

Beyond Oil and Radical Islam: From Classifications to Links of Economy and Religion in Central Asia

Tuesday, May 15th, 2012, 5 pm

Markets, Money and Credit in Colonial Central Asia

Lecture by Wolfgang Holzwarth

This contribution to the lecture series deals with a chapter of the economic history of Central Asia. It enquires into shifting economic and social networks in the colonial period, focusing on two related fields: first, the integration of agricultural and pastoral production into Eurasian market networks. Second, the changing financial infrastructure, where Russian banks superseded Hindu bankers and moneylenders as major financial agents, and (Central Asian) Muslim moneylenders increasingly occupied the intermediate space between European companies and the rural population. Some concluding remarks will address the question of how these processes were reflected and evaluated in Central Asian and Russian debates.

Wolfgang Holzwarth is a senior researcher at the Collaborative Research Centre "Difference and Integration" based at the Oriental Institute, University of Halle-Wittenberg, and the Max-Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, Halle. He has a background in Social Anthropology and Iranian Studies, and received his PhD in 1987 from Free University Berlin.

His publications focus on the history, society and culture of Central Asia and Northern South Asia since the early modern period.

This lecture series is a cooperation between the Zentrum Moderner Orient (www.zmo.de), the Querschnittsbereich Islam in den Gesellschaften Asiens und Afrikas, Institut für Asien- und Afrikawissenschaften, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin (iaaw.hu-berlin.de/islam) and the Competence Network Crossroads Asia (www.crossroads-asia.de).

GEFÖRDERT VOM

During the Soviet era, religion and economy were conceived as distinct, even mutually opposed spheres with their own rationales (such as 'rational actors' on the one hand and 'irrational' 'otherworldly' motivations on the other). A focus on the impact of religious ideas and practices on economic processes - and vice versa - serves to question the common perception of Central Asia as a region determined by either dangerous religious movements or lucrative oil and gas reserves. The lecture series interrogates how 'religion' and 'economy' are shaped and negotiated through everyday strategies and practices. How are separations, links, cross-overs and mutual constitutions of 'religion' and 'economy' conceived and put into practice by Central Asian actors? The lecture series seeks to foreground Central Asian debates on the relationship between religious and economic domains in order to query these social, political and social science categories.

Venue:

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