Scope

The aim of the Association for the Study of EthnoGeoPolitics (EGP), or EthnoGeoPolitics in short, is to further the study of and teaching on the cultural, social, ethnic and (geo-)political characteristics, processes and developments in different areas of the world, at universities, institutes and colleges in and outside the Netherlands. The association's journal, Forum of EthnoGeoPolitics, is above all intended to elicit analytic debate by allowing scholars to air their views, perspectives and research findings—with critical responses from others who may hold a different view or research approach (submit articles and responses to info@ethnogeopolitics.org). At the association's website, http://www.ethnogeopolitics.org, one can find more information about its foundation, founding members, aims, activities and publications—in particular freely downloadable copies of the journal's issues.

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Let’s be Clear: A Call for Tripartite Action-Actor-Motivation Conceptualisations in Social-Scientific Research

Caspar ten Dam

The Chief Editor Dr. Babak Rezvani, who is busily engaged as a Lecturer in Tbilisi, Georgia, sends his greetings: “We are happy to announce the new issue of our journal. We have entered our third year of professional existence. These three years the world has provided us with many examples of why ethnogeopolitics is important as a discipline. Of course it is unfortunate that the many conflicts—e.g. in Ukraine, Sudan, Yemen, Syria and Iraq—have occurred, but nevertheless their occurrence is another indication of the relevance and necessity of the study of ethnogeopolitics in current world affairs.”

Introduction

This Editorial—which can be considered as a follow-up and elaboration on a section in my Editorial on patriotism in the journal’s preceding issue (Ten Dam 2014: esp. 6-8)—describes my principles on how best to define any concepts and phenomena in time and space in the social sciences (not just in the field of ethnogeopolitics, though it is especially relevant and useful to that field). These principles revolve around my tripartite distinction between action, actor and motive or human drive. The consequent conceptualisations I apply in my own research on brutalisation i.e. the increasing resort to terrorism, ‘brigandry’ (brigandage), gangsterism and other forms of violence (see Appendix) violating local and/or international norms—norms that are ultimately based on conscience, empathy and honour (Ten Dam 2014: 8-9).

I have constructed a Brutalisation theory, consisting of the variables violence-values (my composite term), conflict-inducing motivations (grievances, avarices, interests and ideologies) leading up to the conflict, combat-stresses leading to trauma’s (and perhaps brutalities); and conflict-induced motivations (grievances, avarices, interests and ideologies) during the conflict; I first seek to first falsify i.e. test the theory on the methods (actions), aims and values (motives) of Chechen and Albanian separatists (actors) between 1979 and 2001 during the late Cold War and early post-Cold war periods. These variables, their theoretical and disciplinary backgrounds, and preliminary findings on the values, aims and methods among Chechen and Albanian insurgents, are described in my “How to Feud and Rebel” Series in the peer-reviewed journal Iran and the Caucasus (Ten Dam 2010, 2011, 2012).
Conceptualisation: distinguishing actions, actors and motives

Proud Chechens and Albanians may object to the terms ‘rebellion’ and ‘terrorism’ for describing their resistance to foreign rule. Chechens still resisting Moscow consider themselves part of a legitimate if underground Chechen state. My concept of rebellion (see the Appendix) is a neutral one; it does not denote or presume illegality or illegitimacy. Neither do I regard revolution, idealism, ideology and indoctrination as inevitable, universal characteristics of ‘real’ or ‘sophisticated’ rebellion, revolt or insurgency (partially or fully interchangeable terms for the same rebellion concept in the Appendix). My definition of insurgency/rebellion/revolt is even broader than J. Bowyer Bell’s, who states that “in a revolt the rebel abrogates previous authority by recourse to armed force in an effort to seize power in the name of a denied legitimacy” (Bell 1976: 5).

Insurgency as I circumscribe it thus entails violent opposition to the ruler, government regime or state for any personal, collective or ideological purpose. A rebel movement, of course, may aim to form, and succeed in forming, a government and seek international recognition. So-called irredentist rebels (though irredentists can be state actors too) are the expansionist and often more aggressive variant of secessionist nationalists, given their territorial claims across existing state borders.

I circumscribe ethnicity or ethnic identity as the belief among a group of people (and possibly external observers) that they have common tribal, genealogical, and/or mythical ancestries, here classified as a sub-type of nationalism (see Appendix). In practice numerous countries exhibit combinations of nationalism, patriotism and republicanism (also called civic nationalism) in, for instance, written constitutions of states and declarations of armed non-state actors like rebel movements.

Similarly, I refuse to presume that nationalisms are always secular in orientation. In current and future research one must for instance ascertain whether Muslim rebels having emerged from the rubbles of, say, the Afghan, Soviet, and Yugoslav states have followed genuine, ‘pure’ Islamist goals, rather than nationalist-secular ones in which religion is only co-opted as part of a strategy to attain nationhood.

Fundamentalism and nationalism are not necessarily mutually exclusive phenomena, however. Berna Turam rightly criticises the artificial “polarisation between culture-centered and state-centered theories of nationalism” whereby the first school of thought perceives religious revivalism as characteristic of non- or anti-state movements, and the latter school regards nationalism as a solely secular ideology; this false dichotomy obscures the “links between ethnicity, revivalist Islam and the nation-state” (Turam 2004: 353-354; see Ten Dam 2011: 241).

Crucially, one should not define central concepts like terrorism by empirical, changeable phenomena. Motives and goals alter over time. Perpetrators use violence against civilians—a rare common element in terrorism definitions—for any conceivable reason. One must
continuously modify such empirical definitions if one wishes to encapsulate any new trend. Instead, one better could construct one’s main concepts as ideal-types or Gedankenbilder and classify their real-time, fluctuating manifestations as subtypes (Weber, apud Shils & Finch 1949: esp. 90). I, like some other scholars (Ganor, Schmid etc.), agree with the following point that Raymond D. Duvall and Michael Stohl have made at one stage in their analysis:

Motives are .. irrelevant to the concept of .. terrorism. Most analysts fail to recognize this and, hence, tend to discuss .. motives as logical or necessary aspects .. . But they are not. At best, they are empirical regularities associated with terrorism. More often, they simply confuse analysis (Ganor 2002: 10 (update 2010: note 10); Schmid & Jongman et al. 1984 Edit: 100).

I also agree with the more general point Boaz Ganor has made recently: “I genuinely believe that defining terrorism is both crucial and possible, and because I believe that once terrorism has been consensually defined, that definition will become a pillar of much better and more effective international cooperation on counter-terrorism” (Ganor 2013: 1).

My terrorism definition covers certain human rights violations such as sudden kidnappings and killings of non-combatants. Alex Schmid identifies such violations as manifestations of terrorism when and for so far these violations constitute deliberate violence tactics against unarmed people (Schmid 2005: 28-29). Mass killings, which might constitute genocide if directed against an entire group or population, may also be seen as a form of terrorism. Generally, the best approach is to first define violent actors by what they do (behaviour), not what they supposedly want or believe (ideology). Fortunately more analysts have come to share this view.

Better still, always separate the universally possible action (method) from the temporarily existing actor (person or persons) and thought (objective). This tripartite distinction—and the heated debate that may ensue—can be fruitful, even if it concerns essentially contested concepts involving “endless disputes about their proper uses on the part of their users” (Gallie 1955: 169). We “do need, ultimately, “universal” categories—concepts that are applicable to any time and place” (Sartori 1970: 195).

Naturally, all definitions are imperfect and arbitrary in the sense of their demarcations and delineations, due to either implicit, perhaps subconscious assumptions or preferably explicit, well-argued suppositions. Nevertheless, I have developed the following conceptual principles in circumscribing and distinguishing all kinds of phenomena, which I proposition in my forthcoming book Conceptualising Brutality and Violence as follows:

It is best to a) base primary concepts on observable actions by humans and other (sentient) organisms that may occur at any point in time; b) base secondary concepts on observable actors i.e. individuals and groups of humans or other sentient beings; and c) base tertiary concepts on more elusive and fluctuating drives, motives and beliefs of actors across certain points in time—even if the latter two categories involve deeper analysis of the reasons why ‘action-phenomena’ occur (cited in Ten Dam 2014: 7).
As a rule of thumb (and again I cite from Conceptualising Brutality and Violence), “I classify phenomena of action, like the methods of violence regarding tactics and techniques, and means of violence regarding targets and lethal and non-lethal use of weaponry, as main or primary universal concepts; phenomena of actor-identity, like the forms of violence regarding rebel, other non-state, semi-state, state and other actors, I classify as intermediate or secondary structural concepts; and the more elusive phenomena of actor-contemplation, like the ends of violence regarding drives, motives, long-term goals and short-term objectives, I classify as sub-typical or tertiary empirical concepts” (cited in Ten Dam 2014: 7).

Consequently, particular, temporal manifestations of violence exhibiting specific amalgams of actions, actors and motives, I deem ‘empirical concepts’ as well. To be sure, one must be mindful of conceptual stretching i.e. “vague, amorphous conceptualizations” (Sartori 1970: 1034) due to widening the applicability or extension (denotation) of terms across more and more phenomena without progressively restricting the properties or intension (connotation) that these phenomena supposedly possess, about which Giovanni Sartori warned against.8

Nevertheless, as long as actions—and actors—circumscribed as belonging to the “same genus, species, or sub-species” (Ibid: 1036) are observable i.e. empirical in the strict sense9, and thus researchable, testable and even quantifiable, these classified, distinguished phenomena are truly comparable. At first glance, my action-actor-motive trichotomy seems to run along Sartori’s ladder of abstraction (Sartori 1970: esp. 1040-41) from high-level universals (maximum extension) to medium-level classes (high extension, some intension) and low-level categories (maximum intension) (Ibid: 1041, note 28).

However, and arguably contrary to Sartori’s argument and expectation, highly “contextual” motives and amalgams of actions, actors and motives are far more elusive, i.e. less easily discernible and provable phenomena—and therefore, in that sense, less easily or incontrovertibly amenable to comparative analysis.

Brutality and brutalisation as defined by me (see Appendix) one may regard and apply as primary, universal concepts according to my action-actor-motive trichotomy, for so far these are, i.e. can be seen and detected as, observable phenomena. However, for so far local and/or international norms are contested interpretations of not-easily-detectable-and-provable motives—just like grievances, avarices, interests and ideologies—then one should regard and use these as tertiary, empirical concepts. Combat-stresses are usually behavioural responses and pathological symptoms that are observable on the ground and thus can normally be classified as primary concepts—unless stress-responses like rage are not immediately apparent or deliberately hidden from view.

I agree with Sartori that distinguishing and thus defining phenomena along observable i.e. empirical characteristics constituting singular genera or classes is a basic taxonomical requirement for scientific analysis in general and comparative analysis in particular. I also agree to some extent that concepts on a “low level of abstraction” (Sartori 1970: 1043) are still
amenable to comparative research, even if these are first developed through single or few-case (small-N) studies (Ibid)—and even if these concern hard-to-detect human motives.

However, I believe it is nearly impossible in practice to come up with categorised classes that are “mutually exclusive and jointly exhaustive” (Sartori 1970: 1039) in the true, fullest, perfect sense—even with the best, most precise definitions on any level of abstraction. There always will be ill-classifiable grey areas and unclassifiable outliers. Still, the better the definitions, the fewer these ‘indeterminables’ will be—unless we encounter phenomena that are wholly incomprehensible to us according to contemporary knowledge; then these remain ‘unknowables’ for so long as we keep conceiving concepts that fail to capture the reality, nature and characteristics of these phenomena. Only fundamentally new concepts, explanations i.e. hypotheses and theories may ultimately capture and explain these phenomena.

Naturally, one could reverse the hierarchy, and thus “x- and y-axes” in visual representations, of the conceptual triad from an action-actor-motive to a motive-actor-action one. One could consider the contemplations (ends) that germinate inside people’s heads about their wishes and needs as the primary concepts, the actors who do the contemplations and/or are affected by the contemplations (and consequent acts) of others as the secondary concepts, and the actions (means) they undertake to satisfy or secure these wishes and needs as the tertiary concepts.

Thus a motive like revenge (usually based on a consciously felt grievance and experienced deprivation) is universal in the sense that it is an inherent human trait which may crop up at any place and point in time. In the same way particular kinds of grievances, avarices, interests and ideologies are also universal, inherent human drives that have appeared at any time, location and circumstance in the past and (may) happen at any time, location and circumstance in the present and future. In other words, such drives are the primary, universal concepts from the vantage point of the reverse motive-actor-action trichotomy. Then rebellion—as one of the many possible actions emanating from revenge or any other motive —can be seen as the empirically, temporally fluctuating phenomenon.

This often sub-conscious reversal in conceptual hierarchy by those focusing on explanatory in-depth analysis is understandable; the ends—including the internal and external factors that give rise to these ends—ought to explain the means, i.e. account for why the latter occur. It may be fine to narrowly define terrorism, rebellion and other forms or means of violence as actions irrespective of motives. Yet that still leaves the question unanswered of why certain rebellions and terrorist acts take place, what motives and social and political processes are behind these. Nevertheless, actions are relatively easy to observe and corroborate—or to refute as not happening in a certain place at a certain point in time.

One must first establish that or whether a rebellion, terrorist act or any kind of action is taking place (irrespective of one’s particular definitions, as long as one circumscribes these as actions irrespective of possible ends, motives and ideologies) before one can ever find out
why it is taking place. The why, and the how, will always be more elusive and contestable than the what. True, there typically is and will be plenty of disagreement about what actually happened or is happening, even when applying the best, most lucid ‘action-definitions’ of genocide, terrorism, banditry and so on. Still, imagine the even greater level of disagreement on the motives and other causes of an event, even if one could agree on the characterisation —like ‘terrorist’, ‘semi-terrorist’ or ‘non-terrorist’—of that event.

Therefore, in social reality the drives of sentient beings like us human beings are usually more elusive and fickle than the actions; contemplations are more difficult to observe (if at all) than actions. Particularly submerged urges and motives and expressed goals and priorities quickly alter over time—even more so than preferred modes of action, even if the latter may eventually expire in certain cultures (like duelling and gladiatorial games). So in that regard I generally prefer the action-actor-motive hierarchy in analytical conceptualisations above the motive-actor-action one.

Conclusion

Unfortunately, many scholars do not expressly, let alone systematically, define concepts like terrorism, nationalism, modernity, ethnicity and identity, perhaps because they believe the concepts to be either too abstract or self-evident to merit circumscription. The definitions in the Appendix are largely self-made, and based on my action-actor-motive typology, out of necessity. Indeed, identity, modernism-modernity, and traditionalism-tradition concepts do seem ill-defined in much of the anthropological and sociological literature.

Often modernity or the modern is obliquely identified with ‘dynamic’, ‘democratic’, ‘egalitarian’, ‘secular’, ‘scientific’, ‘industrial’, ‘advanced’ or ‘progressive’—in short ‘Western’. These adjectives do suggest a forward-looking mindset (see my definition), yet entail empirical regularities in the Western world, not universal characteristics across the world (Shils 1968: 7-9; see further Ten Dam 2010: 335-340).

Therefore, I define modernity and traditionalism as forward-looking and backward-looking mindsets respectively (see Appendix), that may occur in and characterise any culture, society, country, region or locality at any time or designated period in human history. In the same way, I define nationalism as a ‘timeless’ concept about any kind of secular and/or religious and/or linguistic (self-)identification by any ethnie or other large group, not bound or limited to any particular time or place.

Unlike Tomasz Polanski, I do not feel the need to apply the term ‘nationalism’ “with caution” regarding the motivations, ideologies and identities of people in ‘pre-modern’ (i.e. preindustrial) times, nor the need to follow the “modern secular usage” of the term by scholars like S. K. Eddy (Polanski 2010 (1999): 345 (quotes) ). Indeed, nationalism is not necessarily purely secular: religious belief and ethnic identity and pride are often amalgamated into one national consciousness among peoples long before the Industrial Revolution.
Generally, it is “advisable to strive for precise, tight definitions of key concepts” (Buffachi 2005: 197). To avoid confusion and befuddlement, one should construct concepts that differentiate between universal, ‘timeless’ and actual, temporal phenomena, and if possible include in the former any potential phenomena that may occur at any point in time. Generally, I prefer to classify discernible actions as main-type concepts (e.g. ‘terrorism’), and apparent drives, motivations and ideologies accounting for these actions as sub-type concepts (e.g. ‘leftwing terrorism’, ‘Islamist terrorism’, etc.). My extensive violence typology shown in the Appendix will be regularly reviewed, improved and expanded.

Caspar ten Dam     Leiden, April 2015

Endnotes

1. I will extensively discuss and defend my definitions in future publications, notably in C. ten Dam, Conceptualising Brutality and Violence: How to Define, Grasp and Deal with Terrorism and Other Forms of Violence in a Post 11 September World Cambridge Scholars Publishing (CSP), forthcoming.
2. From 2005 till early 2014, I have described my Brutalisation theory, with some modifications, as “a cycle of violence involving four main variables: “values” on “good” and “bad” violence (variable 1); grievances leading to armed conflict (variable 2); combat stress leading to atrocities (variable 3); and new conflict grievances emanating from such atrocities (variable 4), spawning counter-atrocities and eventually hardening or debasing the original violence-values (the cycle returns to the first variable)” (Ten Dam 2010: 332). Since then, I have widened and reformulated the theory’s variables, so as to more equally represent different motivations as explanations of brutal behaviour.
3. This Series will include at least one more article: C. ten Dam, ‘How to Feud and Rebel: 4. Conflict-Induced Motivations among the Chechens and Albanians’ Iran and the Caucasus (forthcoming).
4. Here, Bell provides some lucid cross-cutting distinctions between revolutionary and non-revolutionary, guerrilla and conventional, and terrorist and non-terrorist rebel intentions, strategies and tactics (Bell 1976: 3-17), more so than in his earlier and later works (e.g. Bell 1971, 1978). Bell eventually speaks of “rebels” and “armed struggle, rather than “guerrillas” and “guerrilla-revolution” in his earlier works, though he once more interchanges and befuddles the terms ‘rebel’, ‘guerrilla’ and ‘terrorist’ in his Dynamics of the Armed Struggle (1998).
5. Yet in 1983 Duvall and Stohl defined terrorism as “action intended to induce sharp fear and through that agency to affect a desired outcome in a conflict situation” (Schmid & Jongman et al. 1988: 36), thereby following B. M. Jenkins’ assertion—which I happen to disagree with—that invariably “fear is the intended effect, not the by-product, of terrorism” (Ibid: 36).
6. As I argue in my Conceptualising Brutality and Violence (CSP, forthcoming), my definition of terrorism refers to any atrocious, ‘anti-civilian’ violence during the immediate act, like bomb explosions in crowded areas, not violence following upon an immediate act like a forceful arrest, such as abuses and torture after the arrest.
7. Thus I argue in my Conceptualising Brutality and Violence (CSP, forthcoming), that brutal actions like terrorism are not universally, invariably linked to only a limited number of goals and motives like revenge, the creation of fear, or the deliberate attempt to influence the behavior and policies of immediate victims or a wider audience.

