

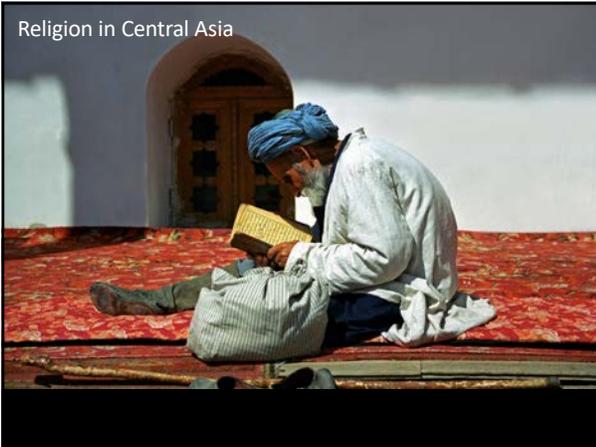
Russian and Central Asian Politics
April 1, 2019



Announcement

- Assignment #1 grades have been posted. Feedback has been sent to anyone who did not get full points.
- Reminder: Assignment #2 due Saturday night midnight.

Religion in Central Asia



Soviet Religion Policy

- Official atheism.
- Most churches, mosques and synagogues were closed or destroyed.
- Some were turned into storage buildings for equipment or planetariums (in city centers).



РЕЛИГИЯ-ЯД
БЕРЕГИ РЕБЯТ



Religion is poison!
Save the children!



Religion and Politics in Russia

- Massive church renovation and construction since 1992.
- Funded by state, individual and corporate donations.
- Alliance of state and Russian Orthodox Church.
- More tolerance of mosques and synagogues.
- Resistance to evangelicalism.





Religion and Politics in Central Asia

- Differentiate: cultural Islam from religious Islam.
- Differentiate: religious revivalism from religious extremism.
- Religious extremism: is it a threat?
- Central Asian leaders have believed so.



Localized Activity

- Fergana Valley, Uzbekistan
- Parts of Tajikistan
- From these roots:
 - IMU - Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan
 - Hizb ut-Tahrir (Fergana Valley)
 - IRP - Islamic Renaissance Party (Tajikistan)



Roots of Religious Extremism

- Additional factors:
 - proximity to Afghanistan (led by extremists in 1990s)
 - religious extremists are highly critical of secular, "heretical" leaders



Roots of Religious Extremism

- Additional factors:
 - loose connections between narco-trafficking and extremist groups
 - reservoir of discontent: large, educated youth population that is under- or unemployed.



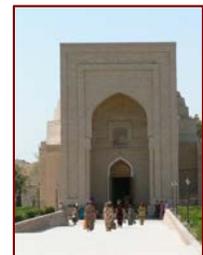
State Policies on Religions in CA

- Response:
 - State control over religion: maintenance of Soviet-era religion regulatory bodies.
 - Co-optation (support but definition).
 - Demonization in schools and the media.
 - Repression.



State Policies on Religions in CA

- Response:
 - Geopolitical tactics (support US effort in Afghanistan, information sharing on al-Qaeda, etc.)
 - Co-optation.



Hakim al-Termezi Mausoleum
Uzbekistan

Gender in Central Asia



Soviet Policy on Gender




- Formal equality.
- High education levels.
- High participation in workforce (nearly 100%).
- Some "pink ghettos."
- Glass ceilings: limited presence in management positions.
- Homosexuality outlawed.

Post-Soviet Status of Women



- Much continuity.
- Visible presence of women in business.
 - Although rarely as oligarchs.
- Some return to "hearth and home" expectations.
- Revival of traditional roles especially in Central Asia.

LGBTQ Rights



- Largely suppressed.
 - Uzbekistan: three years in prison.
 - Turkmenistan: two years in prison.
 - Tajikistan: gay and lesbian "registration" drive (October 2017) – may have to undergo STD testing.
 - Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan: formal equality but widespread homophobia.

LGBTQ Rights



- Russia
 - Decriminalized after transition.
 - But: "gay propaganda law," 2013.
 - Bans "the promoting of nontraditional sexual relationships among minors" and "creating a distorted image of the social equivalence of traditional and nontraditional sexual relationships."
 - Rejected by European Court of Human Rights (June 2017) but little ability to enforce.