

Reviews and Abstracts

Book Reviews

Stephane A. Dudoignon and Komatsu Hisao, eds. *Islam in Politics in Russia and Central Asia (Early Eighteenth to Late Twentieth Centuries)*. London: Kegan Paul International, 2001, 375 pp. ISBN: 0710307675.

Reviewed by: Suchandana Chatterjee, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies, Kolkata, India, suchandanachatterjee@hotmail.com

The world of Islam continues to be a focal point of study for scholars who are keen to observe the variety of social and political trends in Central Eurasia. In the post-Soviet period there is an emphasis on the cultural attributes of Islam and discussions revolve around Islam as a way of life, the social origins of the Islamic community, and diversity within Islam. Though there is considerable interest in the politicization of Islam in Central Asia, there is hardly any focus on Central Eurasia as "a frontier of Islamic Area Studies." Also, research on the intellectual history of the Muslim communities of the Russian Empire, the USSR and post-Soviet Central Asia and the evolution of Muslim politics in the past three decades is very rare. *Islam in Politics in Russia and Central Asia (Early Eighteenth to Twentieth Centuries)*, jointly edited by Stéphane Dudoignon and Komatsu Hisao, and the product of a colloquium organized by the Islamic Area Studies group of the University of Tokyo in October of 1999, tries to fill this gap in research about Muslim communities who have played a significant role in imperial Russian, Soviet and Central Asian politics. The book brings to light the evolution of Muslim politics under non-Muslim domination in Central Asia and Russia. Authors have drawn attention to the twin phenomena of co-optation and subordination of Muslim elements in Central Eurasia. The book also deals with the current situation, in which the Muslims have been thrown into the vortex of international politics.

However, there is not an overemphasis on the significance of religion in Central Asian politics. As pointed out by the editors in the preface, contributors have tried to reverse stereotyped explanations about the relationship between religion and politics. In the process it becomes possible to pinpoint the attributes of a Muslim community. It is also interesting to read about social relationships between members of the

community, the internal contradictions within that community, assertion of "identities" centered around various social groups (like the Tatar merchant class of Kazan), and the spatial development of an administrative division (municipality).

The book is divided into four parts. In the first three parts the authors have dealt with (a) the evolution of Muslim intellectual history from the late eighteenth century to the contemporary period, (b) the working of a community identity within the State and (c) intellectual activity in and around Central Asia. The creation of an urban *mentalité* through institutions and informal associations is discussed. There is an analysis of the world of Islam — the faith, social structures (communities), the literati (*udaba*) and the clergy (*ulema*). Christian Noack and Ramil Khayrutdinov strongly criticize the hypothesis that Muslim society is impervious to outside influence and bars intellectuals and leaders from the decision-making process. To supplement their argument they have shown how in 19th century imperial Russia, particularly in the Governor Generalship of Kazan, considerable local authority rested in the hands of the Volga Tatars. The evolution of the Tatar *ratusha* as a municipal body is an example of this phenomenon. The *ratusha* evolved as an organ of local self-government and was largely managed by the Tatar merchants. Noack explores the ways in which informal arrangements within the framework of an empire resulted in the integration of Muslim learned men. Noack's work is an addition to earlier accounts by Michael Kemper and Allen J. Frank about the role of Tatar Muslim traders in the business transactions of the Russian state.

Dudoignon's article on the development of strains within the Muslim religious community in late Imperial Russia deserves attention. In a comprehensive and rare treatment of *zakat* as a form

of institutionalized property, Dudoignon shows how the collection of *zakat* solidified the *umma* and strengthened community identity. Muslim institutionalized property (*zakat*, *waqf*) was the principal means of exercising spiritual control over the members of the society. This control, however, degenerated with time. Dudoignon shows how, despite such control, cleavages appeared among various sections of the Muslim community (*bais*, *ulema*, *muallims*, *imams*, etc.). Dissension also arose within *Jadidist* ranks. Dudoignon's analysis of divisive trends within the Muslim *ulema* and *udaba* reinvigorates the discussion about *Jadid* reformism and indicates the limitations in the study of *Jadidism*. According to him, the *Jadidist* discourse ignored the existence of internal divisions within *Jadid* circles and the emergence of new trends that produced fissures within the Islamic hierarchy. One such trend was the penetration of private capital and its concentration in the hands of the *imams*, which produced cracks within the *ulema*. The reformers did not like the accumulation of private fortunes by the clergy, and this became the subject of their criticism of religious leaders. Dudoignon's article sharply brings to light debates concerning the diminishing importance of Muslim institutionalized property and the overriding significance of private capital that restructured the Muslim community. Discussions surrounding the ideological conflict between the *Jadid* intelligentsia and the *ulema* were also reflected in the critical press of Ufa, Orenburg and Kazan. Studies of the local press indicate the vibrant *mentalité* of the intellectuals of Central Eurasia.

