

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

Tuesday, March 27th, 2012, 5 pm

Rethinking Islam and the Soviet Economy

Lecture by Eren Tasar

Money and religion have always gone hand in hand. This talk will explore the ways that the economic status and activity of many Central Asian Muslims remained deeply connected with Islamic practices and institutions during the decades following World War II. It will offer an overview of the social and economic setting of Islam in Soviet Central Asia and then focus on a series of specific topics related to Islam and Soviet economy. These will include charity, beggars, the role of mosques in communities, and the response of Soviet officials to the continued existence of religion and poverty in a society which was supposed to eradicate both.

Eren Tasar teaches Central Asian history at the Department of History at Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri, USA. His research interest is the social history of Muslim communities in twentieth century Central Asia as well as Eurasia broadly understood. He received his PhD in the History Department at Harvard University in 2010 and has lectured on aspects of the region's modern history at universities in Europe, the United States, Russia and all five Central Asian republics. Currently he is working on a book project, entitled *Soviet and Muslim: the Institutionalization of Islam in Central Asia, 1943-1991*.

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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