9. In the strict sense, universal concepts on observable actions can be termed empirical concepts as well. However, I apply the term “empirical” as a reference to temporal, time-fluctuating phenomena—typically (though not exclusively) due to changeable human motives.


References—Bibliography


Sartori, Giovanni, ‘Concept Misinformation in Comparative Politics’ American Political Science Review Vol.64 No.4, December 1970, pp.1033-1053.


NB: do you have any comments on the Editorial? Please send these to info@ethnogeopolitics.org, or through the contact form at http://www.ethnogeopolitics.org.

Appendix Definitions of identity and violence
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Collective identity concepts
The ‘modern’: any mindset, norm, project or activity that is forward-looking or future-oriented, set on changing—and keep innovating—the established order, belief or custom into something new that (presumably) has never existed before in a certain dwelling, territory, country or other place. (‘modernity’, ‘modernism’)

The ‘traditional’: any backward-looking or past-oriented mindset/norm/project/activity set on restoring or maintaining an idealised order, belief or custom that has presumably existed in a distant past in a certain place. (‘tradition’, ‘traditionalism’)

Patriotism: the belief that it is one's duty, irrespective of one's motive—love, sense of obligation, sense of self-respect i.e. honour, or even self-interest and opportunism—to defend or otherwise maintain and secure the peace and prosperity of one's home, ranging from one's personal and family homestead to one's village or regional community, all the way up to the homeland i.e. the (nation-)state one happens to live in, not necessarily one's place of birth.
Nationalism: the belief that a nation i.e. a (supposedly) homogeneous people with common characteristics—shared history, territory, culture, religion, language, ethnicity (actual or perceived common ancestry), race, etcetera—should have its own state i.e. system of rule. When a national people attains a state, i.e. governing authority, its rights are paramount over any other people residing within its territory.

Irredentism: the belief that a nation i.e. a (supposedly) homogeneous people with common characteristics—shared history, territory, culture, language, ethnicity, etcetera—should have its own state, including territories of other, neighbouring states where (the majority of) people with the same characteristics reside. When a national people attains a state, i.e. governing authority, its rights are paramount over any other people residing within its territory.

Statism: the belief that the territory of a region, republic or any other entity should have its own state. Such a state does not necessarily have to be based on a homogeneous people of one race, ethnicity, or other common characteristic. Its citizens may belong to heterogeneous communities, yet they in principle hold the same rights of citizenship (‘Expansionism’: parallel to irredentism).

Generic violence concepts

Aggression: deliberate infliction of physical or psychological force perhaps accompanied with pain, other harm or coercion (force) by sentient beings on other beings for whatever end, and may be immoral and illegal i.e. violate basic human rights in the broad sense, including humanitarian law.

Violence: deliberate infliction of physical force perhaps accompanied with pain, other harm or coercion for whatever end, which may be lethal and violate basic human rights in the broad sense.

Political violence: deliberate infliction of physical force perhaps accompanied with pain, other harm or coercion for whatever end in the public arena beyond the private sphere (yet possibly with private motives) which may be lethal, and violate human rights and humanitarian law.

Conflict: fundamental disagreement between one or more actors due to opposite aims, interests, needs or grievances, which for some reason are or appear to be unsolvable or irreconcilable.

Armed conflict: violent confrontation between one or more armed actors with opposite aims, interests, needs or grievances that appear to be unsolvable or irreconcilable through non-violent means, or that one or more actors have been unwilling to resolve or settle through peaceful means.

Armed actor: any group, party, organisation or entity that for whatever reason carries lethal weaponry for violent use or threat of violent use.

Armed non-state actor: any private, non-governmental, illegal or unsanctioned group, organisation or entity beyond the control and sphere of the state that carries for whatever reason lethal weaponry for violent use or threat of violent use.

Armed state actor: any public, governmental, legal or state-sanctioned group, organisation or entity belonging directly or indirectly to the state that carries for whatever reason lethal weaponry for violent use or threat of violent use.
Concepts of violent and non-violent change

Reform: significant modification in a society, authority or state within the parameters of an existing culture i.e. set of values, norms, beliefs, rituals and life-patterns. This constitutes improvement rather than transformation, and transpires peacefully rather than violently. Yet it may occur through violence when (certain) people yearn for it and their rulers are unresponsive to it. Discontented and radical (ised) people may actively seek it through violence.

Revolution: far-reaching change of a society, authority or state involving drastic alteration in a culture i.e. set of values, norms, beliefs, rituals and life-patterns (Variation: drastic change that significantly alters or radically transforms a society, state and/or its political system, which almost intrinsically involves a change in culture (values, norms, rituals, life-patterns, etcetera). This transformation may occur violently or peacefully, or may be actively sought by violent or non-violent means.

Protest: public demonstration of dissatisfaction or defiance on an issue deemed or experienced as unfair, unjust or intolerable, expressed silently or loudly, disciplined or rowdy, peacefully or violently (sit-ins, marches, strikes, riots, etc.), that may amount or lead to peaceful resistance or armed rebellion.

Main forms of violent conflict between different or similar kinds of actors

War: armed conflict with one or more opposing parties fighting in such a way as to achieve complete victory over or utter defeat of the other (enemy, opponent), as evident from the type and scale of fighting methods, tactics and strategies employed.

Interstate or external armed conflict: violent confrontation between the armed forces of two or more states or governments that represent them, due to actually or seemingly irreconcilable aims, interests, needs or grievances.

Intrastate, internal, or domestic armed conflict: violent confrontation due to actually or seemingly irreconcilable aims, interests, needs or grievances between one or more armed non-state actors and the state, or among (quasi-)state actors in 'civil conflicts' and among non-state actors in 'absent states' and 'failed states'.

Civil conflict: intrastate, internal, or domestic conflict in which the main opposing parties represent and control populations, infrastructures and other assets sufficient to fulfil state-like functions, signifying a conflict between state, semi-state, 'partial-state' or 'counter-state' actors.

Civil war: civil conflict in which one or more opposing parties capable of state(-like) functions fight in such a way as to achieve complete victory over or utter defeat of their opponents, as evident from the type and scale of fighting methods, tactics and strategies employed.

Rebellion or insurgency: armed conflict by one or more non-state, semi-state or alternative-state actors against any entrenched and generally recognised ruler, elite, authority, government, regime or state, for whatever personal reasons (grievance, grudge, greed, etc.), goals or ideologies.

Revolt or uprising: spontaneous rebellion by individuals or groups, with little or no planning, instigation or involvement of political parties or other entities (at least not in the initial or early phases), possibly but not necessarily arising from riots and other disturbances.
Insurrection: planned rebellion by individuals or groups belonging to political parties or other entities, possibly but not necessarily arising from revolts, riots and other outbursts of violence.

Coup d'état: focused insurrection that attempts to immediately grab and gain control over the reigns of power of the state, possibly but not necessarily through small-scale, speedy operations to capture government buildings and other vital objects.

Main methods of violence in tactics and fighting techniques

Conventional or regular conflict: violent confrontation between state and/or non-state forces whereby at least one side or party attempts to gain physical, visible and stable control of (the other's) territory and fixed objects, as evident from the fighting methods employed, typically but not necessarily via heavily armed forces on or across battlefields.

Unconventional or irregular conflict: violent confrontation whereby one or more of the parties do not seek or need to hold (the opponent's) territory or fixed objects, as evident from non-territory-occupying fighting methods like sabotage, diversion, ambush or interference of communications.

Guerrilla: unconventional conflict (or tactic) based on flexible, irregular fighting methods with hit-and-run tactics ranging from sabotage to ambush without aim or the need to hold on to territory or fixed objects, typically but not necessarily by lightly armed individuals or small units.

Main means of violence that violate or tend to violate international and/or local norms

Brutality: violation of international and/or local norms of justified violence and those norms guarding the life, health and integrity of the person, particularly through ill-treatment, torture, killing, imprisonment and execution without trial or due process; international norms and local norms or violence-values may differ on what kinds of violence are deemed justified against which persons for what reasons and under what circumstances.

Brutalisation: the process of increasing violations over time, both in severity and scale, of international and/or local norms of violence and those norms guarding the life, health and integrity of the person.

Terrorism: sudden lethal violence without preceding warning of the act for whatever purpose against (groups of) unarmed or weakly armed and thereby effectively defenceless civilians, unarmed off-duty security personnel, soldiers and policemen, and other defenceless non-combatants.

‘Terrorisation’: the process of increasing resort to terrorism over time, both in severity and scale.

Liquidation, or ‘terrorist assassination’: sudden lethal violence without preceding warning of the act for whatever purpose against selected individuals who are totally or practically unarmed and unprotected, like ordinary civilians who cannot defend themselves or afford bodyguards and other security personnel.

Assassination: sudden lethal violence without preceding warning of the act for whatever purpose against selected individuals who are armed or protected by bodyguards and/or other security personnel, like politicians, generals and community leaders—who thus in principle are able to defend themselves or to be defended by others (even in surprise attacks).
Criminality, or Crime: any violent or non-violent act or activity prohibited and punishable by law, directed for whatever reason—not necessarily out of greed—against persons and properties that result in moneys and valuables being illegally and illicitly taken or earned.

Criminalisation: the process of increasing resort to crime over time, both in severity and scale.

Gangsterism: violent criminality out of greed or any other purpose, that is any violent act or activity which illegally and illicitly takes, collects or earns moneys, (from) peoples, goods and properties.

Banditry: gangsterism that resorts to robbery i.e. forceful taking of moneys, peoples and goods for whatever reason through use or threat of lethal violence, involving plunder, kidnapping and kindred acts, by using guerrilla or other irregular tactics, often though not necessarily in mountainous, wooded, inhospitable, urban and other terrains suited for such tactics.

Brigandry, or Brigandage: banditry in the context of rebellion, whereby (certain) rebels act like or operate as bandits, or (certain) bandits turn into rebels i.e. join the rebellion for whatever reason, and (continue to) resort to pillage, ransom and other violently criminal acts through guerrilla(-like) tactics.

Norms, motives and behaviours that may or may not (tend to) violate international and/or local norms (these do increasingly violate such norms according to the Brutalisation theory)

Violence-value: any norm of right i.e. ‘proper’, ‘good’ and ‘justified’ violence vis-à-vis wrong i.e. ‘improper’, ‘bad’ or ‘unjustified’ violence, like those of honour and restraint, hospitality including fair treatment of captured opponents and enemies, proportionality and non-combatant immunity; in short, any notable, distinguishable and (most) significant local and/or international norm of justified violence and those guarding the life, health and integrity of the person.

Grievance: protest, complaint or lament of a past or present injustice i.e. international and/or local-norm violation of one or more individual and collective rights, regarding one or more deprivations (sufferings) ranging from poverty, discrimination and other hardships to repression, genocide and other atrocities.

Greed or Avarice: desire to (m)attain wealth, status, power and privileges for oneself, one’s family, friends and supporters or a wider group (clan, tribe, ethnie, nation, etc.) one feels one belongs to or feels entitled to protect or enhance, to the detriment of others (if not necessarily or automatically detrimental to others: an interest); these ends one seeks and tries to maintain through either or both legal and illegal means, like depredations (extortion, stealing, robbery, plunder, etc.), whereby legal means may be ‘unjust’, discriminatory and/or other draconian laws formalising the depredations to the advantage of a certain group or a few individuals.

Ideology: a belief system that contains a set of principles, convictions and objectives that are orally and/or scripturally expressed and transmitted for and to actual and potential followers or opponents, to achieve secular and/or religious goals like a pious community, a just society, democracy or independence to redress hardships, sufferings and other injustices (grievances) and/or further individual and/or collective interests (‘greeds’ or avarices if these inherently disadvantage others), or to change the present situation irrespective of or without any ‘greeds’, interests and grievances.

Combat-stress: one or more stress-responses like shock, fear, fatigue, rage and consequent trauma among one or more fighters, soldiers, rebels or other (kinds of) combatants prior to, during and after
battles and other high-risk operations. Such stress may lead to atrocities induced by innate aggression (eagerness to use violence) or—paradoxically—by innate restraint (reluctance to use violence), with social pressures of group convictions, bondings and expectations, typically enhanced through military training, indoctrination and conditioning, to either carry out and condone atrocities or restrain from and punish such atrocities.

(Announcement)

The Central Asia Program at George Washington University is happy to announce the launch of the Central Asian Analytical Network (CAAN)

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http://www.caa-network.org/

CAAN is a new, integrated platform designed to increase Central Asian citizens’ access to objective information and analysis. CAAN provides factual information and critical thinking in Russian and in the national languages of Central Asia on domestic and global affairs. The Network connects various communities of producers of information and analysis - professional journalists, social activists, bloggers, experts, and scholars, by using the already existing human capital that has been built up over the last two decades in the region.

This project is the achievement of a group of young scholars and experts from Central Asia who are tired of hearing only Western-or Russian, or Chinese-observers discussing what is happening in their countries. They want to have their own voices taken into account. They believe that a young generation of Central Asians are ready to participate fully in the debate about the future of the region. They think that a plurality of opinions is welcome, and that regional dialogue is not only possible but needed. In the current context, where local voices do not reach Western capitals and local production is dominated by frameworks formulated outside the region-whether in Moscow, in Washington, in Beijing .... or in Syria-CAAN finally returns the region to itself.

Information is not a mere succession of raw data devoid of sense, but is informed by critical thinking, and augmented analysis. This is the entire stake around which CAAN revolves: to enable critical thinking to emerge and flourish among young Central Asians, in order to aid them in understanding the world, their region, their countries, use this understanding to articulate their own opinions.
Main Article

Dehumanising the Dalit: Understanding Lower Caste Alienation in India through the Gramscian Approach

Sanjeev Kumar

Abstract This article seeks to conceptualise the multiple dynamics determining the nature of dalit (outcast) subjectivity in India. After critiquing Indian historiography's conception of subaltern consciousness, the article seeks to expose and account for the nature and structure of the socio-cultural supremacy of the upper-caste in the Hindu or Varna system consisting of the hereditary Brahmín, Kshatriya, Vaishya, and Shudra castes, with the help of the post-Marxist philosophy of the Italian theoretician and politician Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937).

By doing this, an attempt is being made to understand as to how despite modernisation and democratisation, the traditional archaeologies of Dalit subjectivity to the hegemonic Hindu order still persist. The Gramscian approach should help us understand as to how the upper-castes control the super-structure and hegemonise the lower castes, particularly the lowest caste of them all, the 'non-caste' Dalit (‘outcast’, from the Sanskrit root dal, which means broken, ground-down and downtrodden).

The aim is also to explore reasons for dalit elites and leaders to subject themselves and their communities to an unending cycle of domination and subjectivity. The paper seeks to understand this in the context of the political performance of one of the leading dalit political movements in India led by the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP). By examining the party's indulgence in a strategic shift from fiery anti-savarna (upper-castes) propaganda to honey-coated calls for dalit/savarna partnership for long-term prosperity, the paper seeks to show as to how parties like the BSP have effectively estranged themselves from their fundamental ideological tenets, demands and aspirations.

Key words: Dalit, Varna Order, Caste Hierarchy, Gramsci, Inter-Subjectivity, Subaltern Historiography, Subaltern Consciousness, Modernity, Modernisation, Hegemony.

Introduction

This article seeks to conceptualise the multiple dynamics determining the nature of dalit (outcast) subjectivity in India. After critiquing Indian historiography's conception of subaltern consciousness, the article seeks to explore and account for the nature and structure of the socio-cultural supremacy of the upper-caste in the Hindu or Varna (social stratification) system consisting of the hereditary Brahmín, Kshatriya, Vaishya, and Shudra castes, with the help of the post-Marxist philosophy of the Italian theoretician and politician Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937). By doing this, an attempt is being made to understand as to
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By examining the party’s indulgence in a strategic shift from a fiery anti-savarna (upper-castes) propaganda to honey-coated calls for dalit/savarna partnership for long-term prosperity, the paper seeks to show as to how parties like the BSP effectively have estranged themselves from their fundamental ideological tenets, demands and aspirations.

Therefore, this paper seeks to explore and account for the multiple dynamics of dalit subjectivity to the hegemony of caste-based Hindu social order in India. It seeks to situate this *problematique* from the perspective of pervasive modernisation of democratic processes.

The central argument of the paper is as follows: although the antiquarian, undemocratic nature of the social structure manifest in the Hindu *Varna* order may be declining, it still has a strong latent presence in the subterranean domain of society and culture. While caste as a religiously sanctioned system of resource transfer may be declining in importance in India, it remains a powerful, political identity marker and a form of symbolic and social capital (Jeffrey 2001: 218).

The changes that have occurred in India’s society, especially after India’s decolonisation, have de-ritualised caste. With the erosion of rituality and religiosity through the caste, a large part of the caste’s support system has collapsed. Caste now survives as a kinship-based cultural community, but operates in a different, newly emergent system of social stratification (Sheth 1999: 2502).

It is to understand this very phenomenon from the context of the continuing dalit subjectivity in India that the framework of the Neo-Marxist philosopher Antonio Gramsci is being adopted. In this regard, the question of dalit identity, as being subjected to the hegemonic Hindu social order, must be traced in the intricate patterns and conditions in which the dalits live their lives of subjectivity. This approach will not only help us to reflect on the limitations of the project of modernity in India, but also considerably facilitate the examination of the conception of subaltern historiography that subaltern consciousness manifest in resistance and protest leads to the making i.e. transformation and emancipation of people’s history.