Community identity was articulated through mass movements (as in the case of the Kazakhs and the Alash movement of 1916) and demands for "independence" (as in the case of the Uzbeks as expressed by the Bukharan premier Faizullah Khojaev). Obiya Chika is concerned with Khojaev's intentions as Bukharan premier after the Bukharan Revolution of 1920. For her an understanding of the Uzbek identity of Khojaev is crucial because it finally determined his decisions about the delimitation of the Uzbek state in 1924. Such decisions marginalized the Tajiks in the decision-making process of the Young Bukharan Republic. Such analysis is very useful in understanding the present Uzbek nationalist urge to valorize Faizullah Khojaev as the national hero of Uzbekistan. Also, from Obiya's article one gets the impression that Khojaev was solely concerned with Bukhara's independence. However, there is not enough evidence during 1920-24 to substantiate that

argument. Bukharan issues lost prominence the moment the Uzbek SSR was created in 1924. Khojaev was the man responsible for it, and Obiya seems to ignore this. The articles of Thierry Zarcone and Shinmen Yasushi touch upon lesser-known aspects of Eastern Turkestan. The strong chord of unity among the Sufi *shaykhs* of Ferghana, Qashghar and Khotan during the 1930s and 1940s points to the religious linkages between the nomadic and sedentary regions of Central Asia. Such analyses differ greatly from views about regionalism and sentiment that lack an understanding of the symbiotic relationship between the nomads and the sedentary population.

Istanbul as the cradle of Central Asian intellectualism acquires prominence in Komatsu's article. Renowned as a specialist for his research on Fitrat, Komatsu carries his specialization further by highlighting *Munazara* [Debate], Fitrat's mouthpiece in Istanbul. In his article Komatsu reasserts his argument about the development of group identity among Young Bukharan *Jadid* intellectuals who tried to build networks through correspondence and informal gatherings. The author describes the ways in which Fitrat, the leading member of this group, organized his reading circle for the Ottoman journal *Sirat-ul-Mustaqim* in Istanbul.

The advent of new consciousness is the subject of Naim Karimov's article on 20th century Uzbek literature. The article attempts to look into the ways in which Uzbek literature was represented by educated reformers. From Fitrat to Abdullah Qadiry, pre-Soviet and post-Soviet generations of Uzbek litterateurs have been engaged in writing satires that caricature various aspects of religious orthodoxy. This article seems to be a tribute to the pre-Soviet *Jadidist* heritage. Abdullah Qadiry is considered to have belonged to that lineage. In Karimov's article attention is drawn to less publicized journals like *Xudosizlar* and *Mustum* as much as to popular poetry and the plays of writers who were once purged as dogmatists during the Soviet period.

Despite serious concern about re-Islamization in Central Asia, Bakhtiyar Babadjanov and Muzaffar Kamilov reflect upon the need to rehabilitate theologians like Muhammadjan Hindustani. Greatly respected and rehabilitated as a religious figure during the post-Stalinist period, Hindustani and "traditionalists" like him found their status as intellectuals who were educated in centers of Islamic learning in Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Afghanistan and the Indian part of the Kashmir

valley, and later spread contacts in the entire region. Therefore, the co-optation of religious figures that we see in Central Asia today is not an entirely new phenomenon. The Soviets practiced it in the 1960s and the present Central Asian governments (like Tajikistan) are doing the same in the post-Civil War period. Hindustani's charisma is comparable to that of Qazi Akbar Turajonzoda, argues the Tajik scholar Parviz Mullajanov. Despite their charisma, such personalities have not been able to unify their followers. There has been a schism within the ranks of the *umma*. In a case study, Mullajanov indicates that there were fissures within the Islamist movement in Tajikistan. As time passed, the young *mullahs* wavered and reoriented their ideology according to the fluid political situation in the republic. Such arguments point to the cracks within the Islamic movement, and also to the myth concerning the potency of an Islamic threat in Tajikistan.

Part Four of the book deals with the issue of the re-Islamization of Central Eurasia. Discussions revolve round both religious and cultural aspects of revival. There is an interesting observation by Aleksei Malashenko that younger generations of Muslims in the Russian Federation are inclined towards "spiritual reincarnation." As a result of their identification with common religious traditions and customs, Muslim youth in Russia are able to cohere as members of an ethnic group. Malashenko's argument therefore is that there is a very fine thread of distinction between religious revivalists and cultural revivalists. Muslims in Russia's north, the North Caucasus, the Volga region, the Urals and Siberia identify themselves as members of the Islamic *umma*. In other areas, the younger generations of Muslims are more conscious of their cultural and nationalist identity. Similar distinctions can also be made between official Islam and parallel Islam. Rafyq Muhammadshin expresses the State's renewed interest in the subject of parallel Islam, symbolized by *Tengrism* in Tatarstan that signifies the relationship between man and his environment.

Sometimes revivalism leads to social strains. This, according to Irina Kostyukova, was particularly observed in southern Kyrgyzstan, where the traditional "nomadic-pastoralist aul-based community structure" disintegrated after Soviet dissolution. In the post-Soviet period, economic hardships have resulted in a struggle for survival that led to the fragmentation of the Kyrgyz clan structure. Three distinct social groups with varied interests emerged. These social groups are villagers, city dwellers, and a marginalized group of urban migrants who moved to the cities in search of livelihood and have consistently faced the challenge of the Russian-educated intellectual class. To withstand this challenge Kyrgyz intellectuals have suggested spiritual reincarnation as a way of societal progress. From 1998 onwards, migrants and settlers have increasingly associated themselves with "the past." Such responses indicate the transformation of the Kyrgyz *mentalité*. The trend of spiritualism has affected social relations in southern Kyrgyzstan. Competition for better living between new groups of migrants and older generations of settlers has disturbed the ethos of community based on kinship ties. In the northern and central regions however, such ties remain intact and continue to influence power structures in the republic. Such divergent trends account for regionalism in Kyrgyzstan, as well as in the neighboring republic of Tajikistan.

