

***Islam after Communism: Religion and Politics in Central Asia.* By Adeeb Khalid. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2007. xii + 241 pp. \$55.00 cloth, \$ 22.95 paper**

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Many reading this compelling book will sympathize with Adeeb Khalid's frustrations at how Islam is frequently misunderstood. These frustrations relate to the homogenization and demonization of Islam, particularly after the collapse of the Cold War and more recently, September 11, 2001. This homogenization prevents our understanding of Islam as a spatially varied, culturally contingent phenomenon, and unhelpfully ignores important temporal differences in this world religion. As Khalid neatly writes: "The politicization of Islam nowhere has a direct relationship with piety" (139).

Homogenization and demonization have often clouded contemporary understandings of Islam in Central Asia. The often encountered practice of characterizing Islam as "bad Islam" has fed into an overall discourse of danger that we see popularized and often internalized by Western political elites. Without a firm grasp of cultural specificities of Islam in Central Asia, we cannot understand the multiple relationships encountered there between the individual and society, or among nation, religion, and politics.

One of Khalid's various contributions is that he encourages us to analyze Islam in Central Asia in the context of Islam in other geographic areas. As the author writes, a key effect of the Soviet era had been to isolate Central Asian Islam from outside influences. The collapse of communism once again exposed this region, and scholarship itself should be conducted in this spirit. Second, Khalid provides the "long view" of Islam in Central Asia, showing how each major historical period must be taken into account if we are to fully appreciate the ways in which Islam evolved. So, for example, we cannot understand Islam on the Kazakh steppe without understanding the reign of Catherine II or, again, the special position of Bukhara in Central Asia without the context of its protectorate or its singular concentration of Islamic scholars. Third, to understand Islam's relation with communism we need to better appreciate the nature of Soviet communist ideology. Soviet communism was not

Russian imperialism in its aims (even if it has come to be perceived as such by many contemporary political and cultural elites). Its emancipatory agenda appealed to modernizing Islamic elites. Furthermore, Islamic heritage was not denied as part of a broader Soviet nationalities policy that permitted cultural expression “national in form, socialist in diktat.” Soviet communism and Islam thus were able to coexist, and “parallel Islam” therefore was not necessarily oppositional.

The book underscores two major legacies of the Soviet era for Islam in Central Asia. First, Islam was localized and rendered synonymous with custom and tradition (83). This process of de-modernization was accompanied by a second main effect, the de-Islamization of public discourse. The post-Soviet grassroots revival of Islam is again partly a search for cultural authenticity but in the framework of now-independent states. Nationalization takes place “in Soviet parameters” (131). And just as this journey was largely apolitical in the Soviet period, so it is now.

In those exceptional cases where the revival of Islam has become politicized, Khalid makes important distinctions among its three most prominent manifestations: Tajikistan’s Islamic Renaissance Party (IRP), Uzbekistan’s Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), and the region’s Hizb-ut-Tahrir al-Islami (HTI). While the first became instrumental to a modernized view of the new Tajik republic and pitted the IRP against the neo-Soviets (a process very much linked to regional identities and the failure of Tajik nationalism), Uzbekistan’s IMU, while also national, was specific in its violent aim to overthrow President Islam Karimov. The IMU’s strength, Khalid posits, has been exaggerated. The HTI, by contrast, aims to establish a caliphate through non-violent means. Despite these important differences, the author reminds us that all three political movements shot to prominence for domestic reasons: they “are not implantations of a global Islamist movement with a monolithic agenda” (164). The final chapter illustrates how post-Soviet governments have used the so-called Islamic threat to justify blanket repression, and in conclusion Khalid urges scholars and practitioners to embrace Islam’s varied forms. He also suggests important future research agendas: “What are the differences between the various movements in their inspiration, their goals, and their base of support? Where do such movements fit in the post-Soviet religious and political landscapes of Central Asia? Are these movements seamlessly connected to transnational Islamic networks, or are they primarily expressions of domestic opposition to existing regimes?” (141–142).

Khalid succeeds in stating many heretofore-unwritten assumptions succinctly and persuasively. The work serves a number of audiences. It appeals both to scholars of and newcomers to the region. Khalid's text is peppered with a good dose of common sense, as well as indispensable detail germane to an area specialist. The author manages simultaneously to tell the story of Islam in Central Asia and the modern and contemporary history of Central Asia. This is at the heart of the book's message: we cannot understand the one without the other.

***Religion and the Politics of Ethnic Identity in Bahia, Brazil.* By Stephen Selka. Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2007. 175 pp. \$59.95 cloth, \$29.95 paper**

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Stephen Selka's consideration of black ethnicity in the state of Bahia's capital, Salvador, and the town of Cachoeira, two centers for Afro-Brazilian Candomblé, is both a very North American and a very Brazilian study of the entanglements of race and religion. It seems Brazilian because it draws deftly from debates and categories of analysis salient in Bahia, especially claims about borders between culture and politics, the roles of syncretism in religious and national life, and the identification of blackness as an ethnic, rather than racial, status. And it feels notably late-twentieth-century North American due to its pragmatic rhetoric and folksy tone; its reliance on an anthropological "practice theory" concerned with the interplay of individual agents and structural limits on human possibility; and because Selka's parsing of debates *via* a wealth of mainly Brazilian and North American sources presents a U.S.-based, Brazilianist, social scientific "state of the art" circa 2007–2008. In other words, this is a nuanced study grounded in multiple traditions, yet attentive to evidence in Bahia and to the concerns of those on whom it rests.

Religion and the Politics of Ethnic Identity reflects on and reflects the mutual curiosity, influences and, at times, hostilities, of differentially situated actors concerned with African heritage, religion, and