Here, we attempt to demonstrate through the Gramscian framework as to how the notion of subaltern consciousness is a faulty conception whose weakness lies in the utter negligence of everyday sufferings of the dalits. This routine experience of the dalits may not appear significant to the subaltern historians. But viewed from the Gramscian perspective, it
symbolises the reification of the dalits to the hegemony of the caste hierarchy. It also exhibits as to how the instances of resistance and protest represented by dalit-based political movements have merely been fostered by sectional interests and led to the intra-class domination and hegemony within the fold of the dalit class structure.

The Enduring Caste Hierarchy in India

The Caste system has been a fundamental component of Indian society. For Louis Dumont, it was a vital part in envisioning the very essence of India (Dumont 1972: 7). This has been the assumption that has engendered rigorous debates and theorising about the place of caste in Indian society. After the publication of Dumont’s ‘Homo Hierarchicus’ in English, very few could resist the argument that caste was the centrepiece of Indian society. Even the Marxists, who had some trouble dealing with caste in their analysis of Indian society and history, were forced to take note and could no longer dismiss it as super-structural and as false consciousness (Prakash 1990: 392).

However, we are not arguing here that caste is the only basic component to judge the nature of Indian society; rather, here the emphasis is to understand its continued existence despite drastic socio-cultural transitions and its enduring ability to influence multiple layers of human life.

The roots of this pattern of pre-eminence of this caste-hierarchy phenomenon can be traced to the archaic Varna order, the mode of social stratification in ancient India. It is based on a division of the great attributes of human life: social prestige derived out of knowledge, political power emanating out of royal authority, and affluence generated by production. The varna order made rigid compartmentalisations of these social goods and fixed its legitimate control to the specific castes: knowledge for the Brahmins, royal power for Kshatriyas, and affluence for the Vaishyas. By this separation, this order introduced a fine-spun rationale of cooperative interdependence among these upper-castes, placing them in a highly tractable interactive mode, where the logic of collective use of these goods was signified.

The combination of knowledge, royal power and wealth and the collective action of those who owned them, led to the hegemonisation of the society and the marginalisation of the outcastes who were not part of this fold. Hence in this way, the three upper-castes were able, in the Gramscian notion, to establish their hegemony through a subtle and concerted manipulation of societal forces, with a reified acceptance by the masses. In this sense, the upper-castes, privileged of having the dual capacity of using force as well as attract consent, exercised a transcendental control over the affairs of the entire society by creating an interface between the super structure (legal and political institutions) and the infrastructure or the base (forces of production).

This then, formed the foundational component of not only the socio-cultural architecture of ancient India, but it became the core doctrine of India’s politics and economics. This clout
enabled the upper-castes to justify the Varna order as a teleological logic, engendered by the dialectic processes of the historical cycle. The logic of the Varna order can be understood by the multi-layered analysis of the constitution of society, provided by Antonio Gramsci (see further section ‘Interrogating Dalit Subjectivity through the Gramscian framework’).

In Gramsci’s notion, human society consists of various elements that influence and prevent individuals from advancing towards true consciousness. Individuals are influenced by the ideas of the ruling order, ‘the hegemon’, and in most cases this happens unconsciously due to the hegemon’s projection of common sense (Memeth 1980: 75-76, 134). It is by the portrayal of a common-sense conception of the world that the hegemon prevents the masses from realising their true consciousness and their own fundamental interests (Adamson 1980: 149).

Therefore, common-sense ideas of the hegemon are used to acquire consent of the masses (Pellicani 1981: 37). The rule of the hegemon is nothing more than the selfish interests of the elites super-imposed on the general interests of the common people. As a result, the masses accept the morality, the customs and the institutionalised rules of behaviour disseminated throughout society as absolute truths that they cannot and should not question (Fiori 1970: 238).

At this juncture, it would be pertinent to understand Gramsci’s notion of hegemony. Gramsci was mainly concerned with the question of the political functioning of ideology. For him “the idea of hegemony was the means by which the ruling class gains the ascent of those it rules. Hegemony is achieved in large part through the use of ideology, by defining a reality in which the ruling class seems to have some natural or inevitable right to be in charge”. He further states: “The cohesion of the modem capitalist order stem[s] primarily from hegemony, the spiritual and cultural supremacy of the ruling classes. Through the manipulation of the mechanisms of socialisation such as the media, the churches, the schools, they had managed to foist their own values and beliefs on an unsuspecting populace” (Gramsci 1971: 45, 169-170).

Therefore, Gramsci and others’ concepts and propositions on the ‘hegemon’ and ‘true consciousness’ appear to be generally valid, mainly because the ruling class in modern societies always gets the consent to rule and lay down policies not by coercion, but through a power of attraction. People get attracted to the agenda of the hegemon, in this case, the ruling elite, because they deem it proper on the basis of their voluntary will and exercise of reason. It is valid and apparent, if we look at the functioning of most modern democracies.

Anyhow, the caste system has not been a static phenomenon; it has undergone dynamic transformations, owing to the influence of what I wish to call the trilogy consisting of modernisation, democratisation and the endeavours of the religious reformers who formed, proposed and supported the idea of a non-stratified egalitarian Hindu social order. I call it a trilogy because in spite of these interventions engendered by the changing matrix of history, the caste system, as a source of social stratification, has not structurally transmogrified and has exhibited mere superficial changes. What has been achieved is that the occupational status of an individual as it was done in ancient India, is now not tied up to his or her birth because the Government and the industrial sector control the political system and the economy and not the triangular coalition of the three upper-castes in the ‘Varna order’.
However, this material transition has not resulted in the total dismantling of the dalit subjectivity to the hegemony of this coalition. This implies that in the demotic consciousness driven by conventional wisdom, the notion regarding the rigidity of caste-based compartmentalisation that divides people who hold the great goods of society and those people outside this fold is omnipresent.

The examination of the impact of the chronology of reformations that culminated in modernisation and constitutional interventions reflects that the popular psyche, rooted in archaic notions that lineage determines the propriety to possess the three important social goods, i.e. social prestige derived out of knowledge, political power emanating out of royal authority and wealth generated by commerce, is still widely prevalent.

Hence, the chequered history of the cathetic processes of reformations in this direction has been nothing more than a tale that narrates the sense of self-victimisation felt by the lower castes. The optimistic note of emancipation that these oppressed groups sensed in times of reformation efforts and attempts, went into shambles each time these movements either imploded into sectarian divisions and thereby creating dominant sects of their own, or merely ended up replicating a caste hierarchy prototype.

The first initiatives at contemplating a casteless society ended up giving birth to two new religions, Buddhism and Jainism, an ascetic-pacifist religion. The decline of the powerful Hindu empires paralleled with the advent of Islam, bringing in a new shift to this process. This shift was manifest in the religious reformation movement (Bhakti movement) that took place roughly between 8th and 17th century AD, strongly endeavoured to jolt the steel framework of the caste system.

However, this metamorphosis merely led to the multiplication of sectarian divisions within Hinduism, even ushering in the birth of a new, monotheistic religion: ‘Lingayatism’, centred on the worship of Lord Shiva. All this paved the way for the fundamentalist practitioners to clamour for the return of Vedic i.e. Hindu antiquity and to make ardent justifications for the teleological logic of the Varna order; according to them, attempts to disrupt this order led to the messy diversity of sectarian divides in Hinduism. In fact, the products of this process of transition, such as the reformation movements and the decline of powerful Hindu empires and the reformation by-products like Buddhism, Lingayatism and the spread of Islamic culture and philosophy, resulted in the evolution of their own brand of caste-based hierarchal stratifications, entirely defeating the very purpose of their cathartic reform agenda. This brings us to argue that the ailment increased even as medication continued, because the panacea itself began to emerge as source of the disease.

The Unfinished Project of Modernity

India’s post-colonial transition and the British engineered process of modernisation unfastened the roots of material and ritualistic bondage inbuilt in the caste order, through the process of Westernisation, coupled with what M. N. Srinivas called ‘Sanskritisation’, the
process of emulating the Hindu(-scriptural) practices and rituals of the dominant, exploiting castes by the marginalised, exploited castes (1955: 6-40).

The budding of an industrial economy driven by a sense of instrumental rationality, large-scale bureaucratisation nurtured with the principle of governmentality and rational legal authority, and scientific education that sought to infuse a sense of enlightenment rationality, contributed towards the material progress of a few sections of dalits.

However, it sparsely impacted upon the socio-cultural composition of the Hindu order. The hierarchal differentiation among its castes now did not exist in the domain of political representation, bureaucratic position and economics. Nevertheless, the organic system of the Varna order still manifested itself in institutions of family, marriage, ritualistic practices and worship, thereby keeping cultural practices in a hegemonic mould, still structured around antiquarian norms.

Decolonisation and India's transformation into a democratic republic do not seem to have effected any fundamental change in this situation. The postcolonial State merely seems to have emerged as a mute patron that has further encouraged an archaic and domineering social order. Constitutional provisions in this regard have merely proved to be toothless weapons, due to the severity of the upper-class Hindu elite resistance to subaltern emancipation.

Hence, semiotically, the Indian State may be democratic, but due to an imperious society, it only appears as a sham on democracy. This deplorable state of affairs clearly indicates that modernity in India has failed to bring in a sense of inter-subjectivity in human relations, in so far as the domination of the upper-castes over that of the lower castes is concerned.

Such a scenario played out in reality makes a mockery of democracy, by obstructing the path of progress and true emancipation for the weak and underprivileged sections of the society. This kind of a situation can be described as what Frantz Fanon (1968) called the 'false decolonisation', which involves the pitfalls of national consciousness and the weakness of spontaneous, own initiatives by (individuals from) the lower classes, in order to draw our attention to the historically and politically specific nature of nationalist movements, alerting us to nationalism's class-specific and liberating potentials (Ahmad 1987: 3-25).

For Fanon the falsity of decolonisation is directly connected to the ideological control exerted by the national bourgeoisie, or more accurately, the petty bourgeoisie, on the ideological and organisational processes of the nationalist movement (Bannerji 2000: 902).

For thousands of years, the hegemony of the upper-castes has been perpetuated at the cost of the social exclusion of the lower castes that more recently have become known as dalits. This was crafted to perfection by spreading a very popular cliché that lineage determined one's social status. Contemporary India, which has undergone impressive processes of modernisation and democratisation, does not present any novel picture in this sphere.

Even the political mobilisation of the dalits, resulting in their large-scale popular representation and control over the State structure and engagement with modernity through
a considerable improvement of their material status, seems not to have resulted in any revolutionary transition in so far as their social subjectivity is concerned. Though symbolising that modernisation, paralleled with democratisation, this mobilisation has not truly liberalised the socio-cultural spheres that could create a just and equitable order in the polity.

In this sense, India's journey towards modernity, evident in its socio-economic growth story, merely seem to reflect the material side of modernity. Indeed, the entire process of democratisation manifest in the existence of popular Government appears only to have facilitated the perpetuation of dominant interests through a process of legitimisation in the form of elections.

At this point, it may be noted that democratisation involves not merely a process leading to the overthrow of an authoritarian regime, and a transition to a democratic model of governance with its desired stability and maturity; rather, democratisation represents the deepening and spreading of what could be called a truly pluralist culture.

The engendering of a pluralist culture, involves treating modernity and democratic transition in a symbiotic context, wherein modernity and democratisation are supposed to result not only in the mere creation of stable electoral processes and material prosperity, but above all place, establish and secure human relations on a liberal platform of freedom, equality and mutual tolerance i.e. plurality.

On this count, modernity is envisaged here beyond material interpretations and is considered in the Weberian sense of human relations, and what Anthony Giddens calls inter-subjectivity. Both Max Weber (1864–1920) and Anthony Giddens (born 1938) have presented a penetrating critique of modernity and have proposed their own solutions to resolve the predicaments of what they call institutional modernity.

For Weber, "the world was moving toward mechanised petrification" (Weber 1958: 182), "rule by administrators rather than by complete individuals" (Weber 1946: 95), and "control by the rational organic machine known as bureaucracy" (Weber 1978: 402). In "this essentially modern condition, individual worth was lost. The individual was turned into a cog in the social machine" (Weber 1946: 228). Weber’s romantic solution to what he termed as this “iron cage of modernity” is fundamentally combined with an epistemology that is essentially Kantian (Weber 1949: 106). Further for Weber, modernity has produced externalisation of reason, or what he called “the mind objectified” (Ibid).

This externalisation or objectification can easily produce negative consequences for the social realm. The residues of rationalisation, industrialisation i.e. industrialised production and bureaucratic organisation deprives the individual of the spontaneous, creative character of human existence. Institutional life is rigid and dulls the mind. Rigidity, manifested in numbing routine and servility, reproduces itself in the processes of social reproduction. Modernity comes to represent conformity and petrified existence.

In Weberian terms, the primary answer to the pitfalls of modernity lies in an interpretive understanding of social phenomena, by assigning primary importance to morality and values.
as the foundations of human relations—and not to instrumental rationality, as symbolised by a modern society governed by rationalistic bureaucratic control and industrial production. In doing this, Weber resorts to the methodology of Kantian epistemology and the romantic tradition of *Sturm und Drang* (Koch 1993: 128-131).

Similarly, for Anthony Giddens, modernity is mainly a Western project and has resulted in the erosion of traditional forms of living. The consequences of modernity have been accentuated, as it has become reflexive in a self-sustaining, even escalating feedback loop. Personal experiences of dislocation, uncertainty and choice, characteristic of modernity in general, are yet more pervasive and constitutive of modernised identity.

Further for Giddens, modernity is a juggernaut, a runaway engine with enormous power, which collectively as human beings we can steer to some extent but which also threatens to run out of our control and which could run us over (1990: 139). This, according to Giddens, is mainly because modern processes entirely differ from previous socio-cultural processes, due to their dynamism, the degrees to which they undercut traditional habits and customs, and their global impact.

However, these are not merely extensional transformations. Modernity radically alters day-to-day social life and hence one of the distinctive features of modernity is, in fact, an increasing interconnection between extensionality and intentionality. Besides its institutional reflexivity, modern social life is characterised by profound reorganisations of time and space, coupled with the expansion of dis-embedding mechanisms, mechanisms which prise social relations free from the hold of specific locales, recombining across wide time-space distances.

Thus, the reorganisation of time and space plus the dis-embedding mechanisms, act to transform the nature and content of day-to-day social life (Giddens 1991: 1-3). In these circumstances, the self becomes a reflexive project (Ibid: 32). Giddens thus argues that to live in the universe of high modernity is to live in an environment of continuous chance and risk, the inevitable concomitants of a system geared to the domination over nature and the reflexive (re)construction of history (Ibid: 109).

To overcome the predicament of such an institutionalised modernity, Giddens emphasises the significance of personal relations, based on a Habermasian notion of communicative reason. His idea of the pure human relationship, most notably, is by definition communicative rather than that of the Foucaultian conception of power relationships. A pure relationship for Giddens is the social relation which is internally referential, i.e. that depends fundamentally upon satisfaction or rewards generic to that relation itself (Ibid: 244).

Thus the revisionist critique of modernity propounded by Giddens argues in favour of a reflective modernity, based on the importance of inter-subjectivity in human relations. This is one way of going beyond individual subjectivity to the objectified nature of institutional modernity, or, advance toward a truly intellectual dimension of modernity beyond material modernity.
Contrary to this, in India modernity has assumed a dehumanising materialistic character, owing to which subjectivity of one human individual to the other is still incorporated in and forcefully regulated by its system. Epitomising this is the complex structure of domination and subjectivity, characterised by the marginalisation of dalits and the hegemony of upper-castes in the socio-cultural sphere.

This pattern of subjectivity exists even as the State possesses powers to guarantee socio-cultural and politico-economic equality for the dalits, through affirmative action. To operationalise these powers, the Indian Constitution provides for the fundamental right to equality, with special privileges or positive discriminations for the lower castes delineated under article 15, clause III.

At this juncture, we are confronted with the circuitous epistemic question as to why, despite strengthening the dalit middle classes, enabled by State intervention and expansion of industrial production, there were no significant gains in terms of a counter-hegemonic status for the dalits in the Gramscian sense.

This phenomenon may be analysed through the class-consciousness framework of historian E. P. Thompson, which he adopted in his analysis of the English working classes. Thompson had found that working-class consciousness in nineteenth century England came from the traditional artisans, not new industrial labourers.

Thompson shows that forging a new working-class consciousness and working-class organisations relied on the artisans’ sense of inheriting the rights of Englishmen, in other words, on their backward-looking sense of entitlement as the basis for claiming basic rights in the political system. Meaning that political struggles are not a natural phenomenon emanating out of social conditions, but rather that the social conditions themselves are understood by the people who live them, through existing cultural frameworks (Thompson 1963: 53).

This implies that cultural experience becomes a foundational element in engendering class consciousness and their struggles. But when we take the question of the emergence of class consciousness and political struggle of dalits in India, it may be argued that it was not the past cultural experience that acted as an independent variable in the emergence of the dalit class consciousness and fostering of their political struggles. Rather, it was engendered by the political manoeuvring of the cultural experience of the dalits by those political movements predicated upon the ideology of dalit emancipation.

This tended to accelerate their movements’ rise to power, by effectively accepting and accommodating the hegemony of upper-castes, eventually subverting the aim of dismantling that very structure of hegemony. This indicates that the everyday sufferings of the dalits in the socio-cultural sphere, historically transmitted by the domineering Varna order itself, became in a way the source for gaining political capital by opportunist entrepreneurs using rather than representing dalit grievances. As Karl Marx states:
Men make their history, but they do not make just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly found, given and transmitted from the past. The tradition of all the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living. And when they just seem engage[d] in revolutionising themselves and things, in creating something entirely new, precisely in such epics of revolutionary crisis they anxiously conjure up the spirits of the past to their service and borrow from them names, battle slogans and costumes in order to present a new scene of world history in this time-honoured disguise and this borrowed language (Marx 1972: 437).

