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## Orthodoxy and the Cold War

### Religion and Political Power in Romania, 1947-65

Lucian N. Leustean

LUCIAN N. LEUSTEAN is a Lecturer in Politics and International Relations at Aston University, Birmingham, UK. He holds degrees in international relations, law and theology and completed his doctorate in the Department of Government at the London School of Economics and Political Science.

This book examines the unique dynamics between Orthodoxy and politics in Romania. It provides an accessible narrative on church-state relations in the early Cold War period within a wider timeframe, from the establishment of the state in 1859 to the rise of Nicolae Ceaușescu in 1965. In the 1950s Romania began to distance itself from Moscow's influence, developing its own form of communism. Based on new archival resources, the book argues that Romanian national communism, outside Moscow's influence, had an ally in a strong Church. It addresses the following questions: How did the Church, which openly opposed communism in the interwar period, survive the atheist regime? How did the regime use religion to its political advantage? What was the Church's influence on Romanian politics? The book analyses the political interests of the Romanian Orthodox Church and its religious diplomacy with actors in the West, in particular with the Church of England.

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**Reviews:**

Winner of the George Blazycza Prize 2008

'This superbly researched, important book looks at how the Romanian Orthodox Church accommodated itself to atheistic communist rule. Combining an ancient tradition of working with state power with the more recent one of promoting ultra-nationalism, the Church survived the early years of communism by collaborating when necessary. Then, as Romania's communists became increasingly nationalistic, the Church joined them in the common goal of furthering nationalistic causes. Thus, like other Eastern Orthodox churches, it was neither totally craven and submissive, nor all that courageously resistant, but something in between that turned out to serve both its own interests and those of the Party-State. How this worked is a lesson for all those interested in trying to understand how religious and lay power can learn to work together in dictatorships despite having what at first seem to be harshly incompatible ideologies, but also why ultimately Orthodoxy failed to produce strong dissent.'

- Daniel Chirot, University of Washington, Seattle, USA

'An important contribution to the discussion on religion during the Cold War and the inner dynamics of communist states. Leustean argues convincingly that the period under discussion provides one of the most controversial examples of the dynamics between religion and politics in communist East-Central Europe. In addressing issues of significance to historians, social scientists, and theologians, the book will provide a valuable case-study for students of the region.'

- Dennis Deletant, School of Slavonic and East European Studies, University College London, UK

'This beautifully clear and carefully researched study, taking into account much new material, focuses on the fraught, complicated and ambiguous church-state relations in Romania, particularly in the period of 'national communism'. It tells us much about the use made of the Church by the regime, to buttress centralised power at home and to serve foreign policy objectives abroad, and is as fascinating in its way as the better-known case of Poland. This is essential reading for those interested in the survival of religion under communism.'

- David Martin, London School of Economics and Political Science, UK

'...this book is highly commended.' - *Mainstream: Christian Understanding Across Europe*

