

ethnic cleansing.<sup>2</sup>

The most valuable lesson from Millward's account is the exploration of multiple sources. Even though the Chinese state restricts access to archives and information on the ground, Millward combines overseas archives and literary evidence with social media technologies to circumvent official censorship and constructs a coherent historical perspective crucial for our understanding of political crises in post-1949 Xinjiang and the dilemmas of enforcing a Han-centered modernity in this multi-ethnic region. In short, *Eurasian Crossroads* contains new information and critical insights. Its clear prose and argumentation make it the perfect textbook for classes on Silk Road studies and instructors can supplement it with other publications.<sup>3</sup> This exciting work shows us an academic path to transcend the Sinicizing narratives of Xinjiang in the global public arena and to pursue longitudinal research into the lived experiences of Uyghurs at home and abroad.

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Adeeb Khalid. *Central Asia: A New History from the Imperial Conquests to the Present*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2021. 576 pp. (ISBN: 9780691161396). doi:10.22679/avs.2022.7.2.009  
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Adeeb Khalid's latest book is a welcome contribution to the field of Central Asian studies and, more generally, global history. Yet, it is quite difficult to pin down the disciplinary house for this book and this should be taken as a positive quality of this monumental work. In fact, Khalid's study eludes simplistic name-tagging and categorisation, instead making the most of interdisciplinarity with references to political theory, sociology, political economy, and the broader arts and humanities.

The book is divided into four macro-sections, plus an introduction and a conclusion. The "Introduction" helps the reader situate Central Asia in global history, illustrating and analysing the various polities, both nomadic and sedentary, that have crossed and swept the area from initially recorded times to the advent of Russian colonisation. The first section, "Empire", narrates the modern history of the region through its dialogue with, and then incorporation into, the Qing and Romanov empires. The second section, named "Revolution" and the longest of the book (eight chapters), focuses on the crumbling of the two abovementioned empires, the impact of World War I and World War II on the

<sup>2</sup> "The Xinjiang Police Files. Accessed on June 20, 2022 from <https://www.xinjiangpolicefiles.org/>.

<sup>3</sup> Ilham Tohti, *We Uyghurs Have No Say: An Imprisoned Writer Speaks* (New York: Verso, 2022), Morris Rossabi, *China and Uyghurs* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2022), and Sayragul Sauytbay and Alexandra Caveliu, *The Chief Witness: Escape from China's Modern-day Concentration Camps* (London: Scribs, 2021).

region, and the role that the October Revolution and Stalinisation played in catalysing social, political, and cultural change in Central Asia. The third section, “Communism”, analyses the development that the five soviet socialist republics of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan underwent in the period of the Cold War as well as the gradual (and violent) incorporation of Xinjiang within Communist China. The fourth and last section, “Postcommunism,” describes the way in which the Central Asian republics navigated their way through the fall of the Soviet Union, their newly independent status under international law as sovereign states, their nationalising processes, and their elements of continuity with the past. The ‘Conclusion’ of the book wraps up the millennia-long history of the region, before offering a few considerations on the present and future trajectories that the Central Asian states may follow, especially in the light of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The book is an impressive tour de force on several centuries of history of the area. Within this monumental coverage of history, one of the most valuable aspects of the book is the inclusion of an analysis pertaining to the dynamics affecting Xinjiang, a part of China much talked about because of the human rights situation there but not so much studied or understood, especially since it is not part of the discourses around Central Asia that form the common currency of expertise and punditry in political and diplomatic circles. In this respect, therefore, Khalid offers a major service to all those interested in Central Asia by providing a broad, inclusive, and inter-connected reading of Central Asia, one that is not limited to the superficial, inaccurate, and, frankly speaking, colonial appellation of the region as ‘the-stans’ but rather one that is capable of grasping the historical, ideological, religious, cultural, and most importantly, human connections across neighbouring territories and areas.

Another merit of Khalid’s approach to the history of Central Asia is certainly that of offering a view of events that is chronicled not from a single viewpoint but rather from multiple, intertwined, and mutually complemented perspectives. The reader benefits now from the bird’s view of macro-history, paying attention to global, structural processes of transformation, development, and change; now from the meso-level analysis at the level of governments, societies, or reforms; now from the micro-level focus on specific histories and narratives of and about individuals, specific societal groups, classes, and professions. This polyphony of perspectives has of course an obvious impact on the book in that Khalid does not offer a theorisation, let alone a justification, of the kind of history he is adopting. In this respect, therefore, the book often presents events as if they were chronicles, as opposed to the manifestation of a particular reading of history espoused by the author. For example, the book is sub-titled as a “new” history of the region but a discussion of how this novelty is situated in the broader field is not offered. At the same time, this is a form of narrative that is inclusive, engaging, and makes justice by addressing several of the aspects of Central Asian life that are way too often neglected by ‘big histories’ – class, gender, the environment, literature, local ideologies, and more. The continuous shifts from one level of analysis to the other also impact the accessibility of the book, which is at times syncopated and haphazard, with slight ruptures and staccatos. Yet, this is an honest price to pay if the result is an omnicomprehensive view of Central Asia in its active and thriving humanity, with all its physical

and ideational connectivity, and not just in its passive historical significance.

Throughout the book, Khalid is also adamant, and correct, in dispelling some of the unfortunately persistent myths surrounding Central Asia especially (but not only) in the Western literature – the Great Game, the isolation of the region from the global political economy, the threat of Islamic terrorism, and the shakiness of political order. In this respect, the fact that Central Asia is ‘normalised’ by showing its similarities to other parts of the world and its non-unique character when it comes to navigating colonial contexts and managing the legacies thereof is refreshingly decolonial. Yet, the book itself is not immune from the allure of some sedimented tropes in the literature. For example, the book seems to embrace the notion that the Central Asian states were “catapulted to independence” a bit uncritically, despite recent work being done on how local elites in the mid-1980s prepared themselves for the eventuality of sovereignty, even if unwanted. Furthermore, while the book rightfully stresses the lack of authentic indigenous calls for Central Asian unity, it still paints a picture of contemporary intra-regional cooperation as a chimera. While certainly far from the standards set in other regions, Central Asia is an area where dialogue, coordination, and pragmatic cooperation have found a place and nourishment, especially in the last five years.

Having said this, the book constitutes an eminent opus that not only re-centres Central Asia in global history but dignifies it with the local agency, complexity, and liveliness that is too easily forgotten in much scholarship on the region. The book should be an introductory reading to all modules on Central Asia and would certainly enrich the libraries of those interested in history in general.

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Fatma Asli Kelkitli. *Turkish-Russian Relations: Competition and Cooperation in Eurasia*. London: Routledge, 2017. 146 pp. (ISBN 9781138218284) Hardback. doi:10.22679/avs.2022.7.2.010

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Eurasia has long been the focus of global leaders and, since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, has also become a battleground for geopolitical influence and regional supremacy. Russia and Turkey are among those players for whom Eurasia is an area of vested interests and the relations between these two powers are strategically important. Fatma Asli Kelkitli’s book, *Turkish-Russian Relations: Competition and Cooperation in Eurasia*, is of value to experts, international relations professionals, and all those interested in the geopolitical intricacies of postures and positions in Eurasia. Both before and after this publication there have been attempts to understand the nature and range of fluctuations from convergence to confrontation in the geopolitical strategies of the partners, but this volume is distinguished by two components. The first is the careful selection of the theoretical foundation, which