

Rezension: Adeb Khalid: Islam after Communism: Religion and Politics in Central Asia

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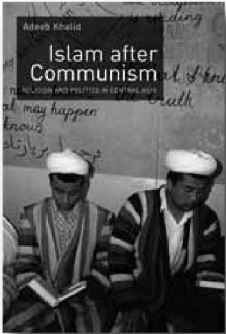
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pendence levels by the late 1990s. Moreover, due to growing income inequality, most Georgians have not benefited from recent economic gains, condemning more than half of the population to live below the national poverty line.¹³ It is therefore unlikely that social and economic hardships played only a secondary role during the Rose Revolution, as suggested in this volume. Interviews with ordinary citizens who participated in the demonstrations might have highlighted deeply felt socio-economic concerns, which are still widespread in post-2003 Georgia, severely eroding the popularity of President Saakashvili.

Nevertheless, *Enough!* is an empirically rich case study. Every scholar who intends to say something meaningful about the Rose Revolution will have to read this book. In fact, equally well-crafted studies of the revolutions in Serbia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan are needed to enrich our theoretical discussions about the causes and dynamics of the coloured revolutions. Unfortunately, our theoretical conclusions are rarely based on sound empirical foundations. Karumidze and Wertsch not only avoid this fallacy, but help in building these foundations.

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Adeb Khalid, Islam after Communism, Religion and Politics in Central Asia, Berkeley 2007 (University of California Press), 253 S.

In the introduction to this book, Adeb Khalid sets his stall in sharp opposition to accounts that focus on primordialist civilizational discourses and the inevitability of conflict on civilizational grounds. He takes particular aim at the by now (in)famous work of Samuel Huntington and his 'Clash of Civilizations' argument.¹ In framing this study of Islam in Central Asia, Khalid takes issue with such essentialist accounts of Islam and/or those that frame religious belief into mutually exclusive categories of moderate and extreme. For Khalid such accounts 'efface history' (p. 7), ignoring the social and religious diversity of Islamic belief and practice, and the disparate and complicated nature of interactions between Muslims and their neighbors.

Having framed his work in these terms, Khalid goes on to provide the reader with an accessible introduction to Islam in Central Asia in the late 19th and 20th

13 United Nations Human Development Programme, Human Development Report 2006. Accessible at: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/global/hdr2006/>; retrieved on 23 November 2007.

1 See, for example, Samuel Huntington, The Clash of Civilizations? In: Foreign Affairs, 72 (1993) 3, pp. 22-49.

century, beginning with the impact of modernizations such as the Jadiids and their disputes with more traditional religious leaders in the pre-tsarist and Tsarist period, going on to trace the continuities and discontinuities of the Soviet period, where the modernizing tendencies of the Jadiids were initially harnessed towards Soviet ends before being repressed in the Stalinist purges of the 1930s. The fourth chapter, on Islam as National Heritage, details the manner in which religious belief in Central Asia became divorced from the political and to a large extent public sphere, but where Islamic practices became firmly embedded within Soviet discourses (and indeed cultural and social enactments) of 'national' tradition.

His fifth and sixth chapters deal with more contemporary issues, reflecting the title of the book. In chapter five, entitled "The Revival of Islam", Khalid highlights the manner in which Islam has been reintroduced into the public sphere – with the focus largely on the a relatively muted reintroduction of Islam into the public discourse in the post-Soviet period, together with some (largely) symbolic attempts by Central Asian leaders to harness Islam towards their political ends. In a region where the threat of Islamic extremism frequently dominates written accounts Khalid's focus in this chapter is unusual in discussing two Islamic social movements that are usually ignored – the development and expansion of Turkish Gülen schools and the introduction of Tablighi Jama'at, a Muslim 'self-help' organization with roots in India (pp. 123–124). His sixth and seventh chapters, entitled 'Islam in Opposition' and 'the Politics of Antiterrorism' tackle the bogeyman of Islamic extremism. These chapters focus on the impact of the Tajik civil war on the policies of Uzbekistan in dealing with organized opposition, including opposition mobilized through social networks in part based on common Islamic beliefs. In these chapters he successfully highlights the potential for radicalization that repressive government policies hold – and indeed that were realized to a large extent in the 1990s in the form of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), and offers a sober assessment of the extent of the actual (as opposed to imagined) threat that such movements actually present to states in the region. The book concludes with an assessment of the events in Andijan and the future potential trajectory of Islam in Central Asia.

In a world where Islam in all too often branded as a reactionary belief system that fosters violence and terror, Khalid's book offers a timely assessment of Islam in Central Asia in both historical and contemporary contexts. While largely an introductory account for readers new to the region and its history, he offers some interesting nuggets for the more informed readers – two in particular struck this reader – his note on page 212 (note 11) on the Latinization of Central Asia languages in the 1920s and a second note on page 213 (note 19) correcting standard accounts of the delineation of Central Asian states as part of Soviet nationalities policy. Khalid's range and depth of scholarship is impressive – drawing from English, French, Russian, Uzbek and Arabic language sources, while the text is peppered with interesting personal anecdotes that offer the

reader further useful insights. If I have to find fault with this fine book, it would be that it focuses heavily on Uzbekistan to the relative marginalization of other Central Asian states – Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan in particular, are hardly covered, with the text on Turkmenistan somewhat dated by the death in late 2006 of President Niyazov. However this is a minor quibble – given the length and target audience of the book choices had to be made and the heavy focus on Uzbekistan is appropriate given the importance of the state and events there to the region. I would recommend the book to anyone interested in understanding the role that Islam plays in contemporary Central Asia and the reasons why its role is so different from other regions of the world with Muslim majorities. It offers a timely response to essentialist accounts of civilizational clash and/or geopolitical analyses based on crude zero sum calculations that ignore the distinctiveness of the Central Asian experience.

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Askold Krusheknycky, An Orange Revolution. A Personal Journey through Ukrainian History, London 2006 (Harvill Secker), 360 S.

Revolutions always present opportunities for retrospection, analyses, predictions, and speculations. Their attraction for social scientists and politicians increases when the revolutions are contemporary events as is the case with the colored revolutions. The recent avalanche of attempts to effect regime change in a few post-Soviet states was triggered by electoral fraud by which those in government tried to stay in power. Due to the large number of people involved, the scale of developments and the dramatic outcome,

the Ukrainian revolution represents a case study worthy of detailed analysis. This is the goal of Askold Krusheknycky's journalistic book written in the aftermath of the 2004 events and based on solid documentation and subjective perceptions, due in large part to his Ukrainian origins.

The author's connections with Ukraine and his position as a journalist with well-known newspapers has allowed him to reconstruct in a few hundred pages the recent history of the former USSR's second largest country. In a manner close to historical institutionalism, Krusheknycky describes the territorial development of the state, the political leadership and transition period up to the Orange revolution. Special emphasis is placed upon the relationship between Ukraine and Russia and the obedience to the latter of Kravchuk and Kuchma, the two men who served as Ukrainian President from 1992 until 2004. Histori-