Open Society Turkmenistan Project

Bibliography of English Language Materials

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1. HISTORY


Collected volume of contributions on many aspects of Central Asian history and culture


Valuable historical survey of origins and development of the Turkmen nation.


Analysis of Muslim regions in Soviet Union. Largely superseded by more recent work.


Historical and ethnographic account of Turkmen tribes and people.


Analysis of interaction between nomadic and sedentary communities in pre-Soviet and Soviet Turkmenistan.


Beautifully prepared volume of maps, with accompanying scholarly text, covering Central Asian history from earliest times to the present day. Contains several maps of migrations (permanent and seasonal) of Turkmen tribes from the eighteenth century onwards.
Important article discussing Bolshevik attempts to re-engineer gender relations in Turkmenistan during the early Soviet period.

Pioneering study of early Soviet Turkmenistan based on archival research and recent work on Soviet nationalities policy. Highly recommended.

Eye-witness account of a former participant in the British Army's operations in southern Turkmenistan in the dying days of World War I aimed at protecting British interests in Persia and India.

Remarks on formation, distribution and interaction of tribal groups in pre-Soviet Turkmenistan.

Complex but invaluable study of tribal structures in nomadic and sedentary groups in nineteenth century Central Asia. Contains detailed case studies of the Emirate of Bukhara and the Khanate of Khiva, and also on the Turkmen political order prior to, and after, the Russian conquest.

Important article based on new research into the physical formation of the non-Russian republics of the USSR, and the more intangible process of nation-building.

Pioneering anthropological study of one of Turkmenistan's most important tribes. Conducted in the Soviet era and so provides important insight into the Sovietisation of tribal society and also a marker as to the continuing importance of tribal identity in the post-Soviet era.

Excellent and important analysis of early years of Bolshevik hegemony in Central Asia, based on newly opened archives in Moscow and Tashkent. Considers relationship between Imperial Russia and Islam, the changes wrought by Bolshevik anticlerical policies, and the patterns of resistance that emerged thereto.


Short study of techniques employed in, and the effects of, Stalin's Great Terror of 1937-8 in Turkmenistan.


Superb study of Soviet nationalities policy before World War II based on research in newly opened Soviet archives. Detailed reference is made to Central Asia, with passing mention of Bolshevik policy in Turkmenistan.


Pioneering study of Bolshevik strategies for reform of gender relations in early Soviet Central Asia, including Turkmenistan.


Major work of empirical and theoretical scholarship, using newly available archival sources in Tashkent and Moscow, on Soviet campaigns against polygyny, the veil and female seclusion in Central Asia, and the resistance this engendered. Although the principal focus is on Uzbekistan, there is valuable comparison with other Central Asian republics including Turkmenistan. Perceptive, erudite and superbly written, it is also illustrated with rare photographs from the period.


Concise but contentious short history of Central Asia from the early Soviet period to the present day. The conclusions on the basis of the Soviet delimitation of Central Asia's republican boundaries have been largely superseded by more recent archival research.

Turkish account of Turkmen history with useful observations not found elsewhere.


Seminal article on identity construction in the Soviet Union. Not specifically related to Turkmenistan but provides essential contextual background on Soviet nationalities policy.


Account of the operations of the British Army in southern Turkmenistan (Transcaspia) at the end of World War I, when a detachment of around 900 men was sent to Ashgabat and Merv to prevent Axis designs on Persia and North West India.

2. TRAVELS


Excellent anthology of travellers' accounts and studies of Turkmen society in the pre-Tsarist era including extracts from Vambery, Rawlinson, and O'Donovan amongst others.


Great Game literature from a British adventurer.


Important supplementary guide (to Lonely Planet) for tourists visiting Turkmenistan.
    Eye-witness account of General Ivan Lazarov's disastrous Russian campaign of 1879 against the Turkmen tribes, later avenged at Geok Deppe.

    Travels with, and descriptions of, Turkmen tribes from an astute Victorian observer.

    Account of a Victorian explorer's time in residence amongst the Turkmen Tekke tribe at Merv.

    Account of a late Victorian explorer's travels across Turkmenistan from Krasnovodsk to Merv and Bokhara.

    Excellent collection of essays on the emergence of non-governmental networks in Central Asia after the collapse of the USSR. No specific articles on Turkmenistan but references throughout. Useful directory of organisations also included.

    Amusing, perceptive and well-written account of travels in Central Asia, including Turkmenistan, during mid to late 1991 as the Soviet Union is collapsing. Illuminates the early origins of President Niyazov's personality cult.

    Depressing and somewhat patronising account of travels in Central Asia. Early chapters cover Turkmenistan. Very little feel for the people of the region. The prose seems rather affected and ornate.

