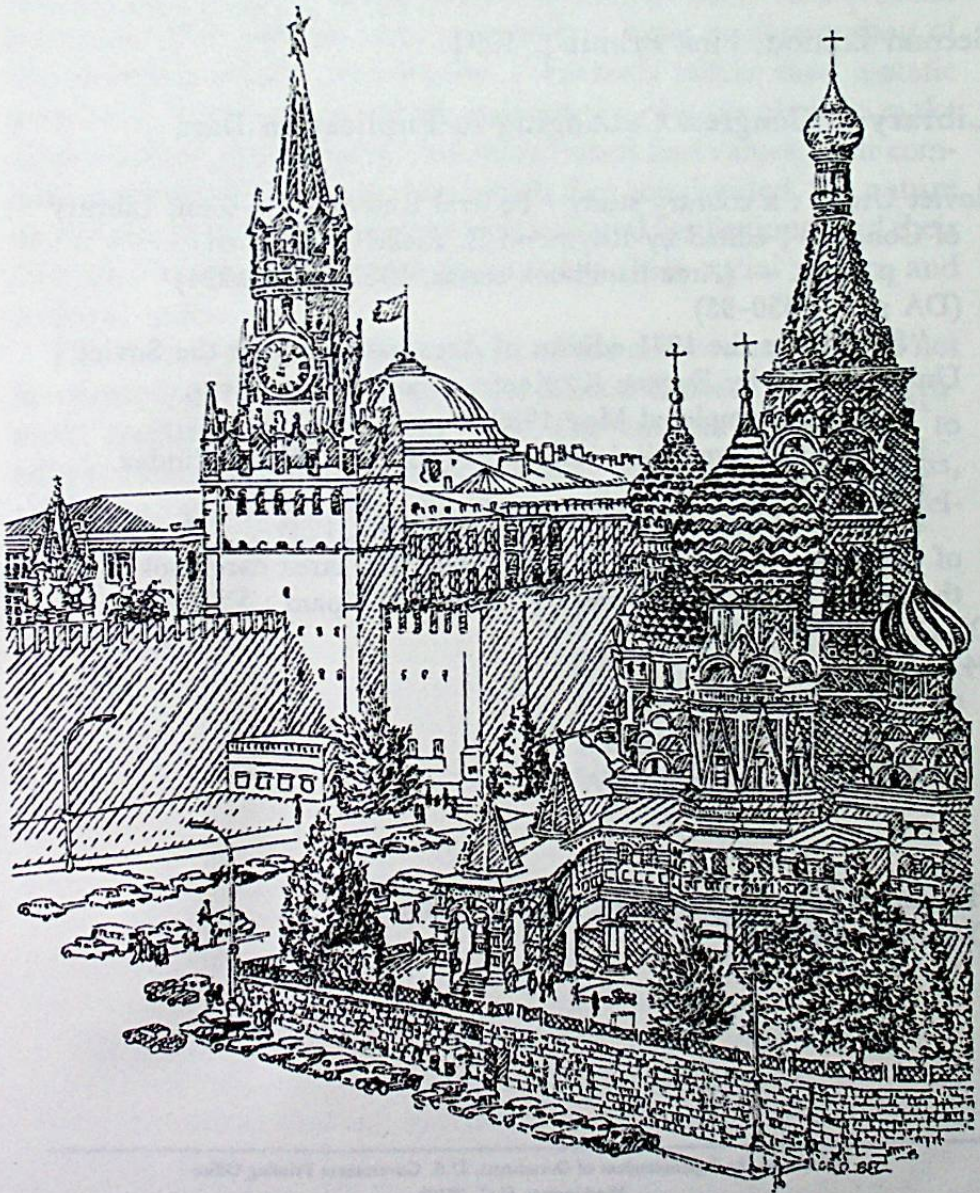


Soviet Union

a country study

Federal Research Division
Library of Congress
Edited by
Raymond E. Zickel
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May 1989



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Foreword

This volume is one in a continuing series of books prepared by the Federal Research Division of the Library of Congress under the Country Studies—Area Handbook Program sponsored by the Department of the Army. The last page of this book lists the other published studies.

Most books in the series deal with a particular foreign country, describing and analyzing its political, economic, social, and national security systems and institutions, and examining the interrelationships of those systems and the ways they are shaped by cultural factors. Each study is written by a multidisciplinary team of social scientists. The authors seek to provide a basic understanding of the observed society, striving for a dynamic rather than a static portrayal. Particular attention is devoted to the people who make up the society, their origins, dominant beliefs and values, their common interests and the issues on which they are divided, the nature and extent of their involvement with national institutions, and their attitudes toward each other and toward their social system and political order.