John Schoeberlein's account of the Ferghana Valley as the cockpit of insurgency in Central Asia indicates the paranoia about Islamic revivalism. He shows how the attitude of the Central Asian governments towards Islamic radicalism has evolved with time.

This is a useful book due to its analysis of Muslim intellectual traditions in Russia and Central Asia. Discussions about the evolution of Muslim politics and the role of Muslim institutions in generating a feeling of "community" offer a rare insight into the world of tradition. Such an approach leads to fresh insights about "re-Islamization."

Mark R. Beissinger, *Nationalist Mobilization and the Collapse of the Soviet State*. Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 2002. ISBN: 0521806704, 052100148 X (pb).

Reviewed by: **Kathleen E. Smith**, Adjunct Professor, Department of Government, Georgetown University, Washington, D.C., USA, kes8@georgetown.edu

Mark Beissinger tackles one of the central failures of social scientists in recent years, the failure to anticipate the demise of the Soviet Union. In

explaining how the once seemingly impossible disintegration of the centralized Soviet state became a foregone conclusion, Beissinger draws our

attention to the role of agency in the form of nationalist mobilization. He employs event analysis to break nationalist mobilization into distinct factors of structure and agency. He then demonstrates how in times of condensed activity one can see the impact of action itself on structure. Beissinger uses the framing metaphor of “tides” to capture the dynamic of nationalism’s growth in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

Beissinger bases his study on a massive database of 6,663 protest demonstrations of over 100 participants and 2,177 mass violent events between 1987 and 1992. He and his research assistants compiled this data primarily by mining 150 different news sources covering the time span in question. The large compilation of events and their careful classification provide Beissinger with the grist for extensive statistical analysis of waves of mobilization and the effects of structural factors, most notably population density, ethnofederal status, degree of linguistic assimilation, and urbanization.

Beissinger offers a persuasive account and innovative theory regarding the “tidal” aspects of nationalism in the former USSR. He shows how events built upon each other across ethnic boundaries. In this regard, he offers a fascinating picture of the influence of early mobilization in the Baltics and the Caucasus. For those readers interested in Central Asian nationalism, Beissinger devotes equally close attention to opportunities for activism that went unrealized. In particular, he discusses the diffusion of nationalist mobilization in Uzbekistan.

This erudite and sophisticated study of the late Soviet period will be of the most interest to those who study nationalism. It offers both a novel approach to the topic of nationalism based on a close reading of major theorists and a huge quantity of data on the former Soviet republics. I offer up only two caveats to readers. For those who want insight into what Beissinger aptly labels the “spectaclelike quality” of protests that “makes [them] important site[s] of cultural transaction at which national identities are potentially formed” (p. 22), this is not a book that conveys a vivid sense of what these demonstrations were like. Although Beissinger quotes moving eyewitness testimony to describe episodes of mass violence, he never attempts to capture what these demonstrations looked and felt like.

Second, the database at the empirical heart of this study is compromised somewhat by its almost exclusive reliance on Russian and English language media and by the author’s apparent lack of consideration of the spotty, politicized and contradictory nature of reporting on demonstrations. Hence, based on three different press accounts, Beissinger refers to one demonstration as having consisted of three thousand to ten thousand people (p. 387) — a rather significant difference! Media reports not only differ drastically in their estimates of the size of protests, they also in my experience usually offer up only a sampling of slogans witnessed. This partial coverage means that the presence of a few nationalist flags and slogans may skew classification of a demonstration that was largely about a non-nationalist issue.

Ronald Grigor Suny and Terry Martin (eds.), *A State of Nations: Empire and Nation-Making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2001. xii + 307 pp., map, index. ISBN: 0195144228, 0195144236 (pb).

Reviewed by: **Richard Sakwa**, Professor of International Relations, Head of the Department, Politics and International Relations, University of Kent, Canterbury, United Kingdom, r.sakwa@ukc.ac.uk

This collection of articles makes a fundamentally important contribution to our understanding of early Soviet nationality politics. It offers a series of studies acting as windows on the complex reality that the Bolsheviks faced, while at the same time all the studies demonstrate that Bolshevik policies themselves evolved and adapted to new perceptions of reality and the changing circumstances. Certain basic principles persisted, however, and the way that

the interrelationship between the modernizing ideology and the realities of a multinational country changed is at the heart of the studies presented in this volume. The work in effect renders redundant earlier simplistic portrayals of Bolshevik policy as a given rather than being rooted in historical legacies and evolving discursive frameworks. One puts down this book having learned a lot, and not just facts but a number of different ways of seeing certain problems.

The tone is set in the introduction by Suny and Martin, where they explore the implications of the historiographical shift from interest in studying the politics of class to multifarious investigations of the idea of the nation and problems of political and national identity. In addition, the emphasis in Soviet studies has shifted from Russocentric analysis to a broader understanding of the Soviet Union as a multiethnic state. The very notion of Russianness itself is being rethought. In this connection the authors argue that an inflexible understanding of the USSR as an imperial power does not begin to do justice to the complex relationship between the peoples that made it up, and between the peoples and the authorities. A further dialectic is that between communism and nationalism, and at the same time problems of economic and national development interacted sometimes in surprising ways.

