of officials and scholars charged with promoting atheism. Based on archival research in locations as diverse as the multi-religious Volga region, Moscow, and Texas, Sonja Luehrmann argues that we can learn a great deal about Soviet religiosity when we focus not just on what documents say but also on what they did. Especially during the post-war decades (1950s-1970s), the puzzle of religious persistence under socialism challenged atheists to develop new approaches to studying and theorizing religion while also trying to control it. Taking into account the logic of filing systems as well as the content of documents, the book shows how documentary action made religious believers firmly a part of Soviet society while simultaneously casting them as ideologically alien. When juxtaposed with oral, printed, and samizdat sources, the records of institutions such as the Council of Religious Affairs and the Communist Party take on a dialogical quality. In distanced and carefully circumscribed form, they preserve traces of encounters with religious believers. By contrast, collections compiled by western supporters during the Cold War sometimes lack this ideological friction, recruiting Soviet believers into a deceptively simple binary of religion versus communism. Through careful readings and comparisons of different documentary genres and depositories, this book opens up a difficult set of sources to students of religion and secularism.