The books represent the analysis of the authors and should not be construed as an expression of an official United States government position, policy, or decision. The authors have sought to adhere to accepted standards of scholarly objectivity. Corrections, additions, and suggestions for changes from readers will be welcomed for use in future editions.

Louis R. Mortimer
Chief
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Washington, D.C. 20540

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Preface

Soviet Union: A Country Study seeks to present factual descriptions and objective interpretations of a broad range of social, political, economic, and national security aspects of the Soviet Union in the late 1980s. The authors synthesized information from books, scholarly journals, official reports of governments and international organizations, foreign and domestic newspapers, and conference reports and proceedings.

This volume supersedes the *Area Handbook for the Soviet Union*, first published in 1971. Throughout the 1970s and early 1980s, the Soviet Union was politically, economically, and socially stagnant, according to many Western observers. After Mikhail S. Gorbachev came to power in March 1985, however, unprecedented events portending substantial change began to occur. To revitalize the critically ailing economy, Gorbachev introduced *perestroika*; to alter the political power structure, he introduced *demokratizatsiia*; and to provide information needed to implement both, he introduced *glasnost*'. These three slogans represented evolving concepts rather than formal programs with specific plans and time schedules. Information about events occurring in the late 1980s came in such volume that many observers were overwhelmed. The long-range impact of the events can be realistically assessed only after careful analysis of accurate and complete data and the perspective granted with the passage of time. Meanwhile, the basic elements of the Soviet Union, such as history, geography, and social, economic, and military structures, as described in this volume, can help readers understand the events as they occur.

This volume covers the salient features of the Soviet Union in nineteen chapters that attempt to provide balanced and straightforward descriptions and analyses of the subject matter. Readers wishing to obtain more information on subjects dealt with in each chapter can refer to the bibliographic essay at the end of the chapter. A complete Bibliography at the end of the book provides additional sources of information and complete citations. A Country Profile and a Chronology are also included as reference aids. The Glossary furnishes succinct definitions of many specialized terms used in the book. Measurements are given in the metric system; a conversion table is provided to assist readers unfamiliar with metric measurements (see table 1, Appendix A).

Because confusion often arises with respect to the use of the words *socialism* and *communism*, a note of caution is in order concerning

their use in this book. The Soviet Union and other countries that people in the West generally refer to as *communist* usually describe themselves as *socialist*, making the claim that they are working toward communism, which Karl Marx described as a more advanced historical stage than socialism. In this book, *socialist* and *socialism* are generally used in the sense of Union of Soviet *Socialist* Republics. Soviet *socialism* has little resemblance to the democratic socialism of some West European countries. In this book, *communism* means a doctrine based on revolutionary Marxian socialism and Marxism-Leninism, which is the official ideology of the Soviet Union.

Readers specifically interested in information on the Russian nationality and the Russian Orthodox Church should note that information on these subjects is contained in a number of chapters. Hence, to avoid redundancy, the space devoted to these subjects in the chapter on nationalities and religions (Chapter 4) is proportionately less than that devoted to other nationalities and religions. Readers are especially referred to Chapter 1, which is primarily concerned with the history of the Russian nationality and frequently refers to the Russian Orthodox Church.

Statistics derived from Soviet sources, especially those dealing with the economy and transportation, have sometimes been disputed by Western authorities. Such statistics, occasionally containing unexplained discrepancies, have been used as the only available alternative and have been identified as of Soviet origin. Population statistics used in the book were based on the 1989 census. Because, however, complete results of that census had not been released or fully analyzed at the time the book was being written, some statistics were based on the 1979 census.

Transliteration of Russian names and terms generally follows the Library of Congress transliteration system, but geographic names follow the United States Board of Geographic Names romanization system. Exceptions were made, however, if the name or term was listed in *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*. For example, Leon Trotsky was used instead of Lev Trotskii and Moscow instead of Moskva. Most of the Russian terms used in the book were not in Webster's and were therefore transliterated and italicized as foreign words. Hence the term for one administrative subdivision *raion* was transliterated and italicized, but the term for another subdivision, *oblast*, listed in Webster's was not. For most organizational names, English translations—and if needed the acronym derived therefrom—were used. If a transliterated organizational name or its acronym was considered sufficiently well known, however, it was used. For example, most readers will know