The question of empire is addressed directly by Suny in his chapter. Drawing on the work of Mark Beissinger, Suny notes the shifting normative value attached to the concept of empire. When successful, people seek to be associated with it, but when crisis hits nations they disassociate themselves faster than rats from a sinking ship! Suny's essay is an outstanding study of the ambiguity of the relationship between center and periphery in multinational states. Clearly, if the concept of empire is ambiguous then so is the notion of decolonization — as the many peoples of Russia are today discovering.

Martin's chapter provides a concise summary of his arguments in his earlier book on the Soviet Union as an affirmative action empire. His work is a powerful corrective to those who have seen the Soviet Union as little more than a Russian empire in red worker's clothes. Martin stresses that the affirmative action empire continued right through to the end of Stalin's rule despite Stalin's destruction of native elites and repudiation of many of the principles of *korenizatsiia*.

Other essays offer wide-ranging evaluation of aspects of nationality politics during the revolution and later. It is particularly welcome that some of the authors are new to the field, with some of the work presented here coming straight out of archive-based doctoral research. Joshua Sanborn discusses the process of nation building in Russia between 1905 and 1925, where he notes that from 1914 a sense of Russia as a nation began to override traditional patrimonial and exclusive representations of the state. A national identity was gradually born that

moved beyond traditional autocratic values. As he puts it, "the nation-state eclipsed the police state" (p. 95).

Peter Holquist looks at the role of population statistics and the politics of managing national groups. His study is a marvelous example of how technocracy in the twentieth century undermined democracy. Peoples were managed by numbers, and often as a result killed in great numbers. Population statistics were far from neutral and were used to manage interethnic relations.

Adeeb Khalid examines the politics of *Jadidism* (reform Islam) in Central Asia during the revolution. He notes above all the shifting role of reform Islam, sometimes for Moscow and sometimes against. More than this, *Jadidists* in Central Asia at first looked to the West as a source of inspiration, but the First World War, the collapse of the Ottoman empire and the imperial pretensions of Britain and France in the Moslem world turned many in the region towards anti-imperialistic positions, a shift swiftly exploited by the Bolsheviks.

Daniel E. Schafer's work on the birth of the republic of Bashkortostan during the revolution is a fascinating study of nation-building on the Volga. Lenin's decision to create and support a separate Bashkir republic repudiated earlier commitments to create a united Tatar-Bashkir republic. That decision in 1919/1920 still has important legacies today, despite some attempts to recreate the ideal of Idel-Ural, a Tatar-dominated Volga-Ural republic.

Douglas Northrop shifts our attention to the question of gender, empire and Uzbek identity. This is a sensitive study of changing women's attitudes towards the Bolsheviks from the perspective of women themselves. Matt Payne looks at the tensions between Russian and Kazakh workers building the Turksib Railway, connecting Novosibirsk with Tashkent, during the first five year plan (1928-1932). The "affirmative action" policies pursued by the Bolsheviks, particularly in employment practices, provoked a backlash among Russian workers that sometimes took violent forms.

A fascinating chapter by Peter A. Blitstein on Russian instruction in Soviet Russian schools between 1938 and 1953 demonstrates Stalin's continued commitment to the concept of the affirmative action empire, even as he destroyed native elites and sponsored greater Russian-language teaching. Stalin insisted that non-Russians should retain the right to be instructed in their own

language, although at the same time he still urged the practical need for non-Russians to learn Russian. The dialectic between nation-building and Russification is far more complex than is often portrayed.

The final chapter by David Brandenberger looks towards the future by examining debates within the historical profession during the Second World War. These debates assessing Russia's pre-Soviet past (whether there was something progressive in Russian imperial expansion), and in particular the history of the Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic revealed tension between internationalists and attempts to "nationalize" history. Was the

colonization of Kazakhstan a lesser evil? The focus of the chapter is the debate over A. M. Pankratova's *History of the Kazakh SSR from the Earliest Times to Our Days*, published in 1943. These historiographical debates, as Roger Markwick has demonstrated so well, began to open spaces for a paradigm shift in the role and status of academic life in the Soviet Union that prefigured the breakdown of Bolshevik ideological orthodoxy.

In short, this is a fine collection of stimulating essays and anyone wishing to understand early Soviet nationality policy should make this essential reading.

Edwin G. Pulleyblank, *Central Asia and Non-Chinese Peoples of Ancient China*. Aldershot, Eng.: Ashgate Variorum, 2002, xii + 312 pp., ISBN: 0860788598.

Reviewed by: **Stephen Chan**, Professor of International Relations, Dean of Law and Social Sciences, SOAS, University of London, United Kingdom, s.chan@soas.ac.uk

This volume is part of the Ashgate Variorum series and, as such, reproduces a number of essays as they first appeared. This means that the essays have not been updated or annotated and, because the original journal pages were used for the photographic plates from which this volume was printed, their original page numbers have also been reproduced — causing confusion only partially offset by the insertion of roman numerals to indicate the order of the essays. Different typefaces and typesizes have also been reproduced, so that while the volume is both a record as well as a selection of some of the author's best essays, it is also a frustrating and unbeautiful beast.

