

DWELLING IN PARALLEL WORLDS

Esoteric and New Age Milieus
in the Soviet Period and Afterward



Edited by
Birgit Menzel and
Anna Tessmann

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DWELLING IN PARALLEL WORLDS

ESOTERIC AND NEW AGE MILIEUS IN THE
SOVIET PERIOD AND AFTERWARD

Birgit Menzel & Anna Tessmann (eds.)

The illustrated volume presents a collection of concise thematic essays, testimonies, and memoirs documenting the esoteric underground of the late Soviet Union, the early post-Soviet period, and beyond. Edited and annotated by an international team of distinguished specialists in history, religious studies, cultural and translation studies, and anthropology, the book also features contributions from scholar-practitioners and long-term participants in these esoteric circles.

Organized around the themes of spiritual figures, communities, and their visionary projects, the volume explores contemporary forms of spiritual transmission and the extensive transnational connections between Soviet or post-Soviet esotericists and Western New Age movements. Topics include theosophy, astrology, tarot, yoga, Vedic feminism, exorcism in the Orthodox Church, esoteric waterbirth practices, the Anastasia movement, and others.

The collection highlights both emancipatory and authoritarian-nationalist currents within these diverse spiritual milieus. It invites comparative perspectives on New Age spiritualities in socialist contexts and examines their divergent trajectories following the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

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