This, in the case of dalits in India, is being done by a section of their own community with vested political interests, leading to a faulty representation of the very notion of dalit consciousness; also, they perpetuate this by making the emancipatory political struggles merely look as electoral processes aiming at imparting a dalit-based identity to a Government, and not to ensure adequate representation of the dalits in the structure itself.

In this regard, denoting the Marxian notion of anxiously conjuring up of the spirits of the past are the attempts on the part of the dalit-led political parties’ engagement in revitalising the caste-based Varna antiquity, through their electoral trysts with the upper-caste Hindu elites and promotion of their interests at the cost of the interests of the dalits for short-term political profits.

The dalit middle class has acted as a bystander, by rendering its reified acceptance to this entire process of political revitalisation of the Varna upper class. Their reticence also indicates an urge on their part to dissociate themselves from the subaltern-class identity and an attempt at getting recognition on an equal footing with the dominant classes.

Thus, the lower caste struggles in India have merely represented a quest for equal status with the upper-castes and does not encompass social(ist) values of far-reaching emancipation. This means that the calls for recognition by the lower classes was only for gaining equality and to be accepted as no different from the others. This mainly has shades of commonalities with the struggles for bourgeois equality. Even Kanshi Ram had not called for land reforms; rather he wanted power for the dalits in the same way as the savarnas exercised over others (Alam 1999: 759). All this has entirely relegated the dalit masses into a state of lethargy i.e. passive subservience and also provides a fundamental explanation for the declining popularity and distancing of ‘backward’ class movements from their bases.

Dalit consciousness and a critique of Subaltern Historiography

Contemporary interest in social history owes much to the generation of British Marxist historians, including Edward Thompson, Eric Hobsbawm, Christopher Hill and Rodney Hilton, who popularised the idea of history from below. A key concept in their work was that of the people (Renton 2005: 559).
Deeply influenced by this genre of historians, the subaltern school of Indian historiography, sought to reinterpret Indian history by placing people at the core. Combining the Gramscian concept of subalternity with the Foucaultian understanding of power and knowledge, this school of thought sought to reconstruct India’s colonial past by objectifying resistance and protest as markers of subaltern agency, and reflected it as the determining force shaping the spatial-temporal dynamics of the colonial epoch. In doing this, they conflated colonial exploitation with Western cultural domination (Sarkar 1997: 41).

Here, colonialism and anti-colonialism are considered as discourse and counter-discourse, with the notion of difference serving as the pivotal marker in both. Subaltern historiography frames the problematic of decolonisation and nationalism in discursive terms. Within its scope, the notion of domination is attributed to power/knowledge, and both domination and hegemony are mainly seen as cultural constructs of identity and forms of representation and narration (Bannerji 2000: 903).

However, Subaltern studies in India, while claiming to rewrite history from the perspective of the subaltern groups as a prelude to creating a new emancipatory politics, has deviated from its original intent and become mired in a postmodernist debate about difference. A critique on this brand of history writing (historiography) should start from a simple question: what is its politics and whose interests may it serve (Bahl 1997: 1333).

The subaltern historians’ rewriting of history that emerged as the people’s history, contending elitist bias in historical narrations, has two objectives: (i) the dismantling of elitist historiography by decoding biases and value judgements in the records, testimonies and narratives of the ruling-classes; and (ii) restoring to the subaltern groups their agency, their role in history as subjects, with an ideology and political agenda of their own. While the first objective has yielded some interesting and important insights, the second has led to results which have been at best problematic, and at worst tediously neo-antiquarian and remarkably unremarkable in their banality (Perusek 1993: 1931).

Putting things into a Gramscian perspective, it may be noted that for him, the peasants cannot create the required emancipatory ideology of their own. Thus, to think that the subaltern classes in India have possessed deep-rooted subterranean ideologies of their own is belied by the universal prevalence of caste ideology, which these groups have shared with the ruling classes. It is the prevalence of such ideas within the autonomy of the subaltern groups that limited their protest and resistance and brought about their downfall and persistent marginalisation (Habib 1988: 8).

Let us take this critique of subaltern historiography as the starting point for examining the current debilitating state of dalit political movements in India. Such an understanding of this genre of historical interpretation would facilitate us not only to know how much serious attention one of the most deprived sections of Indian society has received in scholarly discourses, but also to determine the degree of agency that dalit masses exercise in the
structuration process of political movements aiming at dalit emancipation. In this regard, our interest lies in subaltern historians' claims in the second objective of their studies.

The first problem with this second objective is that it is inadequate to explain the historical linkages that dialogically connect the past with the present. What gets considerably attenuated, is a connection that could interpret the enduring subjectivity of the dalits to a dominant Hindu social order and the inability of this society to reach the stage of modernity wherein human relations would be based on inter-subjectivity and in turn, liberalising the social space to an extent that the perennialist adherence towards received traditionalism as a parameter for deciding individual identity.

Subaltern historians in this sense have not been able to connect the past with the present, mainly because they have been more interested in exploring the sources of oppression during the period of colonial transition and their attempt to investigate the degree of indigenousness that actually existed in delineating the socio-cultural processes during this period.

In this connection, their interests lie in examining the role of native groups in the process of resistance, in order to establish the agency of these groups outside the omnipresent framework of the colonial system. This obviously does not consider the question of dalit oppression by the upper-caste Hindus, which manifests as a source of domination outside the fold of colonial architecture.

The second problem that arises here is related to the phenomenon of subaltern consciousness. The question that arises here is, whether the notion of subaltern consciousness, viewed in the Marxian terms of class consciousness, has played a definitive role in shaping the history of the subaltern groups in India. The answer is a definite no.

Asserting this, we agree with the argument that the very autonomous terrain of subaltern consciousness in political activity, as stated in the second objective of the subaltern school of thought, itself is placed on rather shaky ground (Perusek 1993: 1935). As Guha (1982) himself has noted: this autonomy is not total and this domain coexists with elite groups and consequently bears its marks.

In this regard, E. P. Thompson's contention regarding the structural role of the cultural experience of the subalterns in shaping their own history must be contextualised in order to understand the undeniable yet limited extent of cultural autonomy and political agency that the subalterns have invested in making their own history.

The point here is that it is not merely the subalterns, who are engaged with their social experiences in the sense of E. P. Thompson's class-consciousness concept, but the elites and the ruling classes also take recourse to the same source and the latter succeed over the former due to the commanding advantage of power that latter possess (Perusek 1993: 1935).

Thus, subaltern consciousness not only reflects the marks of elite consciousness but also is subordinated to it. In this sense, if we problematise the question of dalit consciousness and the autonomy of their political activity, it may be stated that their consciousness reflected in
contemporary dalit political mobilisation merely appear to be replicating a kind of consciousness which is of an upper-caste prototype.

It then symbolises the very upper-caste orientation of dalit consciousness, as it becomes itself an elitist proposition—and this is what exactly has happened to the contemporary political movements aiming for dalit emancipation. They have merely emerged as classes within the subalterns, with the masses merely acting as foot soldiers to facilitate the political ambitions of their leaders.

Thus in this regard, yet another limitation of subaltern historiography needing attention here lies in its analysis of subalternity as a theoretical concept: it lends itself more as a description of identity of an oppressed group, rather than the degree and kind of oppression suffered or, the divergence of interests within that group once the source of oppression is removed (Perusek 1993: 1935).

What does all this mean for the oppressed? Does this present the nature of their character, their portrait as a reified subject? Where should we then locate the problem of dalit subjectivity in subaltern studies discourses? These are the questions that arise when we engage in the critique of subaltern school of Indian historiography. In their signification of textual analysis, their excessive emphasis on the supposed determinism of colonialism and their objectification of subaltern consciousness through resistance and protest against colonial domination, this brand of history has opted for a reductionist definition of subalternity. This reductionism meant that the issue of dalit subjectivity, one of the most oppressed subaltern classes in India's society has been relegated into a state of denial and neglect.

Thus, answers to questions posed above are not available when we navigate the waters of subaltern studies. A serious lacuna of subaltern historiography that should be taken into consideration here is that it fails to articulate as to how the persistence of the hierarchical caste system in India shapes a subject like the dalit caste/class, and what social pressures and psychological problems are involved in that process.

Apart from this, subaltern studies, when it emerged, seemed to speak for all oppressed people in India. Today, this voice has become only the voice of differences. Subaltern historians emphasise on political and other organised forms of resistance, but resistance is not a complete explanation of history because it fails to elaborate upon the everyday sufferings experienced by the subaltern groups.

In their passion for 'indigenity' (indigenousness), subaltern scholars appeal to the oppressed people that to be different with inequality and indigenous culture is natural, and they should live with it and they should celebrate it and should have no desire for change and discussion on how to change it. This supposed defence and celebration of traditional identity, in a way, legitimises the whole notion of domination as a natural process which is not amenable to changes and promotes a romantic view on the very phenomenon of hierarchy.
To denounce hierarchy as such does not get us anywhere, however. Instead what must be changed are the conditions that make these hierarchies exist and prosper, both in reality and perceptions of reality (Bahl 1997: 1342). If history is at once memory and hope, past and future weaving together into an open-ended, changeable present, neither nostalgia nor prolepsis can be history’s preferred mode. Rather, it calls for provisional and pragmatic identity points, as strategic locations i.e. opportunities for critical participation (Ray 1993: 1256).

The Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) and the fantasy of Dalit emancipation

False decolonisation in India is represented by the inability of its polity to usher in an egalitarian social order. One dominant phenomenon that epitomises this is the struggle for social amelioration by the oppressed classes, staged in the ambiance of decolonisation and democratisation.

Despite the postcolonial State bringing back native rule, cherishing the ideals of equitable socio-political and economic order in its governance charter, lower-class movements have merely been a futile exercise, and emancipation still remains a mirage. Representative of this, the potent political contestations by political parties embodying lower class interests in the Indian State of Uttar Pradesh, like the Samajwadi (socialist) Party and Bahujan Samaj (People in Majority) Party (BSP) confronting the Bharatiya Janata Party or the Congress dominated by the upper-class Hindu elite, have not translated into any seminal social transition in the form of status reversal for the common dalits or the other marginalised classes.

Both these lower-class political movements nurtured in the geographically and demographically largest State of the Indian union failed to achieve their highly publicised emancipatory goals, and only succeeded in creating a clique that control these parties. Such cliques on their part adopted a clientelistic approach towards politics, acted in pursuance of their own interests and sabotaged the professed emancipatory agenda by impeding the path of development for the marginalised with their dubious political practices.

While doing this, they allied with the socially powerful groups like the upper-caste Hindu elite, by striking power-sharing deals with them and thus endeavouring to create a kind of rentier State through their style of electoral politics and governance. In this way, they diluted the antithetical dialectics between the exploiters (upper-caste Hindu elite) and the exploited (dalits) through a spurious combination of two contrary positions: a superficial anti-savarna dalit agenda and an active engagement with the upper-caste Hindus for sharing political power. These party-leadership groups by indulging in such practices have degenerated the very spirit of subaltern emancipation into a parody, and pushed all movements thriving to achieve this into shambles.

The Mayawati-led BSP (Mayawati is the supremo or the president of the BSP and the party revolves around her iconic status), whose professed political agenda is the emancipation of the most marginalised section of the Hindu society, ‘the dalits’, adopted such a strategy for
gaining political advantages in the later stages of its electoral engagements. This shift was seen in the Uttar Pradesh assembly elections of 2007 in which the party under her leadership, achieved a landslide victory.

Initially, the BSP captured a mass base by its strong anti-savarna (upper classes) agenda which manifested in slogans like ‘tilak, tarazu aur talwar, inkon maro joothein chaar’ (sandalwood paste, the scale and the sword, hit them with boots). Here, the metaphoric interpretation of the tilak (sandal-wood paste mark on the forehead) indicates toward the Brahmins (the holders of knowledge); the tarazu (scale) symbolises the vaishya (traders and businessmen); and the talwar (the sword) points toward the kshatriya (holders of royal political power). The slogan thus meant that the upper-castes deserve such treatment like beating them up with boots.

The BSP attempted to gain political capital through such populist slogans by making use of the ontological structure of social relations between the savarnas and dalits, which was characterised by a hegemonic culture that fomented a deep sense of discontent among the dalits. Thus, the social discontent and alienation resulting out of everyday experiences of domination and dehumanisation among the dalits trapped in the dogmatic Varna order became fertile ground to manipulate and gain political advantages.

It is in this context that the political symbolism of the populist slogans used by the BSP must be understood. They were mainly used as tools of mass mobilisation in order to woo the dalit voters and aimed at raking up their vulnerabilities, in part to exploit the anti-savarna psyche among them and create a hostile and aggressive voting bloc against the exploitative upper-castes.

Situating the political discourse of the party’s ideology in the framework of the long history of exploitation, BSP leaders attempted at portraying the upper-caste Hindus as those who deserve punishment and an unsympathetic treatment for their indulgence in a long legacy of exploitation. The endeavour here was also to picture an aggressive dalit, who with the power of his vote can boot out the upper-caste Hindus out of their hegemonic position.

Yet another electoral tactic adopted by the Mayawati-led BSP, is the infusing of a sense of fear psychosis among the dalits, revolving around the threat of the savarna order. Every time Mayawati reaffirms her commitment to the dalit cause, she also projects herself as the ultimate saviour of the dalits. Her popular electoral slogans run along these lines: “vote for me, otherwise the non-Dalit forces will retard the growth of the dalit community and you will never have access to political power” (Siddiqui 2012: 10).

This, then, has been the ultimate mantra for political change which was propagated by the BSP with a fiery zeal. It contributed to an episodic transformation resulting in the phenomenal electoral successes of the party in 1993. It is dubbed here as episodic because for the first time after almost four and half decades of democratic governance, the political turf of Uttar Pradesh that until then had been dominated by the upper-caste Hindu elite, was de-established with both the Indian National Congress and the Hindu-nationalist Bharatiya Janata (Indian People’s) Party, India’s two main parties, performing very badly in the
elections that were held in 1993. In this direction, the BSP party also made optimum use of
the iconic status of B. R. Ambedkar's image as an apotheosis of dalit emancipation to seep
deep into the demotic consciousness and gain maximum political trade-offs.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar has been one of the most revered leaders that India has ever produced. He is considered to be an apotheosis of subaltern emancipation, social transformation and an emblem of liberty, equality and justice. Ambedkar was a great exponent and practitioner of the affirmative action theory, the concept of redistributive justice and in a Foucaultian sense, the founder of Dalit discursivity. Above all, he is the greatest icon of the Dalit masses, who, through constitutional provisions, transformed the socio-economic and political status of the most oppressed sections of the Indian society.

However, it may be pointed out here that the political practices of BSP have turned out to be a mere epigamic use of B. R. Ambedkar's values by a politically perverted class of people, and also stood out as a grotesque misrepresentation of his ideas.

For Ambedkar, upper-class domination had acquired a kind of mass consent and had to be replaced through an ideological revolution which was a precondition for political revolution. The formula which he advocated was 'education, organisation and then revolution'. Dalit emancipation for Ambedkar thus rested in initially controlling and harnessing the forces of intellectual production which facilitated their organisation and political mobilisation, ultimately paving the way for their political empowerment.

But, in utter contrast to these ideas, the BSP leaders wanted the dalits to merely become a vote bank, for keeping their own political ambitions kindled. Dalits were expected to become the wheels upon which the political vehicle of the BSP would be run. Further, Mayawati's preference of political expediency over ideological commitment also represented a departure from the ideals of the party's founder Kanshi Ram, who struggled to achieve a dignified social space for the dalits.

Such political parochialism alienated the dalits from the BSP movement and led to mass despondency, as the party voted into power on the basis of a popular dalit agenda failed to carve out a durable and improved, or even equitable social space for one of the most marginalised classes of India's society. This ultimately resulted in a drastic slump in the popularity of the party which is evident in its poor performances in the latest parliamentary elections conducted in April-May 2014.

In this situation, the BSP resorted to such tactics that could be called strategic syncretism to redeem its political position. This was characterised by a structural transformation in BSP's electoral agenda which was deeply rooted in its vision of the nature of social relations between savarnas and dalits. A drastic shift was witnessed on this front, with a transformation in the nature of BSP's popular articulations. Previously, it was embedded in the ideology of creating aggressive dalit voters, by raking up their anti-savarna psyche. But by the elections of 2007, 2009 and also during the elections of 2012, it got changed into an
adherence to a grand strategy which would aim at involving and co-opting the savarnas (upper-castes) themselves, in its political endeavours to gain upper-class votes.

The first signs of such a shift began to be visible in the changed nature of BSP's shibboleths, which now stated that yeh haathi nahein, ganesh hein, yeh Brahma Vishnu Mahesh hein (this is not an elephant; it is Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh). Haathi means elephant, which is the party emblem of the BSP; and this new shibboleth represented a change in their earlier emphasis on tilak, tarazu and talwar. It also manifests the re-envisioning of BSP's notions of the savarna/dalit relations, located in the turf of the Hindu Varna order. This re-envisioning meant that the older caste-specific tirade gradually changed into a more holistic and a ritualistic outlook towards Hinduism itself.

Thus by the elections of 2007, the party stopped harping upon creating an aggressive voter against the upper-castes and began to glorify the religio-civilisational traditions of Hinduism and with this, an attempt was made to project itself as a supporter and upholder of the superiority of Vedic antiquity, expressing in a sense, a reified acceptance to the teleological logic of the Varna order.

By making a metaphoric comparison between the elephant (the party emblem) and the elephant-faced Hindu deity Ganesh, and by presenting that very elephant as the representation of the three prominent Hindu deities Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh, the party was now shifting its position from its revolutionary programme of demolition of the Hindu order to a reformative agenda of dalit emancipation while keeping that order undisturbed. The approach here was to argue that the caste-based differences within Hinduism could be ironed out and the oppressed would be uplifted by the concerted effort of all sections of the Varna order.