Pulleyblank probably deserves better, but, given the narrow and esoteric nature of his branch of sinology, we should be happy to have this volume at all. A significant figure in the debates on the historical origins of the Chinese peoples and their languages, his has always been an original and elegant contribution.

What we have here are 14 essays, dating from 1954 to 1999, so we are only five years short of an indicative record of a half century of consistently skillful work. This work is, essentially, one of comparative and forensic linguistics — tracing linguistic roots in the Chinese language and seeking to identify certain crossover points and influences from other languages. Because until recently this was a very small academic discipline, many of Pulleyblank's essays consist in a debate within a

rather small group of scholars. It is only recently that new younger scholars have brought to this debate tools to do with computer-based modeling, and Pulleyblank is unable to express any great commentary on their results.

Similarly, he relies on the work of archaeologists to furnish him with platforms for what must remain, at day's end, well-judged suggestiveness; for that is what he does. He provides well and closely argued suggestions as to what was likely a point of origin, a point of crossover, or a point of influence — and he is highly adept in indicating the difficulty or impossibility of accepting the arguments behind the suggestions of others. As he himself says, the dead — however archaeologically uncovered — cannot speak; and our knowledge of, e.g., second century Chinese contains, in any case, speculative subjectivities; never mind our knowledge of early forms of other languages.

Within all these, which to outsiders might seem significant parameters, Pulleyblank's work is simply superb. The various intersections of early Chinese with Austroasiatic (Vietnamese, Khymer, etc.), Tibetan-Burman, Turkic, Indo-European (indeed, Slavic, Greek, Latin, and even Celtic) languages are traced and dissected with a forensic skill based on an immense erudition and linguistic methodologies. Sometimes the intricacies of argument are lightened by examples of Chinese observations of their neighbors, which seem always

descriptive — rather than themselves forensic and investigative — and amazingly polite. The commonly-supposed nomadic and warlike people of about 500 AD known as the “High Carts” (although “Tall Chariots” might be a less unflattering rendition), “squat on the ground and behave unceremoniously, without any inhibitions or restraints,” meaning that they had no qualms about defecating in public.

What Pulleyblank demonstrates by the sheer weight of his materials and interpretations is that what we know as homogeneously Chinese was nothing of the sort. The origin of the Chinese was, to many extents, a series of compositions of various groups who finally politically merged. The resistance to merger is still evident today in Tibet

and other “minority groups,” often of a Transcaucasian or Turkic nature. He also indicates the debt early Chinese civilization had to influences from the west, so that what we take to be the autonomous and leading scientific development of China took place within a quite late and historically compressed period.

This book is a collection of essays for the specialist. There is an emerging paradigm, based on formal scientific modeling, that may come to regard Pulleyblank and his generation as antiquarians and antiquated. With the tools he had, however, Pulleyblank’s is a huge accomplishment. For the non-specialist there is much of interest here, a story revealed, and received assumptions heavily qualified.

Ahmed Rashid, *Jihad: The Rise of Militant Islam in Central Asia*. New Haven: Yale University Press/World Policy Institute, 2002. xviii + 281 pp., 2 maps, appendix, glossary, notes, index. ISBN: 0300093454, \$24.00.

Reviewed by: **Adeeb Khalid**, Department of History, Carleton College, Northfield, Minn., USA, akhalid@carleton.edu

Ahmed Rashid is a Pakistani journalist whose earlier book on the Taliban was made a bestseller in the U.S. by the events of September 11, 2001. That book was justifiably praised for its fine reportage and the author’s command of the intricacies of Afghan politics. Central Asia, however, is not Afghanistan, and Rashid’s grasp of factual detail (or of necessary languages) does not extend beyond the Amu Darya. In particular, Rashid’s knowledge of the history of the region and its Soviet context is woefully inadequate for the task. Chapter 2 provides a brief survey of the region’s history from prehistory to 1917, where we are told that “Mir Alisher Navai ... created the first Turkic script, which replaced Persian” (p. 23), and that the Tsarist regime developed “large cotton plantations” and established “large factories manned by Russian workers” (p. 25). Chapter 3 deals with the Soviet period, which is absolutely crucial for understanding the contemporary period. Rashid, however, does not go beyond repeating well worn Cold War clichés. The Soviet regime was little more than a thick blanket that smothered local society, but from which it emerged largely unchanged at independence. Hence the remarkable statement that, “When independence finally came, in 1991, the Central Asians, ideologically speaking, were still back in the 1920s” (p. 35). Rashid simply does not comprehend the

massive transformations wrought by seven decades of Soviet rule in local understandings of religion, politics, and culture, which produced new political and intellectual elites that were quite at home in the Soviet context. Nor can he account for the many ways in which Islam came to be intertwined with ethnic and regional identities.

