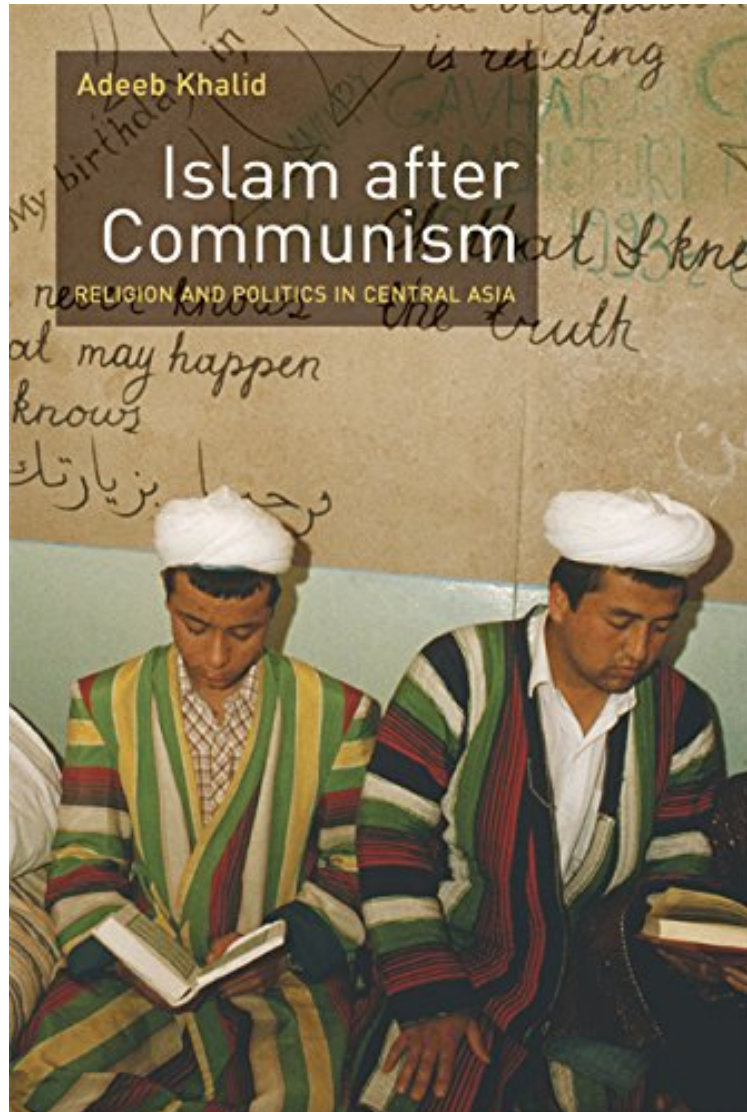


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Islam after Communism: Religion and Politics in Central Asia

Adeeb Khalid

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achieves a number of important goals that work in post-soviet literature and Islamic Studies cannot achieve operating separately. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. This is a thorough book. The content is processed ...By Roar Ljoekjell This is a thorough book. The content is processed and presented in a scholarly way, accessible also for non-scholars. The emphasis is on historical, political and social aspects of Islam in the area. I would have wished more on individual spirituality and belief system. 3 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Interesting Account of Soviet Impact on Central Asian Muslims By Daniel Garcia [*Note: The following review is of select portions of the book, *Islam after Communism*, by Adeb Khalid. It takes into account the Introduction, Chapters 1-3 and 5, and the Conclusion] Islam after Communism is an attempt to convince the reader that the notion of "Islam" as a fixed set of (1) rules, (2) practices, (3) ideas--indeed, a fixed anything--that exists independent of political, economical, and other historical changes, is a fallacious assumption. The author, Adeb Khalid, attempts to accomplish this feat primarily through the examples of the profound transformations the seventy-three-year period (1918-1991) of Soviet authority rendered in the religious, political, educational, and cultural understandings of Islam by the Muslim populations of Central Asia. His basic concern seems to be the deconstruction of the "Western essentialist" view of Islam: That it is (1) political by nature, (2) intolerant of other ideologies (religious, economic, and political), (3) oppressive to women, (4) militant in achieving its aims, and (5) that the most important thing to EVERY Muslim is that the tenets of Islam be upheld at ALL costs. Although the author is rather opinionated (and repetitive), he is a good story teller. The book is an interesting, smooth read. I recommend it for anybody interested in the history of the Soviet Union, the Communist influence in Central Asia and on Central Asian Muslims, and/or the history of the Muslim peoples. This is a history book, not a book about Islamic religion per se.

Adeb Khalid combines insights from the study of both Islam and Soviet history in this sophisticated analysis of the ways that Muslim societies in Central Asia have been transformed by the Soviet presence in the region. Arguing that the utopian Bolshevik project of remaking the world featured a sustained assault on Islam that destroyed patterns of Islamic learning and thoroughly de-Islamized public life, Khalid demonstrates that Islam became synonymous with tradition and was subordinated to powerful ethnonational identities that crystallized during the Soviet period. He shows how this legacy endures today and how, for the vast majority of the population, a return to Islam means the recovery of traditions destroyed under Communism. *Islam after Communism* reasons that the fear of a rampant radical Islam that dominates both Western thought and many of Central Asia's governments should be tempered by an understanding of the politics of antiterrorism, which allows governments to justify their own authoritarian policies by casting all opposition as extremist. Comparing the secularization of Islam in Central Asia to experiences in Turkey, the former Yugoslavia, and other secular Muslim states, the author lays the groundwork for a nuanced and well-informed discussion of the forces at work in this crucial region.

Khalid's work is an important contribution to an understanding of the increasingly plural character of Islamic societies and how political Islam should be understood in particular regional and societal contexts.