In a way, this is to say that the cycle of exploitation was to be ended by an alliance between the exploiter and the exploited; such an alliance would result in the exploited beginning to follow the ritualistic practices embedded in the dominant culture of the exploiter, a practice referred to as Sanskritisation by M. N. Srinivas. In the Marxian sense, this was a kind of petty bourgeoisie, wherein, bourgeois culture was to be imitated by the proletariat. Or, in terms of Homi Bhabha (1994), the formerly colonised people attempting to mimic their erstwhile imperial masters in a way as to depict that the colonised shares a peculiar relationship with its former coloniser, which Ashis Nandy terms ‘the intimate enemy’ (1983).

With such strategic syncretism, the BSP rode to office in 2007 with the support of all the castes. Now slogans chanted by diverse sections of the society stated that tilak, tarazu aur talwar, yeh hein BSP ke adhar (sandal-wood paste, scale and sword, they are the pillars of support for the BSP). Meaning that the BSP was now requiring the support of the upper-castes to carry out its political journey, and hence the Brahmins, Kshatriyas and the Vaishyas are the pillars of the BSP.

Further, another slogan stated that tilak, tarazu aur talwar, ab sabhi ho jao haathi par sawar (sandal-wood paste, scale and the sword, now all can ride on the elephant). This implied that
from then on, the party was willing to co-opt the upper-castes within the fold of its political agenda which vindicated the logic of the Varna order.

Thus, such slogans emanated from (or were directed toward) the non-dalit groups and provided the BSP a wider political spectrum and voting base. The BSP accepted this with the spirit of real politic, wherein power-sharing arrangements purely depended on political realism and not on ideological commitment. Such a transition indicates the vacuity and falsity of what could be called the dalit consciousness, which merely remained an elite domain. It also demonstrated the lack of a panoptic vision among the party leaders for dalit emancipation, which remained mired in parochial concerns of building a voting base and not aim at looking beyond politics for achieving a just and equitable order for the subaltern communities.

Naturally, with such a myopic attitude, BSP was bound to lose its dalit support base as it entirely deviated from its original focus. The end result was a crushing electoral defeat in the 2012 assembly elections and and a devastating defeat in the 2014 parliamentary elections.

The questions that arise at this juncture are: are the dalits passive victims of the huge juggernaut of the Varna order? Are they themselves responsible for their subjectivity? Do they lack agency to free themselves from the shackles of caste hierarchy? To answer some of these questions, we can go back to E. P. Thompson, who states that the English working class were consciously present and vocal at the time of their own making (1978: 147).

As a marked contrast to this argument, it is stated here that the dalits were not consciously present and vocal at the time (i.e. had a voice in the timing and manner) of their own making. This means that their presence was carved by others which subsequently became their history, indicating that somebody else made their history. Their subjectivity, thus, was imposed upon them by carving their identity by outside forces.

In this sense, identities are the products of particular spatial-temporal contexts and they are engendered by a specific social structure. These identities get interpreted as an opposite to identities of those who hold the power of defining them. This is to say that we need to identify the true sources of identities and take into cognisance that they are constructed and imposed adventitiously from outside. Normally, this is done through identifying the dominant discourse emanating out of the most powerful class in society.

Immanuel Wallerstein has argued that one group is socially and culturally inferior to another in such a way that the group said to be inferior cannot be expected to perform tasks as well as the presumably superior group (Wallerstein 1991: 177-178). This very logic has been persistently advanced by the dominant discourse advocating for upper-caste domination and dalit subjectivity in India.
Interrogating Dalit Subjectivity through the Gramscian framework

The post-Marxist thinking exhibits a revisionist interpretation of the nature and coalitional interaction between the base and super-structure, in which Antonio Gramsci’s contribution is paramount. Gramsci’s neo- or post-Marxist theory represents the assertion of absolute historicism and humanism over economic determinism: the primacy of the super-structural activities over infrastructural activities that form the base; the primacy of ideological hegemony over political hegemony, and the subjective over the objective dimension in neo- or post-Marxist theory of history and society (Salamini 1974: 359).

Situating the problem of emancipation of the dalits in India in the Gramscian sense, it may be stated that their enduring dehumanisation and marginalisation can be assigned to their lack of control over the super-structure. On their part, the upper-castes still maintain a hegemonic hold over the super-structure, and hence are in a position even to shape the affairs of the base.

Hegemony for Gramsci is not merely the exercise of coercive force; it is fundamentally a transcendental power to consensually impose authority on other groups in society. It is primarily a cultural and ideological phenomenon reflecting human consciousness, and only secondarily a political phenomenon. Further, it also means that to exercise class domination, it may not be necessary to control the forces of production in the classic-Marxian sense. Control over the super-structural elements allows the dominant class to extend their control even to the base. This also lends to the Gramscian interpretation of the State, which is very different from that of the classical Marxists.

The State for Gramsci is not a monolithic entity and represents a combination of two interdependent components: political society and civil society. Meaning that hegemony is protected by coercion (Gramsci 1971: 263), or it is dictatorship + hegemony (Ibid: 239). In the same way, unlike Marx (1974: 57) for whom civil society was an ensemble of economic relations, for Gramsci (1971: 12) it was an ideological super-structure.

Hence, upper-caste domination is not merely predicated on coercive capacity; rather, it is ideological control backed up by force. No authority can be exercised by mere coercion and hence ideological consent becomes an imperative. Thus, the upper-caste hegemony in the Gramscian sense is not merely a political or economic domination. Thus, hegemony depends upon both the structure (the realm of economy) and the super-structure (the realm of culture), which dialectically get connected and reinforce each other to form an organic structure called the historical block.

The upper-caste domination is thus a combination of control in the ideological, political and economic spheres. This domination in civil society is exercised on a deeper level by a profound unconscious transformation of human consciousness. The dynamics of upper-class domination is popularised and internalised by the masses and becomes part of the common sense of the masses. The consciousness of the masses also reflects either an appropriation or an inversion of upper-class ideology (Pizzorno 1970: 119).
Here, the fundamental difference between Gramscian and Leninist notions of hegemony comes to the fore. For Lenin, hegemony is associated with domination and the dictatorship of the proletariat in the domain of political society. Gramsci, on his part, was concerned with its infusion in both the political and civil societies and for him the theoretical and practical principles of hegemony have epistemological significance (Piccone 1976: 501).

In accordance to this notion, it may be argued that despite the dalits gaining control over the base by virtue of material progress, their socio-cultural position still reflects an antiquarian and downtrodden character. They find themselves subordinated to the coalition of the three upper-castes in the socio-cultural domain. This is because of the primordialist disadvantage thrust upon them by the dogmatic assertions by the upper-castes of the teleological logic of Varna order, which prohibits the translation of their progress in material status to an uplifting and emancipation in the societal sphere.

Their hold over the legal and political institutions, gained through popular dalit political movements, backed by constitutional provisions also has failed to accomplish this task. This can also be accorded to the perennial existence of traditionalism in India's modernising society which has witnessed the emergence of modernity merely in material terms, with the question of inter-subjectivity in the sphere of human relations still remaining unaddressed.

The cogent argument of Gramsci aptly fits here. He states: the economic moment of consciousness constitutes a negative phase (the realm of necessity) in the historical ascendancy of subaltern classes toward political hegemony, which must be transcended and replaced by a positive phase (realm of liberty) providing the masses with entirely new categories of thought (Salamini 1974: 367).

Thus, considering this Gramscian notion, it may be stated that the alienation and subjectivity of the dalits is not rooted in the pattern of production (material forces), rather it is basically political in character. Hence, a Gramscian explanation at deciphering answers to resolve the dalit question in India, involves the acceptance of his advocacy of what he calls “the revolution without a revolution” which involves two stages: “the war of position” and the war of manoeuvre before reaching the stage of “war of movement”. This means that for the dalits, the dismantling of their marginalisation would happen only through the transformation of civil society and not merely by the capture of seats in parliaments and government.

This Gramscian dictum has been aptly demonstrated by the enduring dalit alienation even in those provinces of India which saw political parties being catapulted to power by the advocacy of dalit-based ideology. The BSP-ruled Uttar Pradesh is one such example. Apart from this, these instances also signify as to how there emerges intra-class contradictions, resulting in the creation of class elites within the subaltern groups which leads to inner-group domination.

This inner-group domination tends to connive and interject with the already existing dominant interests of the upper classes to form a combination of hegemonic structures involving both the upper classes as well as the dominant fringe within the subaltern classes.
It makes the nature of hegemony even more immense and suppressive, because the subgroup which commends the superior status within the subaltern group seeks a narcissistic self-identification with the superior groups in the society. Such narcissism stems from their voluntary excursion into the material and political advancements, benefits and privileges resulting from the dismantling of their subaltern identity, and their chimerical urge to recognise themselves at par with the superior classes.

One latest instance demonstrating this self-identification with upper-class identity is the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) showcasing its Brahmin following in a rally on 9 October 2012 which was held to mark the death anniversary of its founder Kanshi Ram. It was a concerted attempt on the part of the party leadership to revitalise the Brahmin/dalit combination that had helped it to gain a thumping majority in the 2007 Uttar Pradesh assembly elections. In the rally, special arrangements were made for the Brahmins by providing an exclusive enclosed space for them as they participated in the rally dressed in their traditional attire of dhoti kurta, the Ramanami stole and a tilak on the forehead. The Brahmin face of the party, national general secretary Satish Chandra Mishra was entrusted with the responsibility of bringing in a sizable number of Brahmins.

Besides this, the other Brahmin leaders of the party extensively canvassed for the event, throughout the State of Uttar Pradesh. (*Daily News Activist* 2012: 1). If such a phenomenon could be called petty bourgeoisie in Marxist discourse, it could be called petty Brahminism in the context of dalit political mobilisation—and goes beyond Adorno’s statement that all thinking, including non-identity thinking, has a moment of identity or, what Gayatri Spivak called the minimal idealisation (*Ray* 1993: 1256). This entirely defeats the true purpose of the counter-hegemonic movement, as far as the dalits are concerned.

For any counter-hegemonic movement, ‘the vanguard’, a small group constituting the top brass of the party is required. They must lead the movement through their ideological teachings, organisational skills and strategic planning. But if most of the powerful members of the vanguard are actually Brahmins, then it becomes quite difficult or even almost impossible for the party’s ideology to evolve a critical consciousness within the organisation i.e. amongst its rank-and-file members towards the goal of dalit emancipation, mainly because these leaders tend to reinforce the dominant Brahman ideology and view the notion of dalit emancipation itself from a paternalistic perspective.

All this boils down to the question of cultural superiority which the dominant groups always claim for themselves. Culture in the Gramscian sense involves a dense mosaic of institutions of civil society which help make the revolution possible (*Eagleton* 2000: 239). Although Gramsci has emerged as the major theoretician in this regard, he did not entirely minimise the importance of the infrastructure. Still, unlike Marx, for Gramsci the base is not the primary and determining factor of the super-structure. Rather, it is secondary and determined by super-structural elements (*Bobbio* 1969: 75). So, the relationship between the base and the super-structure is one of means and ends. For Gramsci, super-structural
elements such as consciousness, ideology and culture are determining factors of the nature, scope and outcome of revolutions (Salamini 1974: 368).

Hence, the cultural superiority of the upper-castes has rendered the material progress of the dalits effectively as a sham. The participation of the dalits in the State structure also has proved to be ineffective, reflecting the dominance of the upper-castes over the civil society.

The failure of the Mayawati-led BSP’s social engineering project and its devastating performance in the recent assembly elections provides credence to this basic observation. The BSP lacked the dalit-based ‘organic intellectuals’, and relied on the Brahmins to provide the intellectual support and leadership. This proved to be counterproductive to say the least, because the Brahmins merely reproduced the hegemonic values and stopped short of adhering to any emancipatory ideals.

Gramsci’s definition of organic intellectuals covers the entire group able to be an organiser of society in general, including all its complex organisms and services right up to the State system. Organic intellectuals are different from traditional intellectuals who regarded themselves as being free from all classes, for instance, the academics. According to Gramsci, such traditional intellectuals were imbued with hegemonic culture and were incapable of challenging dominant values. Organic intellectuals on their part were connected to the class structure, say for example the upper-class members of a political party being engaged in lower-class movements.

Being an organic intellectual did not mean merely thinking abstractly, or in the Leninist conception being some exceptional lower-class members who become intellectuals, engendering or at least pretending to engender class-consciousness among the proletariat. Rather, in a Gramscian sense, all individuals must become intellectuals with the capacity to objectify ideas to such an extent as the revolutionary party itself does it. This means that not only a small clique, but all members of the political movement perform the role of intellectuals in motoring the revolutionary agenda (Piccone 1976: 504).

To achieve the goal of the dalit (Gramscian subaltern) emancipation, the foremost need is what he termed as solidarity to take a “war of position”, that is to prepare the intellectual and cultural ground to launch a counter-hegemonic movement. For this to happen, every member of dalit-based political movements should perform the role of an organic intellectual and through their writings and activism, create a counter-hegemony that can challenge upper-caste hegemony. This will not happen only by clamouring for equality with the savarnas, which only leads to the formation of subaltern dalits into a kind of replica models of Sanskritised selves, reflecting a nostalgic glorification of the Vedic antiquity.

Putting this in Marxian terms, a quest for bourgeois equality (parity with the savarnas) will merely produce reified individuals who accept the teleological logic of the Varna order and the superiority of the cultural practices of the dominant classes.
Rephrasing this in the notions of Herbert Marcuse, the material advancements that the dalits gain by virtue of modernisation and its powers of social conditioning characterised by welfare, leads to the growth of commodity fetishism, subsequently resulting in reducing their will to dissent (Marcuse 1964: 61). This is similar to what Jurgen Habermas states: “the capitalist ethic had become more technocratic, legitimating itself through science and technology, or consumerism, which in a sense depoliticised the society” (Habermas 1974: 142).

Situating the caste system in this way, it may be stated that due to the material advancement of the lower castes engendered by modernisation, the Varna order has been able to progressively eliminate caste-based conflicts and gradually absorb contradictions embedded in caste hierarchies. Thus, any movement challenging it will not be successful if the subjective components of Marxist theory are deficient, meaning that the subjective realisation of objective conditions for social transformation is crucial (Salamini 1974: 363). This is exactly what is needed for achieving the goal of dalit emancipation in India.

Conclusion

This paper does not claim to advocate a hermeneutic debate on the concept of subaltern consciousness, nor does it affirm that the use of the term represents a kind of catachresis or misconception. Rather, the aim of the paper has been merely to highlight as to how dalits, the lowest strata of the Hindu social order in India, have succumbed to the dominance of the upper-castes in civil society.

Gramsci had argued that the greatest weakness of the Italian working class was that they failed to translate revolutionary ideas and relations into a concrete political system and Governmental programme. His observations were related to the Fascist regime which was gradually taking over power in Italy. The same can be said about the dalits in India. The Gramscian perspective applied here is the penetrating influence of the upper-castes into the matrix of dalit political movements—making them merely a travesty of what Mayawati calls as the ‘social engineering’ project.

In fact, such political movements have played a vital role in the incorporation of the urge by the dalit elites to incorporate savarna identity into the movement, providing fertile space for upper-caste interventions. Thus, upper-caste domination has acquired a kind of mass consent. It cannot be replaced in the pattern of the Russian Revolution, but rather through an ideological revolution which becomes a precondition for a political revolution.

Hence, the dalits must become a dominant social class before becoming one of the ruling classes on a par with the other ruling classes. They must exhibit intellectual leadership before winning Governmental power. In the Gramscian framework, they must acquire position to establish their hegemony, through which they overcome alienation and subjectivity. To become a dominant class, they should possess a well-organised system, to maintain ideological control and go beyond mere material control. This would be ensured if the dalits come to a position from where they can exercise ideological, political and
economic control over the totality of the social structure of India or at least of their own community.

In short, in the Gramscian notion, the dalits should emerge as a historical block. This involves a self-constitution into a new kind of State which is kindred to the Hegelian conception of the State as the highest expression of civil society, and not just a tool of class domination as propounded by orthodox Marxists.

Dalit emancipation can become a tangible proposition only if their hegemonic status intersperses beyond political society and creates a concrete interface between State and civil society. Mere control of the State by majority dalit representation will result in class domination of its own type. In this regard, we have to take into cognisance the Gramscian signification of State’s cultural hegemonic function which was contrary to the Marxist/Leninist emphasis on its class character and oppressive nature.

Thus, rather than the State, it must be the civil society in the Gramscian sense of a kind of cultural spirit and an ideological sphere that must be strengthened. This act of strengthening must involve a deep and pervasive location of the dalits in its wider spaces, activated through their intellectual progress, accomplished through a coherent ideology, unified organisation and long-term strategy.

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Critical observations on the article 'Dehumanising the Dalit'

(First Critical Response to Sanjeev Kumar "Dehumanising the Dalit: Understanding Lower Caste Alienation in India through the Gramscian Approach")

To begin with, the article is a probe into the failure of dalit-based political movements in India, wherein the author has adopted the Gramscian approach to conceptually comprehend the link between culture and politics, a key requirement for conducting such an enquiry. Theoretically speaking, the notions of hegemony and *transformismo*, linkage between culture and politics, difference between State and civil society, together with the notions of ‘organic’, dissident intellectuals, revolution and counter-hegemony, as expounded by Antonio Gramsci, are useful to conceptualize the patterns of hegemony and reactions to it in different societies. The article has sought to demonstrate as to how Brahman hegemony,
through the centuries, has operated as a cultural force in determining the contemporary nature of Indian politics.

By locating the hegemony of the Brahmans to their overarching position in shaping the intellectual agenda of society, the author shows how this hegemony operates in a manner to steer away (i.e. repress and marginalize) the dalit-based political movements from the actual values of dalit political ontology. The author also indicates that the movements emerging out of a romantic vision of dalit emancipation, tended to get diluted through submission to the hegemonic agenda, purely out of compulsions of political expediency. The author argues that the acceptance of the intellectual superiority of the Brahmans by the leaders of the dalit political movements, made them part of that very hegemonic structure against which they had positioned themselves. This, for the author, reflects a vacuity in so far as the notion of dalit class consciousness is concerned.

