

Islam in Post-Soviet Russia: Unraveling the Interplay of Faith and Society



The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 marked a seismic shift in the geopolitical and religious landscape of the world. Among its many profound effects, it ushered in a revival of religious practices and beliefs, including

Islam, in the newly independent republics that emerged from the Soviet sphere of influence. In Russia, the largest of these republics, the Muslim population has grown significantly in recent decades, making Islam one of the country's most visible and dynamic religious communities.



Islam in Post-Soviet Russia by Susan Jane Gilman

★★★★☆ 4.1 out of 5

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Screen Reader : Supported
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
Print length : 334 pages



Historical Roots of Islam in Russia

The history of Islam in Russia dates back to the 7th century, when Arab traders and missionaries brought the religion to the southern regions of the country. Over the centuries, Islam spread northward and eastward, establishing itself in the Caucasus, Central Asia, and Siberia. By the time of the Russian Revolution in 1917, there were an estimated 20 million Muslims living in the Russian Empire.



Soviet Suppression and Post-Soviet Revival

During the Soviet era, Islam faced severe suppression at the hands of the atheist regime. Mosques were closed or destroyed, Islamic schools were banned, and religious leaders were persecuted. Despite these challenges, Islam survived and even flourished in some regions, particularly in the North Caucasus and Central Asia.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, Muslims in Russia experienced a newfound freedom to practice their faith. Mosques reopened, religious schools were reestablished, and Islamic organizations proliferated. The Muslim population also grew rapidly, due to both natural increase and migration from former Soviet republics in Central Asia and the Caucasus.

Challenges and Opportunities in Post-Soviet Russia

The post-Soviet era has brought both challenges and opportunities for Muslims in Russia. On the one hand, they face discrimination and prejudice from some segments of Russian society. Islamophobia is a growing problem in Russia, and Muslims have been the targets of hate crimes and violence.

On the other hand, Muslims have also made significant progress in recent years. They have established a network of mosques, schools, and community centers. They have also gained political representation, with several Muslim deputies elected to the Russian parliament.

Understanding Islam in Post-Soviet Russia

To understand the complexities of Islam in post-Soviet Russia, it is essential to delve into the historical, social, and political factors that have shaped this dynamic religious community. Susan Jane Gilman's book, "Islam in Post-Soviet Russia," provides a comprehensive and nuanced analysis of this fascinating topic.

Gilman's book draws on extensive fieldwork and interviews with Muslims from all walks of life in Russia. She explores the diverse ways that Muslims practice their faith, the challenges they face, and the contributions they make to Russian society.



Islam is an integral part of the religious landscape of post-Soviet Russia. Despite facing challenges, the Muslim community has grown and flourished in recent decades. To understand the complexities of this dynamic religious community, it is essential to explore the historical, social, and political factors that have shaped its development. Susan Jane Gilman's book, "Islam in Post-Soviet Russia," provides a valuable resource for anyone seeking a deeper understanding of this fascinating topic.



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