All of which affects Rashid’s basic argument about the present. The core of the book is provided by four chapters on different militant Islamic movements: the Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan, the *Hizb-i Tahrir* in Uzbekistan, and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan. On the whole, this is fine reporting. Rashid spins tales of his encounters with several leaders of the movements he discusses. But while he paints a rich picture of the movements in question, he provides no context. We get little sense that these movements exist in a political context that was radically de-Islamized in the Soviet period and that remains so; that claims to Islam coexist with claims to the nation; and that other varieties of Islam — whether the “folk” or “everyday” Islam of the bulk of the population or the conservative, quietist Hanafi Islam of the majority of the *ulama* — are much more popular than the militant version discussed here. Also, Rashid’s reliance on interpreters occasionally leads to dubious outcomes. He reports attending a “clandestine

Muslim wedding" in a kolkhoz in the Ferghana valley in 1989, in which a sheep was slaughtered in "secrecy" and the "feast was held at the crack of dawn to avoid the security police" (p. 41). Now, such feasts (*to'y*) were, in the late Soviet period, a major Uzbek tradition and a basic expression of Uzbek identity, and they were traditionally held at the crack of dawn. Clearly, some of Rashid's local friends were not above pulling his leg and telling him what he wanted to hear.

Rashid explains the rise of militancy in terms of the woeful economic situation of the region and the corruption and authoritarianism of the regimes that have run Central Asian states since independence. The problems of Central Asia are internal, and will not go away with the military defeat of the militants. The solution would be market reform and the creation of a democratic system that permitted legal Islamic parties to participate. Most of these conclusions are unexceptionable, though they often arise from questionable assumptions about the contemporary situation. For Rashid, it is "natural" that Islam (i.e., militant, politicized Islam) should replace the "cultural vacuum" left by the Soviet

Union. He grossly underestimates the power of nationalism to provide other answers, or the possibilities of alternative understandings of Islam emerging.

Ultimately, this is an instant book generated by September 11. It was apparently in progress when the events of September 11, 2001, sent the author's previous book on the Taliban skyrocketing to the top of national bestseller lists. This book was then rushed through the press, and it hit American bookstores before the dust from the bombing of Afghanistan had even settled. The haste shows in the numerous contradictions, factual errors, and editing mistakes throughout the book, while the heat of the moment colors some of Rashid's conclusions, most notably the self-contradictory statement that "by joining the U.S.-led alliance against the Taliban and Osama bin Laden, [Central Asian regimes] have given their countries a tremendous opportunity for change, economic development, and democracy" (p. 11). The American public might want to believe such platitudes, but they fly in the face of Rashid's own logic in the rest of the book.

Natsuko Oka, Andrei Chebotarev, Erlan Karin, and Nurbolat Masanov, *The Nationalities Question in Post-Soviet Kazakhstan*. Middle East Studies Series No. 51. Chiba, Japan: Institute of Developing Economies, 2002. ii + 159 pp., appendices, references (paper; distributed for free).

Reviewed by: **Edward Schatz**, Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, Ill., USA, schatz@siu.edu

Of all the changes that Central Asian societies underwent in the 1990s, perhaps none was more striking than the relative stabilization in interethnic relations. The rise of tensions that began with the 1986 Almaty riots largely subsided after the violence in Osh in 1990. To be sure, not all was peaceful in the early 2000s, with small bands of Russian skinheads roaming the streets of Almaty, Uzbeks feeling themselves to be victims of discrimination in Kyrgyzstan, Tajiks feeling the same in Uzbekistan, and so on. The predictions for the worst forms of interethnic conflict, however, proved to be off base.

How post-Soviet states attempted to manage interethnic relations (i.e., the "nationalities question") has been the subject of a wide array of literature — much of it in English. Lost in the array, however, have been the voices of Central Asian scholars themselves. When Central Asian perspectives appear in English, they typically do so

through the prism of the West's social science establishment, with its range of policy concerns and theoretical preoccupations. By producing in English a volume of largely unfiltered voices from Kazakhstan, Natsuko Oka — a Research Fellow at the Institute of Developing Economies (Chiba, Japan) — and her collaborators fill an important gap. Fluent in Western and Japanese social science, Kazakh and Russian, she is perhaps uniquely qualified to do so.

After a two-page preface written by Oka, the volume's three chapters turn to the Kazakhstani variants of policies common across the "nationalizing states" of Eurasia — that is, states that spearheaded a drive to remedy titular ethnic groups for their underprivileged position. Thus, policies on language use, cultural promotion, migration, and personnel appointments receive particular attention.

The volume's major strength lies in the authors' willingness to let the contributions speak for themselves. The voice of the first contributor, Nurbulat Masanov (an ethnographer and a prominent critic of Nazarbaev), is clear. He roundly criticizes the "ethnocratic regimes of post-Soviet countries" (p. 2), depicting a "barbaric ethnic virus against modern civilization" (p. 1). A dedicated advocate of liberal democracy and neo-liberal market institutions, he is particularly affronted by the West's support for Central Asia's authoritarian rulers (p. 2-3).

Unrestrained by a central conceptual concern, Masanov theorizes freely about intergroup relations. This is a post-Soviet scholar who moves easily from Bromlei's theories of *ethnos*, to neo-modernization paradigms, to a functionalist explanation for nomadic pastoralism, to a Brubaker-like consideration of communal vs. individual identities (with a marked preference for the latter). Even if his conceptual wandering creates unresolved contradictions, we have still gained insight into the competing paradigms that confront and inspire post-Soviet academe.