    Victorian gazetteer of topography and tribes of Western Turkistan.
Classic account of Victorian explorer's encounters with Turkmen tribes in the Caspian region, including much detail on Turkmen tribal structures and customs.

Second volume of the Victorian explorer's reminiscences and travels in Turkmenistan and Central Asia generally.

3. POLITICS

Seminal report based on in-country sources on the Niyazov regime. Essential reading.

Valuable report on current situation in Turkmenistan; should be read in conjunction with 'Cracks in the Marble'.

Discussion of attempts of the post-Soviet regime's attempts to legitimise itself and to construct a sanctioned form of national identity.

Short comparative article covering Islamic culture and official religious policy in contemporary Turkmenistan.

Interesting and astute general survey of politics in post-Soviet Turkmenistan.

Solid overview of Central Asian politics from before the 1917 Revolution to the mid 1990s. Decent primer on the region, including Turkmenistan, but now looking a little dated.


Source documents from Turkmen political parties, including the Democratic Party of Turkmenistan and Turkmen Movement for Democratic Reform.


Solid summary of political developments in Turkmenistan from the late Soviet period up the mid-1990s.


Concise, theoretically informed discussion of the Niyazov regime's descent into sultanism.


Rare and valuable analysis of Turkmen armed forces' capabilities and need for fundamental reforms.


Collection of 20 short articles covering geopolitics, security, energy issues, the environment, politics and society, and also including a series of country surveys. Includes two specialist articles on Turkmenistan.


Short discussion of the prospects of regime change or collapse in Turkmenistan.


Country survey including statistical data on the economy.
Survey of political and economic transition in Central Asia since 1991, includes a chapter on Turkmenistan, focusing on the oil and gas sector.

Good general survey of Islam and politics in Central Asia after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Survey of Central Asia after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Covers much the same ground as Rashid's 'The Resurgence of Central Asia'. One short but useful chapter is devoted to Turkmenistan, although stereotypes are not challenged.

Intriguing analysis of the ethnic origins of Turkmen political elites from the Soviet era to the present day, and their impact on policy.


Although there are no specific chapters on Turkmenistan, this edited volume contains scattered references to political developments in the country after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Excellent monograph on the issues surrounding the vexed issue of water sharing between the Central Asian states. Includes information and analysis of Turkmen-Uzbek problems.
   Brief survey of the political and economic dynamics of post-Soviet Turkmenistan.

   Comprehensive and perceptive article covering the consolidation of Niyazov's regime in the early post-Soviet period and subsequent political developments.

   Brief and rather unsatisfactory survey of Turkmenistan's current economic profile and challenges.

   Flawed and somewhat dated journalistic survey of the Central Asian scene after the collapse of the Soviet Union - includes a short chapter on Turkmenistan.

   Discusses causes of nationalist riots in Central Asia in the late Soviet period, including mentions (without much detail) of the Ashgabat disturbances of 1988-1989.

   Survey of Islam across the Soviet Union with reference to Turkmenistan.

   Discussion of formation of Turkmen political institutions and practices after 1991.

   Overview of the challenges and opportunities afforded to the former Soviet republics (including Turkmenistan) by the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Short survey of broad political and economic developments since 1991.


Powerfully argued and theoretically informed analysis of the way in which Central Asian regimes have approached the enormous ecological and social challenges posed by the desiccation of the Aral Sea, through the creation of inter-state mechanisms of cooperation. Emphasises the important role of third party and non-state actors in promoting dialogue and collaboration.

4. ECONOMICS, THE ENERGY SECTOR AND GEOPOLITICS


Solid edited volume on regional security in Central Asia, although somewhat superseded by 9/11.


Decent collection of articles covering a wide spectrum of oil and gas related issues including pipelines, legal status of the Caspian Sea and environmental issues.


Study of the possibility of Turkmenistan avoiding the resource "curse" apparently symptomatic of 'rentier' state economies.


Turkmen view of economic dilemmas and challenges faced by the Turkmen government.


Superb volume of 19 essays covering geopolitics, energy reserves, security and military issues, regional conflicts, oil and gas pipelines and environmental concerns. The best book on the region in print. Includes two chapters specifically on Turkmenistan.

Somewhat dated discussion on the impasse over the ownership and potential demarcation of the Caspian Sea.


Collection of 20 short articles covering geopolitics, security, energy issues, the environment, politics and society, and also including a series of country surveys. Includes two specialist articles on Turkmenistan.


Country survey including statistical data on the economy.


Patchy edited volume covering the intersection of geo/political and energy interests in the Caspian oil and gas sector.


Analysis of foreign policy position of neutrality and non-alignment developed by the Turkmen regime since independence.


Ex-Government official turned dissident's view of Turkmen foreign policy.


Turkmen dissident's analysis of Turkmenistan's place in the regional security framework.


Discussion of Turkmenistan's place in regional security complex and beyond.