However, the author falls short of analyzing the birth of a class within the dalits, which has a class consciousness of its own. Termed as the dalit middle class, this section of dalits has represented more of a type of bourgeois interest and secluded itself from the mass political agenda of the dalits. Acting as a class within a class, for the dalit middle class, the demands for democratization of capital and reservation of jobs for them in the private sector (Pai 2013), come ahead of the very need for a counter-hegemony that is aimed at dismantling the cultural supremacy of the Brahmans. In fact, this class identifies more with the values and practices of the hegemon and isolates itself from the goals of emancipation.

Further, it must be noted that the term dalit itself is very discursive and the epistemology of dalit political movements is very wide and varied, considering the underlying geo-cultural diversity in India. For instance, the dalit political movements have found more success in the western Indian State of Maharashtra, as compared to other parts of the country. The intellectual agenda of the dalits is also stronger in Maharashtra. Besides, the very problems of the dalits in different parts of India and the political ideologies emanating out of those, vary across regions.

Thus, a monolithic envisioning of the notion of dalit politics will always be infested with a kind of methodological reductionism. Here the author seems to limit the paper to a focus on dalit politics in the north Indian province of Uttar Pradesh and the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), a political party founded upon the ideals of dalit emancipation. Be as it may, it would have been more appropriate if the author had dealt upon these nuances more clearly and done the study on a wider canvas.

The BSP, on its part, is a key player in the politics of Uttar Pradesh and the author seeks to analyze up to what extent the issue of caste consciousness determined the political fortunes of BSP. By referring to distinct electoral patterns of the politics in Uttar Pradesh for the last two and half decades, the author shows how the political populism of anti-Brahmanism has transformed into a policy of Brahman appeasement. The author argues that the dalit, projected as the main engine of social transformation during the 1990s by the BSP, gradually declined to be a mere voter party or voting machine who needed to be aligned with the voters of the upper castes (savarna).
The goal of social transformation through the abolition of Brahman hegemony rapidly changed into a necessity for a harmonious alliance of all the castes in order to achieve a dual objective: the political survival of the BSP and the softening of anti-Brahmanism for achieving short-term political gains.

To bring in a sharper analysis, the author could have placed this entire political context within the framework of the discourse of dalit identity politics. In this regard, there is a growing realization that in present-day Indian politics, most of the political parties are harping on the notion of governance as an all-encompassing agenda that would capture the imagination of all classes and sections of society. It is argued in this context that by emphasizing the need for good governance, political parties have attempted to entirely attenuate the significance of the debate over identity politics. Consequently, there has been the gradual erasing of the debate over dalit identity politics from the political sphere. In any case, this is mainly the view of scholars who bring in critical perspectives to the study of dalit identity politics. Recent works by Ajay Gudavarty throw light on this important dimension.

On the other side of the spectrum are the so-called Ambedkarites who still hold the classic romantic vision of dalit identity politics and argue that movements such as BSP still occupy a significant position. Besides all this, there is the discourse of Hindutva that attempts to drastically change the cartography of dalit identity politics. The proponents of the Hindutva discourse have been constantly making calls toward the dalits to give up their anti-savarna agenda and become part of the grand Hindutva fold.

In this appeal, the Hindutva ideologues tend to articulate a sense of the common threat emanating from the Muslims, against whom all Hindus should unite. Apparently, the agenda here is to obliterate the very idea of dalit identity and make the dalits part of the grand narrative of Hindutva (Narayan 2009). Such a notion emanates out of a Brahman organic, overarching view of Hindu society that regards the caste structure as the most basic, harmonious component of society (Jaffrelot 2003).

Finally it may be said that out of the three major strands of dalit assertion as outlined by Sudha Pai—assertion at the grass root level, dalit political parties and electoral politics, and middle class activism—only the third seems to remain significant today (Pai 2013). Thus, as Gopal Guru has stated, you can be an author of dalit experience, but you cannot be its owner, implying here that it is very difficult to document the everyday suffering and humiliation encountered by the dalits.

Hence, an empirical analysis of their political participation may not be able to capture the actual state of their consciousness. Even ethnographers, with all their objective participant observation and thick description, may fall short of a proper understanding and description of the psychological violence that practically every dalit encounters. The notion of structural violence propounded by Johan Galtung could be adopted as an interesting analytical tool in this regard.
Keeping all this in mind, it may be stated that this article not only touches upon a subject of contemporary relevance, but also offers an interesting and innovative proposition for further research. I believe this would be a good read for political science students as well as for readers interested in understanding the ways in which manifestations of practical politics can be seen and analyzed through epistemological dimensions, embodied in political theory.

- Anonymous

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Some comments on ‘Dehumanising the Dalit’

(Second Critical Response to Sanjeev Kumar “Dehumanising the Dalit: Understanding Lower Caste Alienation in India through the Gramscian Approach”)

This article on the history and current state affair of the Dalits, the lowest caste of "outcasts", "untouchables" in Hindu-dominated India from the perspective of Gramsci’s theory on hegemony and hegemonisation, is insightful and painful to read. It would be no surprise to me that its sensitive topic and perhaps controversial approach has prevented it to be published in India or elsewhere, until now—just like Sai Ramani Garimella’s paper on a closely related topic until it appeared in this journal’s Spring 2014 issue. For this reason alone, I recommend it to the reader, as it deserves to see the light of day (so to speak) and merits a serious scholarly debate and exchange of views.

Nevertheless, I have some comments and suggestions which may be useful to the author, if he or she wishes to publish a new, updated and improved version of this article in the future (in this journal or elsewhere)—or intends to do more research related to outcasts, ‘lesser’ classes and second-class citizens living in a hegemonic, hierarchical structure of any society.

First, there should have been more clarification of the context and Marxist ideology of Antonio Gramsci’s political thought on hegemony i.e. dominance and subjectivity, and some more direct quotations from his own writings rather than from secondary sources. This
would have been useful for those who are unfamiliar with Gramsci’s work (as admittedly I am).

Second, the author seems to wholeheartedly and unquestionably adopt Gramsci’s philosophy, conceptualisation and theoretical framework(s), but does not really make clear why he or she does so and to what extent (if not fully) he or she actually does so. He or she should or could have engaged in a sympathetic yet critical debate with Gramsci in one or more paragraphs.

Third, the author occasionally gives sweeping statements on the supposed reasons of certain institutional actors, organisations and individuals for behaving in a certain way, without offering sufficient corroboration to my mind. For instance, the author seems to impute exclusively opportunist, self-serving or at least short-sighted and cow-towing motives to the leaders of a (or the) major Dalit political movement, the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), even BSP-chairwoman Mayawati Kumari herself, in an apparent recent shift from emancipatory opposition to cooperation with and incorporation within the hegemonic Hindu order and its higher castes and classes.

But on what facts or analysis is the author’s observation of “Mayawati’s [and BSP’s] preference of political expediency over ideological commitment” really based on? And why would this expediency not be at least partially due to an honest-felt if misplaced belief that one needs to tone down one’s voice and accept incremental improvements within a political system dominated by higher-caste Hindus? Is it indeed the case that “the BSP leaders wanted the dalits to merely become a vote bank, for keeping their own political ambitions kindled”? The author’s interpretation of political moves and shifts made by the BSP may thus be overly cynical—and may all too easily fall under the overgeneralised ‘all-politicians-are-bad-or-become-corrupted-by-the-system’ rubric.

These critical remarks notwithstanding, I believe that the author’s seering analysis and effective condemnation of India’s ossified system and culture of caste-based discrimination and domination is credible and urgent, meriting further academic debate and research. Hopefully, ultimately, this will help marginalised groups anywhere in the world to truly, decisively emancipate themselves and their societies. One dares to dream.

- Anonymous
Can the Dalit subjectivity be understood by muzzling the voices of Dalit ‘elites’?: A note on methodological problems in making sense of Dalit subjectivity

(Third Critical Response to Sanjeev Kumar “Dehumanising the Dalit: Understanding Lower Caste Alienation in India through the Gramscian Approach”)

The present article ‘Dehumanising the Dalit: Understanding Lower Caste Alienation in India through the Gramscian Approach’ is a timely and seminal intervention in the increasingly polemical discourse on Dalit subjectivity in India. The question of Dalit subjectivity has been examined from traditional Marxian, Subaltern and even Benjaminian perspectives. However, barring a few recent attempts (Zene 2011, 2013), this article presents the first time that any scholar has made an innovative and penetrating use of the Gramscian framework to interrogate the successes and failures of the Dalit movement and Dalit subjectivity in post-colonial India.

Indeed, the central problematique of the author is this—why, despite strengthening the dalit middle classes, enabled by State intervention and expansion of industrial production, there have been no significant gains in terms of a counter-hegemonic status for the Dalits in the Gramscian sense? According to the author the everyday sufferings of the Dalits in the socio-cultural sphere, historically transmitted by the domineering Varna order itself, became in a way the source for gaining political capital by opportunist entrepreneurs using rather than representing Dalit grievances.

The article is rich in theoretical and epistemological analysis. The reader should be able to find many of points of departure from traditional perspectives, most notably that of Sudha Pai, Christophe Jefferlot, Badri Narayan, etcetera. However, the author fails to make a direct critique of the approaches of these previous scholars who have made a very significant contribution to the studies of Dalit political assertion in North India. Unlike other scholars, the author believes in academic correctness and not in political or ideological correctness. He clearly puts the onus of continued Dalit exploitation on the hegemonic structures of the Caste system. Even the Dalit elites easily become a victim of these structures.

The Dalit middle class, according to the author, has acted as a bystander, by rendering its reified acceptance to this entire process of political revitalisation of the Varna upper class. Their reticence also indicates an urge on their part to dissociate themselves from the subaltern-class identity and an attempt at getting recognition on an equal footing with the dominant classes. Thus, the lower-caste struggles in India have merely represented a quest for equal status with the upper-castes and do not encompass social(ist) values of far-reaching emancipation.

The author should also have taken cognizance of the explanation offered by the Dalit elites while analyzing causes of the continued domination of the bourgeois upper-castes in India. Indeed, this is the main problem in most of the writings on Dalit political
mobilization. Even in case of this article, the author starts with a gaze on 'structures' of subjectivity, but limits the discussion to the power of the upper-caste bourgeoisie in co-opting the radical forces of Dalit elites.

What is, therefore, overlooked is the fact that many of the radical Dalit 'elites', from Ambedkar to Kanshi Ram, have always taken cognizance of these structures embedded in the educational system, cultural mores and, most recently, modern political processes. Kanshi Ram, the founder of Bahujan Samaj Party in his, now forgotten but an important book The Chamcha Age (1982), expresses the concern about these structures which keep the Dalits perpetually marginalized in the India society. He concludes that the capture of political power by the Dalit/Bahujans would be only an initial step in the struggle to end Caste-based exploitation, and the real transformation will come about only when more fundamental social and cultural moorings of Hindu social order are dismantled. This perspective is not dissimilar to Ambedkar's social and cultural revolt by adoption of Buddhism by millions of his followers just before his death in 1956.

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References


NB: do you have any comments on Sanjeev Kumar's article and/or the Critical Responses? Please send these to info@ethnogeopolitics.org, or through the contact form at http://www.ethnogeopolitics.org.
Main Article

Scourging the Caucasus: The Soviet Deportation of the Karachais, Chechens, Ingush, and Balkars in 1943-1944

J. Otto Pohl

Abstract

2014 marked the 70th anniversary of the massive Soviet ethnic cleansing of the Turkic Karachais and Balkars and Vainakh Chechens and Ingush from their North Caucasian homelands. This article examines the stated justifications, mechanisms, and results of these deportations. Among its findings are that the official Soviet justifications have no validity, and that, contrary to the claims made by some North-American based scholars, the deportations were acts of racial discrimination and genocide as these terms are currently defined in international law. The article deals with the false claims of treason against the deported peoples, their removal from the North Caucasus and resettlement in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, and their later return to their ancestral homelands.

Introduction

Seventy years ago during 1943 and 1944, the regime of Joseph Stalin ethnically cleansed the North Caucasus of virtually the entire population of four nationalities falsely accused of mass treason against the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) during the war with Nazi Germany. The NKVD (Peoples' Commissariat for Internal Affairs) systematically rounded up and deported almost every single Karachai, Chechen, Ingush, and Balkar from their ancestral homelands in the North Caucasus to Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. This brutal relocation to areas of confined internal exile affected over 585,000 people (see Table 1), the majority of them women and children. The poor material conditions they suffered in exile led to more than 165,000 excess deaths (see Table 2) among the deportees during the next eight years. In addition to lacking basic food, shelter, clothing, and medical care the deported North Caucasians also suffered under severe legal restrictions. The Soviet government only lifted these restrictions in July 1956 and only allowed the survivors to start returning to the North Caucasus in 1957. These four nationalities thus spent nearly a dozen years living in internal exile in the USSR as second-class citizens subjected to a harshly discriminatory legal regime. The traumatic experience of deportation and exile still greatly shapes the outlook of the descendants of the survivors who returned home to the North Caucasus.

The Chechens and Ingush are Vainakh speaking peoples in the northeast Caucasus while the Karachais and Balkars are Turkic speaking peoples in the northwest Caucasus. They are all Sunni Muslims of the Hanafi school as a result of Ottoman influence. Sufi brotherhoods have also historically been strong among the Chechens (and Ingush). All of these people came under Russian rule only after sustained military campaigns in the 19th century. During the
1920s and 1930s the Soviet government made efforts to modernize this region along socialist lines.

The Soviet deportation of the Karachais, Chechens, Ingush and Balkars during 1943-1944 has unfortunately been interpreted by some Western scholars through a lens that seeks to ameliorate the criminal nature of these acts. Too few Western scholars are willing to even consider that the deportations constituted acts of racial discrimination and fewer still speak of genocide. Instead a great deal of credence is given by some of these Western scholars to the Soviet claims that the deportations were somehow largely motivated by genuine security concerns rather than racist acts that threatened their very physical survival (Weiner 2002: 46; Hirsch 2002: 37-40). This article will approach the topic from an unapologetic rather than subjective extenuating point of view and judge the Soviet actions by their clearly foreseeable results rather than trying to ascertain extenuating circumstances regarding Soviet motives and specific intents as do some Western scholars.

Table 1   Number of North Caucasians Deported 1943-1944

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Karachais</td>
<td>69,267 (Bugai 1995: 62)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chechens</td>
<td>387,229 (Pobol and Polian 2005: 455, doc. 3.121).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ingush</td>
<td>91,250 (Pobol and Polian 2005: 455, doc. 3.121).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balkars</td>
<td>37,713 (Bugai 92: 113-114, doc. 29).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>585,549</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2   Estimated Excess Deaths among North Caucasian special settlers 1944-1952 (Ediev 2003: 294, table 104)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Karachais</td>
<td>13,141</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chechens</td>
<td>125,477</td>
<td>30.76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ingush</td>
<td>20,284</td>
<td>21.27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balkars</td>
<td>7,594</td>
<td>19.82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>166,496</td>
<td>28.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The False Charges of Treason

It is quite clear that the Soviet government's uprooting of the Karachais, Chechens, Ingush and Balkars during 1943-1944 had little to do with the officially stated justification of punishment for "collective treason". For while the deportations did indeed constitute an extremely harsh collective punishment, in no sense could most of the victims be considered guilty of treason against the USSR in any shape or form. Indeed, like in other cases of mass Soviet deportations, the vast majority of those exiled to Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan and placed under special settlement restrictions consisted of women and children. Very few representatives of the four deported North Caucasian nationalities collaborated with the Nazis. Organizations such as the Karachai National Committee (KNK) were representative only a very tiny minority of the population. In contrast, large numbers of Karachais fought with the Soviet Red Army and partisans against the German armed forces.

The claims of widespread collaboration by the four deported North Caucasian nationalities with the Nazi occupation of the USSR do not stand up to scrutiny. The largest of the deported nationalities from this region, the Chechens, never came under German occupation nor did the Germans have a large number of Chechen POWs from which to draw collaborators. It should also be noted that the accusations of treason by the Soviet government against the Chechens, Ingush and Balkars all only came after the completion of the actual deportations.

The accusations against all four of the nationalities are similar in their wording and do not mention any specificities, but rather only generalities. Thus the Ukaz (decree) by the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of 12 October 1943 ordering the deportation of the Karachais presented the regime's case in the following words:

In relation to this, during the period of occupation by the German-Fascist aggressors in the territory of the Karachai autonomous oblast many Karachais allowed themselves to become traitors, enlisted in detachments organized by the Germans to struggle against Soviet power, handed over to the Germans honest Soviet citizens, escorted and showed the way to German soldiers, advancing through the passes of the Caucasus, and after the expulsion of the occupiers opposed measures to establish Soviet power, hiding from the organs of power bandits and armed German agents, and rendering them active assistance. (Pobol and Polian 2005: 393, doc. 3.77).

It is true that some Karachais like all other Soviet nationalities that came under German rule did collaborate with the occupation authorities—as happened in practically all occupied territories under Nazi rule, and is typical of human behavior in such circumstances throughout history. But, the number of collaborators among the Karachais was quite small compared both to the number that served in the Red Army or to the percentages of collaborators among other nationalities that were not deported en masse.

The Karachai participation in the war against the Nazis prior to the occupation of their homeland by the German military was no less enthusiastic than any other Soviet nationality. Some 15,600 out of a total population of less than 80,000 fought in the Soviet Army or partisan detachments during the war (Bugai 2005: 144). In August 1942, the Karachai Autonomous Oblast came under German occupation. The occupation regime shot some
6,000 people and destroyed some 150,000 head of cattle during its brief rule of the region. During this time the German administration created the Karachai National Committee (KNK) to help it in suppressing Soviet partisans and dismantling the collective farming (kolkhoz) system (Bugai 1995: 58).

The KNK formed one squadron of cavalry to assist the German military in fighting against the Soviet partisan movement in the region (Nekrich 1979: 42). In January 1943, the Red Army recovered the homeland of the Karachais from the German military (Polian 2004: 140). Immediately following the retreat of the Germans there was considerable guerrilla resistance to the Soviet forces by the KNK. Further resistance by other groups such as the Balyk Army continued up until April (Bugai 1995: 60). All in all, the level of collaboration with the Germans and resistance to the Soviets by the Karachais during World War II compared to other occupied nations in the USSR was relatively low.

