

Making Uzbekistan: Nation, Empire, and Revolution in the Early USSR.

Adeeb Khalid. Cornell University Press. 2015. xix + 440 pp. (ISBN-13: 9780801454097)

Adeeb Khalid's book provides an excellent narrative of the construction of 1920s Uzbekistan. Khalid successfully compiles an impressive and outstanding account of the unfolding events in the making of Uzbekistan in the tumultuous epoch of the Russian Revolution as a result of his encyclopedic comprehension of the sociohistorical considerations of the period and his unique linguistic capabilities. The book relies on a rich array of both Russian and Central Asian sources. He eloquently presents all that primary data within an interpretative framework to explain the transformation of Central Asia during the early Soviet period.

The *fin de siècle* created the necessary social/political conditions for significant transformations vis-à-vis Muslim modernization in tsarist Central Asia. It is important to reveal how political, social, cultural, and demographic shifts altered the nature of Central Asian society from the tsarist conquest of 1865 to 1923 when Bolshevik authorities subjected the region to strict Soviet rule. Equally, it is essential to decipher the impact of Russian imperial conquest on its Central Asian periphery. At the turn of the century – mainly due to the effects of the Age of Discovery, the Age of Enlightenment, and the Age of Revolution – a large part of the Muslim world had begun to lose much of its cultural and political sovereignty to occupiers from Europe. The impact of the European Enlightenment period and its subsequent implications for Western sociopolitical, economic, scientific, and technological advancements facilitated this historical development. Equally, there was a massive shift of power due to the declining Ottoman Empire, which led to the subordination of Muslims. The subjugation by the Tsarist Russian Empire prompted the Muslims of Central Asia to question their beliefs as well as their aspirations, creating skepticism over whether the success of Western occupation was due to the inferiority of their Islamic ideals. Out of these self-criticisms came a variety of responses, including the adaptation of Western principles, advocating the separation of religion and politics – *laïcité*, and calls for armed struggle against the Western colonial powers. Khalid marvelously diagnoses all the epical changes that were taking in Central Asia.

Most certainly, the successes of European and Russian advances into all of the historic centers of world civilization – India, China, and Islamic Central Asia/Middle East – set off a number of reactions ranging from indifference to multiple forms of resistance and accommodation. This involuntary and to some degree forced interaction with the West convinced some intellectuals not only in tsarist Russia but all across the Islamic world to question/reevaluate the existent standards vis-à-vis cultural tenets and education in conjunction with political, economic, and social norms/practices. The main conclusion was that Islamic modernism was a goal toward which all peoples had to strive in order to face the challenges posed by European colonial expansion. The pursuit and realization of these objectives entailed serious reforms within the indigenous cultures pertaining to Muslim geography. Uzbekistan, with traditional Islamic cultural centers such as Bukhara and Samarkand, was also predisposed to these dramatic transformations.

The reformist Jadidist movement was at the heart of the debates, which was initiated by the Crimean Tartar Ismail Gaspirali in 1883 and later gained prominence among Uzbek intellectuals. They were sympathetic to a socialist revolution, which they hoped would not only get away from Russian oppression but also get rid of feudal and tribal elites in their respective communities. The movement derived its name from its advocacy of the *usul-i cedid*, the new method of teaching the Arabic alphabet to children and conceptualizing a new way of looking at the world. Jadidism, around the Bolshevik Revolution, was a socially totalizing movement ultimately revolutionary in its expectations and consequences.

Jadidism appeared in Uzbekistan in the closing years of the 19th century, a generation after the Russian conquest. It focused on the notions of progress, development, rise, and growth. The Jadidist movement believed that the Muslim society of Uzbekistan was in grave crisis, in which its survival depended on significant and radical changes with respect to traditional Islamic education. The conviction was that the only way for Central Asian Muslims to combat growing Russian colonialist policies and influence in the region was the reformation of Islam and spreading education. This change through enlightenment and modern learning would provide an adequate remedy to all the maladies of the Islamic community in Uzbekistan. Its proponents, the Jadids, formulated a ruthless critique of their society based on a fascination with modernity. The Jadids widely shared the sense of decline. In a sense, reform was necessary to continue to exist as a coherent social/cultural/religious entity.

Up until the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, the Jadids' perspective on Russia and Europe was on the positive end. The Jadids wanted to incorporate all the knowledge, wealth, and military might associated with these advanced societies into Uzbekistan. This high esteem for Western knowledge, order, discipline, and power pushed them to obtain all those aspects for their communities. Although there was this fascination with the West, it would be fair to argue that that fascination cohabitated with a fear that if Muslim societies did not catch up, their situation would become even more challenging in the not very distant future. The practically unchallenged encroachment of Western powers at the turn of the century over the rest of the planet sustained these fears. The Jadidist movement was also kept under unrelenting surveillance and repression. Jadidism was wiped out by the Bolsheviks since the concept of nation-state formation and society's breaking of the colonialist impasse was considered a likely option to the totalitarian Soviet system. However, despite this adverse outcome, the Jadidist movement did a great service to the development of national self-consciousness in Uzbekistan and played an indispensable role in the formation and development of a national liberation ideology. Most importantly, the movement reminded the Turkic/Muslim populace of the region of ideals such as freedom, national pride, great ancestors, and rich cultures that were put down in a dormant phase by tsarist Russia. Their action program became a model for future generations. The historical merit of the Jadids was their attempts to uplift the society starting from the fundamentals, i.e., education, and its development.

Following a well-detailed section on the burgeoning of the reform movement and intelligentsia in Turkestan in tsarist times, the remaining chapters of the book can be broadly divided into three parts. The first part investigates the agitated and perilous period up to 1924, focusing mainly on the notion and idealization of an autonomous Turkestan and covering the impact of events ranging from the February Revolution to the Muslim modernist republic in Bukhara to the Soviet engineering of a Soviet Central Asia. The author in this first part displays the importance of Turkestan and Bukhara to the Islamic world. The second part addresses the nature of the cultural revolution of the era. The chapters in this section feature the different phases of cultural radicalism of the period and detail the idea of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan in the making as two definite national republics. The final part reveals the political and cultural changes that took place after 1926, when the Soviets debuted the ideological and cultural confrontation in the region, all the way to the decimation of the Uzbek intelligentsia in 1938.

To truly appreciate *Making Uzbekistan: Nation, Empire, and Revolution in the Early USSR* by Adeeb Khalid, readers should be familiar with the general history of the late Russian Empire and the early Soviet period. Consequently, it is a must-read for specialists and graduate students focusing on Central Eurasia. The book yields an exceptionally compelling account of the origins of the modern nations of Central Asia.

Cagri Erdem
Keimyung University