Discussion of Turkmenistan's options for oil and gas exports.

Survey of political and economic transition in Central Asia since 1991, includes a chapter on Turkmenistan, focusing on the oil and gas sector.

Passable edited volume on oil and gas politics. Not as comprehensive as Churin's collection.

Prominent energy specialists put Caspian oil reserves and the region's geopolitical importance into perspective.

Intriguing analysis of the ethnic origins of Turkmen political elites from the Soviet era to the present day, and their impact on policy.

Russian diplomat's view of the oil and gas sector.

Russian diplomat's survey of the Turkmen economy.

Russian diplomat's assessment of Turkmen foreign policy.

Russian diplomat's updated survey of the energy scene and development prospects.

Contains five technical papers on changes to pastoral farming since the collapse of the Soviet Union, based on extensive field research conducted in collaboration with Turkmen specialists, and funded by the UK Department for International Development.


Turkmen view of the regional impact of 9/11 and subsequent US military presence in Central Asia.


Shallow, sensationalist account centred on the competition for development of the Caspian oil sector. Poorly sourced, conspiratorial and factually inaccurate, a dangerous book for the mainstream market.


Although there are no specific chapters on Turkmenistan, this edited volume contains scattered references to political developments in the country after the collapse of the Soviet Union.


Excellent monograph on the issues surrounding the vexed issue of water sharing between the Central Asian states. Includes information and analysis of Turkmen-Uzbek problems.


Prize winning essay which advocates the re-integration of Iran into the Caspian energy nexus.


Analysis of the EIA Convention with reference to the involvement of private sector operations and international financial institutions.


Analysis of Gazprom's network of agreements with the Central Asian republics that have substantively increased the leverage of the company, and Russia, in the region since 2002.

Discussion of plans to construct a gas pipeline from Turkmenistan to Pakistan (and India) that were revived after 9/11 and the removal of the Taliban.

Excellent short monograph setting out Turkmenistan's reserves, extraction capacity, potential export markets and pipeline routes.

A fresh look at the prospects for constructing TAP after the fall of the Taliban in Afghanistan.

Short survey of broad political and economic developments since 1991.

Powerfully argued and theoretically informed analysis of the way in which Central Asian regimes have approached the enormous ecological and social challenges posed by the desiccation of the Aral Sea, through the creation of inter-state mechanisms of cooperation. Emphasises the important role of third party and non-state actors in promoting dialogue and collaboration.

5. SOCIETY

Discussion of culture and tribal society in Central Asia.

Study of social formations in traditional Turkmen society


Study of family and gender roles and relationships, 'bride-price' and traditional marriage practice in Turkmenistan.


A fascinating, superbly researched study of gender relations, relations between women, and between generations in contemporary Turkmenistan. Includes detailed analysis of traditional songs, stories, rituals and texts, and of marriage ceremonies and practices. Essential for those spending time in rural Turkmenistan.


Veteran researcher's analysis of trends in religious observance.


Ethnographical researches in to patterns of Turkmen tribal organisation.


Research findings from the foremost Western anthropological expert on Turkmen tribal structures and customs


Pioneering anthropological study of one of Turkmenistan's most important tribes. Conducted in the Soviet era and so provides important insight in to the Sovietisation of tribal society and also a marker as to the continuing importance of tribal identity in the post-Soviet era.

Intriguing analysis of the ethnic origins of Turkmen political elites from the Soviet era to the present day, and their impact on policy.

Survey of changing patterns of opiate use in Turkmenistan, policies of government control and prohibition from the end of the nineteenth century onwards, and the social consequences of addiction.

Excellent collection of essays on the emergence of non-governmental networks in Central Asia after the collapse of the USSR. No specific articles on Turkmenistan but references throughout. Useful directory of organisations also included.

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Discussion of culture and tribal society in Central Asia.

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A fascinating, superbly researched study of gender relations, relations between women, and between generations in contemporary Turkmenistan. Includes detailed analysis of traditional songs, stories, rituals and texts, and of marriage ceremonies and practices. Essential for those spending time in rural Turkmenistan.
Study of the poetry of Turkmenistan's national poet.

Research findings from the foremost Western anthropological expert on Turkmen tribal structures and customs

Pioneering anthropological study of one of Turkmenistan's most important tribes.
Conducted in the Soviet era and so provides important insight into the Sovietisation of tribal society and also a marker as to the continuing importance of tribal identity in the post-Soviet era.

The prominent Soviet novelist’s story, set in Turkmenistan, of an ideological mission derailed by doubts and the struggle for personal happiness. Superb new English translation by the Chandlers, replete with a clear map and two introductory chapters covering Platonov's time in Central Asia, and the issues raised in the translation of *Soul*.

Study of the restrictions and privations faced by one Turkmen intellectual during the Soviet period.