The official accusations of treason against the Chechens and Ingush came only on 7 March 1944, a week after the NKVD completed evicting them from the Caucasus. An Ukaz issued by the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet makes the following charges against them.

In relation to this, during the Fatherland War, especially during the time of active German fascist war on the Caucasus, many Chechens and Ingush betrayed the Homeland, went over to the side of the fascist occupiers, joined the ranks of saboteurs and intelligence officers, infiltrating Germans in the rear of the Red Army, forming on orders from the Germans armed bands for the struggle against Soviet power, but also it must be taken into account, that many Chechens and Ingush during the duration of these years participated in armed formations against Soviet power and in the course of this time, did not occupy themselves with honest labor, committing bandit attacks on kolkhozes in neighboring oblasts, robbing and killing Soviet people (Pobol and Polian 2005: 458-460, doc. 3.123).

While there was indigenous armed resistance by Chechens and Ingush against the Soviet state during World War II involving perhaps two percent of their total population, it had almost no direct connection to the Nazi occupiers (Statiev 2005: 311). The Germans never occupied Chechnya proper during the war. Nor did they have a large pool of Chechen and Ingush POWs to recruit from, since most of them avoided conscription or deserted during the war.

Whereas the Soviet government conscripted 20% of the Karachais to fight against the Nazis, they succeeded in only drafting 4% of the total Chechen and Ingush population (Statiev 2005: 289). Out of 14,000 Chechens eligible for induction into the Soviet military in 1942, only 4,395 actually joined and 2,365 of these men deserted (Statiev 2005: 288). The ability of the Chechens and Ingush to collaborate with the Nazis was thus extremely limited. They quite simply had very little contact with the Germans.

The official charges of treason against the Balkars came on 8 April 1944, almost a full month after their deportation. The Ukaz of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet providing a legal cover for their deportation from the Kabardino-Balkar Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (ASSR) used wording almost identical to those for the related Karachais and the Chechens and Ingush.
In relation to this, during the period of German-Fascist aggression on the territory of the Karbardino-Balkar ASSR many Balkars betrayed the homeland, participating in armed detachments organized by the Germans and conducting work to undermine sections of the Red Army, providing the fascist occupiers with the assistance of skilled guides through the Caucasian passes, and after their expulsion from the Caucasus by the Red Army participated in German organized bands fighting against Soviet power (Pobol and Polian 2005: 489, doc. 3-143).

The Balkars, like the closely related Karachais and unlike the Chechens and Ingush, participated actively in the Soviet military effort. Some 5,000 Balkar men fought at the front against the Nazis during World War II (Bugai 1995: 120; Nekrich 1979: 62). Nonetheless, there were some Balkars that did collaborate with the Nazis. NKVD-chief Lavrenti Beria makes reference to 1,589 such Balkar collaborators or less than 4% of the total population (Pobol and Polian 2005: 481, doc. 3-137). The very small number of Balkar collaborators compared to other nationalities that were not deported, however, sticks out.

Some 1.3 million Soviet citizens served in the German Wehrmacht, SS, and police divisions during World War II (Berdinskikh 2005: 65). In 1945 around 15,000 men in German uniform came from the North Caucasus (Chebatoreva 2011: 447-448). Most of them, however, did not come from the North Caucasian nationalities subjected to wholesale deportation as collective punishment for alleged collaboration with the German occupation.

Soviet evidence against Dagestanis was greater than what they had against the Karachais, yet no Dagestani group was subjected to deportation in its virtual entirety (Statiev 2005: 312). In contrast, Southern Caucasian nationalities provided much larger numbers of soldiers for the Germans. For instance, in 1945 there were 36,500 Azerbaijanis, 19,000 Georgians, and 7,000 Armenians in German uniform (Chebotareva 2011: 447-448). There was in fact no correlation between collaboration with the Nazis and deportation. Some groups with very low levels of collaboration like the Karachais were deported and others with much higher rates like the Dagestanis were not.

However, while the stated reasons for the mass deportations are obviously false, and were in the cases of both the Chechens and Ingush and the Balkars only made after the completion of the deportation, the real reasons for this massive ethnic cleansing remain contested. This is because no archival records regarding the actual discussions leading up to the decision to deport these nationalities have yet been declassified. Instead, there has been a great deal of speculation about the actual Soviet motives based upon the long-term historical tensions between these groups and the Russian and later Soviet governments (Werth 2006: 350-355). That is to say, historical opposition by elements of these populations led the Stalin regime to use the cover of war to collectively punish these nationalities in their entirety for both past resistance and to prevent any further reoccurrences in the future (Werth 2006: 348-349).

The racialization of Soviet nationality policies along the lines of primordial cultures during the 1930s and 1940s, meant that these punitive acts not only targeted whole nationalities in their entirety, but that there was little possibility of escape for even future generations as
long as Stalin and Beria were alive (Weitz 2002: 23-24). Thus the Karachais, Chechens, Ingush and Balkars were collectively punished for the actual crimes of only a small minority of individuals because it was the actions of those individuals that fit the racist stereotypes of the groups constructed in the Russian Empire and USSR.

Genocide

There is no doubt that the deportations had horrible physical and social effects upon the deported peoples. Their dispersal across Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan had the easily foreseeable result of killing tens of thousands of the deportees and threatening their continued survival as viable cultures. This was a result the Soviet government knew would be inevitable since it had already deported millions of people to the same areas under the same conditions previously with very similar results. In 1930-31 there had been the waves of kulak exiles, followed in 1937 by the deportation of the Russian Koreans, and finally in 1941 by the massive uprooting of the Russian Germans. The Soviet government deliberately engaged in actions against the Karachais, Chechens, Ingush, and Balkars in 1943-1944 that it knew would inevitably lead to a large number of them dying prematurely as a result of the poor material conditions they were subjected to in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

Despite the militant opposition to the use of the word “genocide” by some scholars such as Francine Hirsch and Alexander Statiev, the above description does in fact meet all the criteria for the definition of genocide including the issue of intent both as defined by the 1948 United Nations Treaty and the original concept as espoused by Raphael Lemkin.

Deliberately exiling an entire group of people defined by their ethnicity to material conditions that are known ahead of time to be so insufficient as to cause a large minority of the deportees to die of deprivation, fits article 2 (c) of the Genocide Treaty (Weitz 2002: 27-28). The fact that the conditions were known ahead of time to be deadly and the fact that the Soviet government deported whole peoples to them anyways, satisfies the issue of intent as it is understood in Anglo-American jurisprudence including the interpretation of international treaties such as the 1948 UN Genocide Treaty (Greenwalt 1999: 2266-2269).

Statiev’s claim that there was no intention to kill the deportees because the Soviet government’s main goal was acculturation and not extermination of the special settlers is a serious misreading of the legal definition of intent as it has been developed in case law (Statiev 2009: 259-260; Greenwalt 1999: 2266-2269).

As international legal scholar Alexander Greenwalt has noted, the “culpability for genocide should extend to those who may personally lack a specific genocidal purpose, but who commit genocidal acts while understanding the destructive consequences of their actions for the survival of the relevant victim group” (Greenwalt 1999: 2265). The continued militant insistence by some scholars of the USSR that genocide was a crime that was only committed by “fascists” and “imperialists” and never by the Soviet government, thus hinges upon extremely weak semantic arguments (Hirsch 2002: 40-41 and Statiev 2009: 259). A reasonable
analysis of the objective facts shows that the national deportations under Stalin were both racist and genocidal.

This article will further detail the deportation and exile of the Karachais, Chechens, Ingush and Balkar from their Caucasian homelands to Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. It will then discuss the material and legal conditions they suffered under as "special settlers". Finally, it will deal with their return home in the post-Stalin era. The article relies mainly upon published Soviet archival documents from the State Archives of the Russian Federation (GARF) in Moscow.

The Deportation of the Karachais

The Karachais were the first indigenous Caucasian nationality subjected to wholesale deportation within the Soviet Union. The Soviet NKVD forcibly removed them from their homeland to Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan already on 2 November 1943. The Karachais were the first whole nationality the Stalin regime accused of actual rather than potential treason and thus were resettled as a form of collective punishment rather than a prophylactic measure.

The Karachais were a numerically small nationality. The 1939 Soviet census counted only 75,763 Karachais living in the Karachai Autonomous Oblast. Between August 1942 and January 1943, Nazi Germany occupied the territory (Pobol and Polian 2005: 389). Eleven months passed between the Red Army ejecting the German occupiers from the Karachai lands and the Soviet authorities evicting virtually the entire indigenous population from their homeland.

The Stalin regime made no exceptions for political loyalty. As early as January 1944, the Soviet government admitted that among the Karachais deported to Kazakhstan were families whose head was currently fighting against the Nazis at the front in the Red Army. Among these soldiers were those in command positions and those that had won military awards. Also among the deportees were invalid veterans of the war against the Nazis who had received awards for military valor from the Soviet leadership.

The deportees also included partisans who had fought against the German occupation and received orders and medals from the Soviet government. Finally, there were even NKVD troops of Karachai origin that had been active in the territory following the German retreat (Pobol and Polian 2005: 409, doc. 3.87). These men and their families were all deported for being Karachais despite their proven political loyalty.

Given the overall patriotic and even heroic conduct of the Karachais during the war, there was no reason to suspect that they would be accused of mass treason and forcibly resettled. Indeed, during the first eight months after the return of Soviet authority there was no indication that the Karachais would be treated any differently from any other Soviet nationality that had suffered under German military occupation.
The Soviet government began planning the deportation of the Karachais in August 1943. In September 1943, the NKVD drew up a plan for the resettlement of the Karachai population in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. The initial plan called for the settlement of 5,000 families on kolkhozes (collective farms) and sovkhozes (Soviet or state farms) in Jambul Oblast, Kazakhstan, 5,000 families in South Kazakhstan Oblast and 6,000 families in Frunze Oblast, Kyrgyzstan. However, already before the deportation the lack of sufficient housing in the areas of exile was apparent. In particularly the Kyzl-Kum and Kirov raions (districts) in South Kazakhstan Oblast, it was already known that part of the deportees would have to be housed temporarily in tents.

More important, however, was organizing the network of NKVD special commanders to control the deportees. This network was to have one commander for every 200 deportee families, and half of the network would consist of local NKVD workers from Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan and the other half of such workers from the Karachai Autonomous Oblast (Pobol and Polian 2005: 390-392, doc. 3.76). The preparations on the ground for creating a network of special commandants went smoothly and a couple of months later the Soviet government issued an official deportation order.

On 12 October 1943, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR issued an Ukaz titled “On the Liquidation of the Karachai Autonomous Oblast and the Administrative Allocation of its Territory”. The preamble of this decree accuses the Karachais of engaging in mass treason against the Soviet Union during the German occupation of their territory. The first operative clause of this decree ordered that “All Karachais, living in the territory of the oblast, are to be resettled to other regions of the USSR, and the Karachai Autonomous Oblast liquidated”. The territory of the Karachai Autonomous Oblast was to be divided between Stavropol' Krai and the Georgian Soviet Socialist Republic (Document Reproduced in Alieva 1993 vol. 1: 258-259). The decree ordered the forced removal of the indigenous population and the subsequent dismemberment of the territory.

The SNK (Council of People's Commissariats) followed up the decree by the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet with Resolution 1118-342ss of 14 October 1943. This resolution contained instructions for disposing of the property of the deported Karachais left behind in the Caucasus and accommodating the deportees in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. The Karachais were to receive vouchers for property they had to abandon in the Caucasus that could be redeemed in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan (Pobol and Polian 2005: 394-397, doc. 3.78). However, the rapid and ruthless manner of the deportation meant that many did not receive vouchers for property including foodstuffs they were compelled to leave behind.

The deportation of the Karachais took place on 2 November 1943. The NKVD rounded up and loaded the Karachais into Studebaker trucks and transported them to rail stations. In total the NKVD deported 68,938 people in a single day. A short time later the NKVD deported an additional 329 Karachais from the territory of the now dissolved Karachai Autonomous Oblast (Bugai 1995: 62). Thus the NKVD forcibly removed a total of 69,267 Karachais from their national homeland and sent them into exile in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.
The first echelons of Karachai deportees started arriving at their destinations in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan on 10 November 1943. By 23 November 1943, a total of 34 train echelons carrying 68,614 (15,987 families) Karachai deportees arrived in Jambul Oblast Kazakhstan, South Kazakhstan and Frunze Oblast, Kyrgyzstan. The vast majority of these exiles were women and children. Adult men comprised only 12,500 of the exiles in contrast to 36,670 children under sixteen years of age and 19,444 adult women. The authorities immediately put the majority of these special settlers to work on kolkhozes and sovkhozes, harvesting cotton and beets and cleaning irrigation canals. Since these kolkhozes and sovkhozes were already inhabited by local Kazakhs and Kyrgyz, housing conditions were quite overcrowded and relations with the earlier inhabitants quite tense.

The food situation of the Karachais arriving in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan threatened to become desperate already upon arrival. Some 60 to 70 percent of them arrived in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan with no food at all. To aggravate matters, the Karachai deportees did not yet have the mandated vouchers in their hands for the livestock, grain and vegetables they had left behind in the Caucasus. Hence their ability to acquire food in their new places of settlement was limited. The People's Commissariat of Procurement issued 300 tons of flour and 75 tons of cereal to feed the Karachais, but this amount of food could not feed nearly 70,000 people for longer than two to three weeks at the most (Tsarevskaia-Diakina 2004: 397-398, doc. 113). A serious food crisis confronted the Karachais already in the first month of their arrival.

On 22 November 1943, the NKVD reported that 22,721 (5,128 families) Karachai special settlers had arrived on eleven train echelons in Frunze Oblast, Kyrgyzstan. The majority of these exiles, 13,241 people, consisted of children under the age of sixteen. In contrast, there were only 3,244 adult men and 6,236 women. The local NKVD distributed these deportees in houses on kolkhozes and sovkhozes in ten different raions throughout the oblast (Pobol and Polian 2005: 402, doc. 3.82). In Frunze Oblast, Kyrgyzstan the vast majority of deported Karachais joined kolkhozes during the first year of their exile. By 20 April 1944, 4,603 Karachai families or 95% of the population in the oblast had entered kolkhozes (Tsarevskaia-Diakina 2004: 412, doc. 120). The economic integration of the deported Karachais into the kolkhoz system of the Kyrgyz SSR had almost been completed by May 1944.

By 13 December 1943, South Kazakhstan Oblast had received 6,689 Karachai families numbering 25,142 people of which 14,679 were children, 6,674 women and only 3,689 men. The authorities settled these deportees in seven raions and housed them in 949 empty two-room houses, empty apartments, and 2,442 apartments already inhabited by local residents. The local authorities settled most of these new arrivals on kolkhozes, but 1,491 families with 5,713 members ended up on nine sovkhozes (Pobol and Polian 2005: 406, doc. 3.85). In South Kazakhstan the distribution and accommodation of the Karachais was similar to what had occurred in Kyrgyzstan.

A large number of Karachai families became separated during the deportations. The deportations divided a total of 5,143 Karachai families (Bugai and Gonov 2003: 406, doc. 5). In Jambul Oblast, Kazakhstan, out of 5,699 Karachai families resettled in 1943 and 1944, over
2,000 or more than a third became separated during their journey in exile. Efforts to reunite the divided families proceeded slowly and the majority still remained disunited as late as September 1944 (Bugai and Gonov 2003: 405-406, doc. 4). The violent separation of families during the deportations greatly disrupted the ability of the Karachais to adapt to their new places of settlement during the first years of exile.

During the deportation of Karachais from their homeland in the Caucasus, most young Karachai men continued to fight against the Nazis at the front. The Stalin regime did not remove them from the Red Army until 3 March 1944 when the GKO (State Defense Committee) issued Prikaz (decree) No. 0741. This decree demobilized the Karachais and all other representatives of the deported peoples serving in the Red Army, and sent them to special settlements in Central Asia with nothing more than the clothes on their backs (Bugai 1995: 63). A number of Karachai veterans also ended up in forced labor battalions. Their proven political loyalty to the USSR did nothing to prevent the deportation of their families while they were at the front.

Material conditions for the Karachai special settlers assigned to work growing and harvesting cotton in the Pakhta-Aral region of South Kazakhstan Oblast proved to be extremely deadly. Those lucky enough to work on the Pakhta-Aral Sovkhoz received 200 to 300 grams of bread a day (Lafi 2002: 46). Those on the surrounding kolkhozes often received no food. This dire situation led to massive mortality through starvation among the Karachai special settlers from hunger.

Following the Karachais, the NKVD deported the Buddhist Kalmyks to Siberia on 28-29 December 1943. The experience of the Kalmyks in many ways resembled that of the deported North Caucasians, but differed in a number of details due to both the location of exile and national differences between the two groups. The formerly nomadic Kalmyks dwelling on the steppes had a considerably different life style and political history than the mountain dwelling North Caucasians. Due to these differences the Kalmyks will not be further addressed in this article. But, it is important to note that the WWII deportations of whole nationalities by the Stalin regime including the 1943-1944 wave of “punitive” deportations was not confined to Muslim groups in the North Caucasus.

The Deportation of the Chechens and Ingush

The next whole nationalities deported eastward by the Stalin regime were the Chechens and the closely related Ingush. This operation took place on 23-29 February 1944. The Chechens were the second largest nationality deported by the Soviet government after the ethnic Germans. They also, for a variety of reasons, suffered the greatest percentage of deaths due to deportation and the poor conditions they endured in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

Planning for the deportation of the Chechens and Ingush began already in the fall of 1943. Initially Vasyl Chernyshov suggested that the Chechens and Ingush be deported to Siberia like the Kalmyks, but the local NKVD heads in Novosibirsk, Omsk, Altai, and Krasnoiarsk strongly objected to this suggestion. They did not wish to take responsibility for housing,
feeding, and finding work for hundreds of thousands of impoverished and hostile deportees. As an alternative the NKVD leadership worked out a plan to deport the Chechens and Ingush to Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan by December 1943 (Polian 2004: 146). The following month the GKO and NKVD drafted the necessary documents to implement this plan.