In the volume's middle chapter, Erlan Karin and Andrei Chebotarev (director and research fellow, respectively, at the Central Asian Agency of Political Research in Almaty) develop a complex picture of Kazakhization in the 1990s. Their normative concern is similarly clear: the Nazarbaev regime was intent to Kazakhize state and society, and what little was done for non-Kazakhs was "mystification of civilized interethnic politics, rather than concern for the equal rights and development of the republic's many peoples" (p. 80). Critically, the piece is a cry for help to present "Kazakhstan to the world community as a state where democracy and human rights are oppressed" (p. 108).

The unfiltered nature of the voices is also the volume's weakness. First, it creates notable redundancy in empirical coverage between the first two chapters. Second, it raises an array of theoretical tensions. For example, on the one hand Masanov depicts ethnic Kazakhs as irreversibly disunited (p. 13), while on the other hand offering an ethnodemographic history as if Kazakhs were the unit of analysis (p. 16). Third, the first two chapters rely heavily on data from the mid-1990s. One cannot help wondering what newer data would reveal, especially in light of a recent, relative macro-economic stabilization. Fourth, little attention is paid to Soviet atrocities in Kazakhstan — the backdrop

against which post-Soviet nationalities policy must be evaluated.

The primary missed opportunity is the lack of attention to a question that hovers like a ghost over the volume: if the general trend is toward Kazakhization, why has Kazakhstan avoided the worst forms of interethnic conflict? To use Karin and Chebotarev's words, why is it so that "At present, the nationalities question in the republic is not quite so sharp..." (p. 105)?

Oka's contribution helps in this regard. Presenting the result of an elite questionnaire administered in 2000-2001, she front-loads the study's methodological shortcomings, sounding a note of modesty about conclusions that is strikingly absent in much English-language scholarship. This comes across as refreshingly unlike standard social scientific narratives in the West.

But Oka need not be so modest, for her piece partially resolves theoretical tensions that emerge from the volume's other pieces. Her answer — though she does not depict it as such — is to focus on the different subjectivities in Kazakhstani nationalities policy. Russian nationalists and intellectuals, Kazakh nationalists and intellectuals, and members of other ethnic minorities all have viewed Nazarbaev's nationalities policy differently. Each ethnic and professional community has experienced a different Kazakhstan. (Masanov offers a similar point [p. 58], but in the context of his eclectic piece, the point gets lost.)

Few of Oka's respondents expressed satisfaction with nationalities policy, viewing it either as too coercive of ethnic minorities or insufficient in its promotion of titular Kazakhs. Herein lies the clue. Nazarbaev appealed deeply to no one; neither did the regime deeply alienate any single, ethnically defined community. Notably, it avoided fundamentally antagonizing ethnic Slavs. So, when we read about the state's rhetorical commitment to the "friendship of peoples," we can regard it as masking a different reality of interethnic relations, which it often does (Masanov, 55). But political rhetoric may also be effective. As a politician, Nazarbaev used this rhetoric with skill, managing to appeal to different communities at a minimal level while satisfying no one deeply. As an increasingly ruthless authoritarian leader, he supplemented this rhetoric with a willingness to buy off his opponents and deal harshly with those who were unwilling to be corrupted.

Sally Hovey Wriggins, *Xuanzang: A Buddhist Pilgrim on the Silk Road*. With a foreword by Frederick W. Mote. Boulder, Colo./Oxford, Eng.: Westview Press, 1996. xxiv + 263 pp., 13 maps, 8 color plates, 42 ill., glossary, bibl., index. ISBN: 0813334071 (pb).

Reviewed by: **Karénina Kollmar-Paulenz**, Full Professor, University of Berne, Switzerland, Faculty of Humanities, Institute for the Study of Religion, Chair for the Science of Religion, karenina.kollmar-paulenz@theol.unibe.ch

The Chinese monk Xuanzang's journey to the West (from C.E. 629 to 645) marks a turning point in Chinese religious history. His translation of representative texts of Indian Buddhism set into motion a new reflection about Buddhist dogma and its vicissitudes and highly influenced the later development of Chinese Buddhism. Xuanzang's account of his travels to India and his detailed description of the countries he visited fascinated not only his Chinese countrymen, but since the 19th century, when his work became known in Europe, also found an interested audience in the West. His life and works are the subject of continuous scholarly research in Asian Studies.

The author of the book under review does not aim at offering new research results about Xuanzang. Rather she wants to provide a readable and popular presentation of his life and his achievements for the spread of Buddhism in China. Moreover, the author unfolds the richness of Chinese, Central Asian and Indian cultures in the first millennium of our era, focusing primarily on the treasures of art and architecture found alongside the route Xuanzang traveled as a documentation of the manifold civilizations of these crossroads of different cultures.

The author tries to achieve her goal in giving a vivid narrative of Xuanzang's experiences, drawing on his own writings and on his biography by Huili. In ten chapters she presents an account of Xuanzang's travels from China to India and back again, following the stations of his journey and interweaving the narration with information on the political, economic and cultural situation of the different countries and kingdoms Xuanzang visited. The presentation is rounded off by copious notes to each chapter and an afterword which sums up the legacy of Xuanzang. The text is accompanied by many maps and photographs of important architectural monuments along Xuanzang's route, illustrations of Buddhist works of art and photographs of the landscape. Many of the photographs were taken by the author herself, who traveled in the footsteps of the Chinese Buddhist

pilgrim. A glossary of technical terms, people, and dynasties and place names is also added.

The author explicitly does not aim at writing a scholarly monograph. In her own words she wants to rediscover Xuanzang "as a person of deep religious feeling with a powerful mind, a man of adventure with a strong personality and a gift for friendship" (p. xix). Thus she presents us with an imaginative, often rather simplified account of Xuanzang's life and travels. She relies on well-known secondary sources, having a tendency to limit herself to older works written nearly exclusively in the English language (only three books and articles in French are cited). This, and her tendency to simplify, are the biggest flaws of the present book because they inevitably lead to a number of mistakes in her description. These mistakes concern the history of Buddhism as well as the presentation of Buddhist philosophical issues, which are skillfully interwoven in the narrative. To mention but a few of these shortcomings: on p. 98 we read the date 563 B.C.E. for the birth of the Buddha, notwithstanding the fact that recent research has proven this date to be evidently wrong (see H. Bechert, *The Dating of the Historical Buddha*, Göttingen, 1991-92). The characterization of the *trikāya*-doctrine given on p. 151 is rather bizarre. On p. 115 we find the curious statement that monks from Mongolia studied at Nalanda (p. 115). Buddhism, however, was introduced to the Mongols in the 13th century, after Nalanda had already been destroyed. In its oversimplification the glossary of terms is often more a drawback than an actual help (see for example the explanations given for Hinduism, Jainism, and Vaisravana Buddha).

The book can be recommended to a general readership interested in the rich cultural and religious heritage of China, Central Asia and India. It makes easy and enjoyable reading. For the scholar of Asian Studies, however, the work has serious shortcomings. It not only provides a simplistic view of its topic, but the completely uncritical use of the available historical sources betrays the author's view of historiography as a means to describe how things

"really happened". This unreflective positivistic view of history does not take into account that the narrative sources on which the historian relies

always present a constructed reality. This basic flaw in the theoretical approach to the subject matter renders the book quite useless to the scholar.

Abstracts

Resul Yalcin, *The Rebirth of Uzbekistan: Politics, Economy and Society in the Post-Soviet Era*. Reading, Eng.: Ithaca Press, 2002. x + 349 pp., maps. Durham Middle East Monographs Series. ISBN 0863722814 (cloth).

Abstract written by: **Marianne Kamp**, Department of History, University of Wyoming, Laramie, Wyo., USA, mkamp@uwyo.edu

Yalcin's work, based on his dissertation research in the mid-1990s and later research, presents a comprehensive and balanced view of Uzbekistan's political and economic development since independence. Ambitious in scope, *The Rebirth of Uzbekistan* begins with a chapter that introduces Uzbekistan's deep historic past, while succeeding chapters discuss the political changes in the Soviet Union that led to Uzbekistan's independence, independent Uzbekistan's government, its economic development and policy, and its domestic issues and foreign relations.

Yalcin examines the reasons that Uzbekistan has chosen its own "Uzbek economic model," rather than following the paths that other post-Soviet states

have chosen, and also addresses the types of political change that Uzbekistan has launched, while paying attention to the shortcomings in both political and economic transitions. This is not a work of criticism, but rather an overview that should provide students, scholars, and others a thorough introduction to Uzbekistan, establishing a strong foundation for further research. While it is commendable that Ithaca Press published a high-quality hardback edition, this reader wishes for stronger editing to reduce whimsical spelling and inconsistent transliteration, and hopes that a paperback edition will make it possible to include this book in the list of books for purchase for courses on Central Asia.

Virginia Martin, *Law and Custom in the Steppe: The Kazakhs of the Middle Horde and Russian Colonialism in the Nineteenth Century*. Richmond, Surrey, Eng.: Curzon Press, 2001. xvi + 244 pp., 2 maps, glossary, appendix, bibliography, index. ISBN: 0700714057. \$75.00.

Abstract written by: **Peter B. Maggs**, Professor of Law, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, Ill., USA, p-maggs@uiuc.edu

On February 1, 2002, the Constitutional Council of Kazakhstan invalidated legislation allowing individuals to resolve disputes by private arbitration. This put an end to a non-judicial procedure that had consistently been authorized both by Soviet and post-Soviet law. While this procedure was little used, it did offer an alternative to the regular court procedure derived from Soviet and post-Soviet Russian models. As shown by Professor Martin's book, the tension between formal Russian judicial models and informal dispute settlement is not a new one for the Kazakhs.

This narrative chronicles how the Russian authorities developed Kazakh customary law from a set of orally-transmitted rules, enforced by an arbitrator selected by the parties, to a more formal procedure that constituted the lowest rung of the

colonial judicial system. This change occurred simultaneously with the increased immigration of Russian peasants and the gradual decline of nomadic herding, both of which precipitated numerous legal disputes about land and water rights. Kazakhs reacted by making sophisticated use of both the traditional legal system and the Russian courts and administrative structures to defend their rights. The chapter titles are: Nomadism and *Adat* [customary law]; Law and Empire-Building; Settlement: Cossacks, Peasants and Nomads; *Biys* [nomadic judges] and Litigants; Land Disputes; *Barimta* [driving away of livestock in revenge]. The book closes with annotated translations of a number of sample court cases, an extensive bibliography, and an excellent index.