In the last days of January 1944, the NKVD and GKO promulgated the necessary decrees to start the mass deportations of the Chechens and Ingush from the Caucasus to Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. On 29 January 1944, the NKVD issued instructions for the deportation of the Chechens and Ingush (Polian 2004: 146). Two days later, the GKO issued two orders relating to the deportation of the Chechens and Ingush. GKO Order No. 5073ss on 31 January 1944, “On Measures to Accommodate Special Settlers within the Borders of the Kazakh and Kyrgyz SSRs”, instructed the NKVD to resettle 400,000 “special settlers” in Kazakhstan and 90,000 in Kyrgyzstan during February and March. It did not, however, mention the Chechens and Ingush by name, curiously enough (Pobol and Polian 2005: 443-445, doc. no. 3.111). GKO Order No. 5074 also did not mention the Chechens and Ingush by name, but provided additional instructions “On Measures to Distribute Special Settlers within the Confinces of the Kazakh and Kyrgyz SSRs” (Ibid: 445-447, doc. 3.112).

According to Pobol and Polian these two GKO Orders provided the basis for the deportation of the Chechens and Ingush, despite the fact that neither of them mentioned the targeted nationalities (Polian 2004: 146-147; Pobol and Polian 2005: 442). Subsequently, the NKVD devised and carried out the mass deportation of the Chechens and Ingush.

On 17 February 1944, Beria reported to Stalin that the preparations for the deportation of 459,486 Chechens and Ingush living in the Chechen-Ingush ASSR, neighboring areas of Dagestan, and the city of Vladkavkaz had been completed. The original plan allocated eight days for the operation during which the first three would be dedicated to the lowlands, the foothills, and several mountainous settlements with a combined population of 300,000 people. Then the remaining 150,000 in the highlands would be deported. The settlements and immoveable property of the deportees, including their livestock, was to be turned over to Dagestanis, Ossetians, and Russians to guard.

A total of 6,000-7,000 local Dagestanis, 3,000 Ossetian from North Ossetia, and an unspecified number of Russian village activists were to be recruited to help with this and other aspects of the deportation of the Chechens and Ingush (Pobol and Polian 2005: 450, doc. 3.115). The NKVD managed to carry out this plan despite inclement weather in the highlands, particularly in Galanzchoy.

After making the proper preparations, the actual deportation of the Chechens and Ingush progressed rapidly. Already by 11 am of the first day, February 23rd, the NKVD had already taken 94,741 people from their homes (20% of those to be deported) and loaded 20,023 of them on to train echelons. Beria reported that they had only had six cases of resistance so far. But, this is probably a serious understatement since in the same report he notes having to arrest 842 people in the course of the operation by this time (Pobol and Polian 2005: 452, doc. 3.117).
The next day Beria reported considerably greater progress to Stalin. Already by the morning of the second day of the operation, the NKVD had removed 333,739 people from their homes and loaded 176,950 on to trains. However, due to heavy snowfall the previous day, the roundup of people from their homes slowed down after the 24th, particularly in the mountainous districts of the Chechen-Ingush ASSR (Pobol and Polian 2005: 452, doc. 3.118). By the following day, 342,647 Chechens and Ingush had been loaded onto 86 train echelons (Ibid: 453, doc. 3.119).

On 29 February 1944, Beria reported to Stalin that the operation had been completed with the exception of around 6,000 in the high mountain villages of Galanzchay district. The entire operation involved the roundup and entraining of 478,479 people of which 387,229 were Chechens and 91,250 Ingush. The NKVD placed them in 177 train echelons of which 159 had already departed for Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan by this date. Officially Beria reported no serious cases of resistance, despite arresting 2,016 "anti-Soviet" elements and confiscating 20,072 weapons including 4,868 rifles, and 478 machine guns and a submachine gun (Pobol and Polian 2005: 455, doc. 3.121).

Like the earlier deportations of the Karachais and Kalmyks, the Chechens and Ingush were taken completely by surprise. Despite the relative geographical proximity of the Karachais, the Chechens and Ingush were not aware of their deportation several months earlier. In less than a week, the NKVD had forcibly removed nearly half a million people from their indigenous homeland and sent them on a harrowing journey eastward to Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

The Presidium of the Supreme Soviet issued a decree ordering the deportation of the Chechens and Ingush and the liquidation of the Chechen-Ingush ASSR only on 7 March 1944, eight days after the operation had been completed. This decree retroactively accused the Chechens and Ingush of treason to the Motherland, the general-purpose pretext issued by the Soviet government for the deportation of whole peoples (Pobol and Polian 2005: 458-460, doc. 3.123). The decree had two concrete effects. First, to provide a post-facto legal approval and cover for the actual deportations, and second, to officially stigmatize the Chechens and Ingush as traitors despite the lack of any evidence pointing to mass treason.

On 20 March 1944, the head of the NKVD transport section reported to Beria on the movement of the deportation echelons from the former Chechen-Ingush ASSR to Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. The total number of Chechen and Ingush deportees counted at this time reached 491,571 in 180 echelons. The destination of the deportees was divided between 88,649 to Kyrgyzstan and 402,922 to Kazakhstan (Pobol and Polian 2005: 466-467, doc. 3.129). This was a decrease from the 493,269 Chechen and Ingush deportees originally counted as loaded on to trains by the NKVD section of convey troops. The decrease was the result of an official registration of 1,272 deaths during transit which lasted between nine and twenty-three days with an average time of sixteen days.
The real number of deaths was undoubtedly much higher. The single largest cause of death appears to have been acute typhus due to the unsanitary conditions in the train wagons (Pobol and Polian 2005: 467-468, doc. 3.130). Thus close to half a million people were uprooted from the Caucasus and dumped in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan and thousands died in the process.

The following day a report by the Chief of the Section of Special Settlements Col. Mikhail Kuzentsov to Deputy Chief of the NKVD Vasilyi Chernyshev gave slightly different numbers. It reported that as of 21 March 1944, 180 echelons with 494,456 Chechens and Ingush had arrived and been unloaded in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. Most of these 147 echelons with 405,941 people had arrived in Kazakhstan, and the remaining 33 echelons carrying 88,515 people arrived in Kyrgyzstan.

Akmola Oblast constituted the largest recipient of the deportees, with 22 echelons containing 59,988 deportees unloading there followed by Kustanai Oblast with 17 echelons and 45,768 deportees. This report gave the total reported deaths during transit as 1,361 people (0.27%) plus an additional 1,070 hospitalized during transit (Tsarevskaia-Diakina 2004: 406, doc. 117). This number is also unrealistically low and does not match with other sources of information, such as oral testimonies and memoir literature which report deaths in almost every train wagon.

For instance Isa Khashiyev, an Ingush man deported as a child recalls that on the journey, “We had no water and no food. The weak were suffering from hunger, and those who were stronger would get off the train and buy some food. Some people died on the way—no-one in our carriage, but in the next carriage I saw them taking out two corpses.” (http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-26271733?OCID=fbasia&ocid=socialflow facebook accessed on 25 February 2014). An average of one death in every train wagon would be one out of every 50 or so deportees, around 10,000 people or 2% of the population. Thus there is good reason to believe that the real number of transport deaths could be nearly ten times as high as the official Soviet figures.

In Galanzhoy district in the Chechen-Ingush ASSR a number of people, especially the elderly, sick, cripples, and children, could not be moved during the deportation. The 61st Military-Academy Rifle Regiment under Major Saigakov came into the district to assist with the collection of cattle and other property from the khutors (rural homesteads) emptied by the deportations. His men engaged in a number of documented atrocities. A 28 May 1944 report from the head of the Galanzhoy operative sector Col. A.K. Granskii to Deputy Chief of State Security (NKGB) Bogdan Kobulov, noted the following unlawful killings of Chechens by members of this unit.

On 22 March 1944, Cadet Sinitis acting on the orders of Junior Lt. Struev and Sergeant Sidorov killed three Chechens in the khutor of Galichi. He shot a sick man named Iznaur Gaisultanov, and bayonetted a cripple named Dzhemilkhan Dzhabs and an eight-year old...
child named Umar Gaisultanov. On 19 April 1944, the same men shot another two Chechens in Galichi who are listed as names unknown.

In the khutor of Amki this same regiment dropped munitions down the chimneys of houses of five old women too sick to be taken to the collection centers for deportation. The resulting explosions killed the women and destroyed their houses. Col. Granskii estimated in total that the cadets of this particular regiment had killed as many as sixty sick and crippled Chechens in Galanzhoy raion (Pobol and Polian 2005: 473, doc. 3.134). These murders, however, were not unique to the 61st Military-Academy Regiment. In addition to earlier killings by the NKVD during 1943, there were other atrocities connected with the deportations.

The most infamous massacre associated with the deportation of the Chechens occurred at Khaibakh, also in Galanzhoy. This atrocity took place on 23-24 February 1944 (Alieva 1993: 175, vol. II). Different accounts give wildly varying numbers of victims for this atrocity. Some put it as low as 200 and others as high as 700. At Khaibakh the NKVD took hundreds of Chechens that could not be deported due to poor weather conditions and locked them into barns. The NKVD then set the barns on fire and burned the Chechens locked inside to death. This massacre took place under the command of General Gvishiani (Polian 2004: 147). The Khaibakh massacre remains a poignant collective memory among the Chechen people.

The Deportation of the Balkars

The final North Caucasian nationality deported by the NKVD in their entirety were the Balkars. The planning for the deportation had begun already during the deportation of the Chechens and Ingush. On 24 February 1944, one day after the start of the mass expulsion of the Chechens and Ingush, Beria sent a telegram to Stalin on the planning for the deportation of the Balkars. This report accused the Balkars of massive anti-Soviet activities and “banditry” during the war. The telegram, however, could only point to 1,227 arrested for “banditry” and “anti-Soviet work” and 362 people that retreated with the Germans in 1942-1943. Out of 40,900 Balkars this works out to less than 4% of the total population.

Originally, these nearly 41,000 people were scheduled for forced resettlement during 15-20 March 1944 (Pobol and Polian 2005: 481, doc. 3.137). Like in the case of the Karachais, Chechens and Ingush, the vast majority of those slated for deportation as punishment for allegedly engaging in “banditry” and “anti-Soviet” acts were women, children, and old men.

The NKVD decree ordering the deportation of the Balkars preceded the GKO order specifically authorizing it by a whole week. On 26 February 1944, Beria issued Prikaz No. 00186 s/s “On Measures to Exile the Balkar Population from the Kabardino-Balkar ASSR”. This decree laid out “the organization for necessary preparatory measures and conduct of the operation for exiling the Balkar population from the Karbardino-Balkar ASSR”. It allocated a total of 17,000 NKVD troops and 4,000 NKVD-NKGB operative workers to the operation (Pobol and Polian 2005: 482-483, doc. 3.138).
The actual GKO order for the deportation of the Balkars was signed by deputy GKO Chairman Vyacheslav Molotov rather than the Chairman, Stalin (Pobol and Polian 2005: 484-488, doc. 3.139). This decree was issued on 5 March 1944 and specifically noted that it was a supplement to GKO Order 5073ss of 31 January 1944, which referred only to deporting 490,000 North Caucasians as special settlers to Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan without noting any specific nationalities (Ibid: 443-445, doc. 3.111). The 5 March 1944 decree interpreted this to include 40,000 Balkars, of which 25,000 were to be sent to Kazakhstan and 15,000 to Kyrgyzstan (Ibid: 484-488, doc. 3.139). This decree was implemented almost immediately along the same lines as the earlier deportations of the Karachais, Chechens and Ingush.

The Soviet government rapidly completed the preparations for the deportation of the Balkars both in the Caucasus and in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. On 7 March 1944, Chernyshev sent Beria a report announcing that the proper preparations had been made (Pobol and Polian 2005: 485-486, doc. 3.140). The actual deportation took place from 8-9 March 1944 and involved the forced resettlement of 37,103 Balkars. The NKVD arrested 478 people and confiscated 288 weapons during this operation (Ibid: 486-487, doc. 3.141).

An NKVD report from 17 March 1944 noted that fourteen echelons containing 37,713 Balkars were en route to destinations in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan (Bugai 1992: 113-114, doc. 29). A later report from 23 March 1944 noted that this number had decreased to 37,618 deportees (Ibid: 116, doc. 32). The final number recorded to have arrived was 37,406 (Ibid: 117-118, doc. 36). Presumably deaths due to diseases resulting from the unhygienic conditions in the cattle cars accounted for these decreases.

Like in the case of the Chechens and Ingush, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet decree accusing the Balkars of treason and ordering their deportation came after the deportation had already been completed. In this case it was only issued on 8 April 1944 (Pobol and Polian 2005: 489, doc. 3.143). Also, as in the case of the Chechens and Ingush, it served to provide a post-facto legal basis of the deportation.

The Chief of the Section of Special Settlements of the NKVD USSR, reported that the arrival of the Balkar deportees in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan had been completed by 23 March 1944. A total of fourteen echelons with 37,433 Balkar deportees had arrived in these two republics by then. Kazakhstan received eight echelons with 21,235 people, and Kyrgyzstan six echelons with 16,198 people. The largest number of deportees, 5,503, ended up in Osh Oblast, Kyrgyzstan, followed by 5,399 in Alma-Ata, Kazakhstan. Kuznetsov reported a ridiculously low figure of only 36 deaths and another 36 hospitalizations in transit (Tsarevskaia-Diakina 2004: 407, doc. 118). The real number of deaths remains unknown.

Exile

The initial supplies of food to be provided for incoming special settlers from the North Caucasus to Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan were set at quite low levels. The regime established
rations of 3.35 kg of flour and 1.67 kg of cereal a month for each deportee during the trip by
train. The food supplies provided to the deportees by the government during resettlement
proved to be insufficient and most kolkhozes provided no assistance. Thus already by April
1944 many North Caucasian deportees had been reduced to eating weeds and roots
(Tsarevskaia-Diakina 2004: 409-416, doc. 120).

Mukhazhar Dzhabrailova recalled that after arriving in Kazakhstan “There was no water, no
food” and that “We had long ago eaten what we had taken with us. When the train stopped,
my mother would gather snow in a jug. She would then give us the melted snow to drink”. A
few months later her father, two remaining brothers, mother, and two sisters died from
hunger leaving her the only survivor (http://www.rferl.org/content/chechen-
reports from local officials of hunger among the special settlers did little to improve the
situation. Malnutrition and starvation remained a major problem among the North
Caucasian deportees until 1949.

Lack of male heads of households due both to men fighting on the front against the Nazis
and the splitting of families, exacerbated the poor material situation of many of the North
Caucasian deportees. Families consisting mostly of children had difficulties feeding
themselves (Statiev 2009: 254). The NKVD initially counted 14,460 divided families arriving
among the deported North Caucasians in Kazakhstan of which 5,478 had been reunified by 5
September 1944, leaving 8,982 still divided. In Kyrgyzstan 2,941 North Caucasian families
had been separated by the deportations of which 952 had been reunified by this date, and 1,982
remained divided (Bugai 2002: 95-96, doc. 81). The reunification of special settler families
took many months.

Many of the special settlers were not quickly incorporated into kolkhozes, and thus
remained ineligible to receive bread and produce in exchange for labor days. From April to
August 1944, the Soviet government provided the deportees with 17,688 tons of flour, cereal,
and grains. This worked out to a mere 4.7 kg per person per month, a near starvation ration.
The impossibility of further food support meant conditions continued to deteriorate as the
year progressed. This was especially true of families that had many children, but no adults
capable of physical labor.

Already by the summer of 1944, the Kazakh authorities reported that 130,000 special settlers
from the North Caucasus had inadequate food supplies and that as a result many suffered
from physical emaciation and dystrophy, as well as infectious diseases (Berdinskikh 2005:
628-630, doc. 3). Hunger was widespread among the special settlers, which the Soviet
government was fully cognizant about but took few practical measures to ameliorate.

Food assistance by the central government to the deported North Caucasians after arriving
remained in the absolute starvation range during the next two years. During 1944 and 1945,
the Soviet government provided the deported Karachais, Chechens, Ingush and Balkars with
33,965 tons of grain, flour, and cereal (Bugai 1992: 239, doc. 20). Out of 575,768 people this works out to less than 100 grams a day (Zemskov 2005: 8).

In December of 1944, when conditions were most desperate, the North Caucasian special settlers only received 2,430 tons of flour and 607.5 tons of cereal as a result of an SNK (Council of People's Commissariats) resolution, or 100 grams of flour and 25 grams of cereal per person a day. In the first half of 1945, food assistance increased somewhat, but still remained insufficient. The state allocated 2,274 tons of flour and 803 tons of cereal to the North Caucasian special settlers or 6 kg per person a month (Berdinskikh 2005: 628-630, doc. 3). Not surprisingly, during 1944 and 1945 alone the NKVD recorded the death of over 19% of the North Caucasian special settlers from malnutrition and physical ailments exacerbated by lack of food (Statiev 2009: 248, table 1).

This massive mortality due to malnutrition, exposure, and disease continued throughout until 1949 when annual births finally outnumbered deaths (Bugai 2002: 165-167, doc. 161). The North Caucasians, especially the Chechens, lost a larger percentage of their population due to the poor material conditions in places of exile than any of the other deported nationalities.

In addition to the horrible material conditions endured by the deported North Caucasians in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, they also suffered from the strict legal restrictions. Classified as special settlers, they came under a separate administration and legal system from other Soviet citizens and had limited rights. Most notably, the Soviet government severely restricted their right to freely move and choose their place of residence within the USSR.

The mass deportations of 1943-1944 prompted the Soviet government to strengthen the legal regulations regarding the special settlement regime. On 7 February 1944, the NKVD issued Prikaz 00127 dealing with the status of district and village special commandants. These NKVD officials had the following main duties: preventing special settlers from escaping, searching for escapees, exposing criminal or anti-Soviet elements, and negative political views. Additionally, they had to maintain order in the places of special settlement, assist with the housing and labor accommodations of the deportees, maintain the family and individual registration rolls of special settlers, and supervise their movement within the regions of their resettlement.

The district and village special commandants also were charged with forming a network of informants to spy on the special settlers as a complement to overt forms of surveillance (Tsarevskaya-Diakina 2004: 400-403, doc. 115). This system of a few overt NKVD agents backed by a much larger covert network of underground informants was based upon the institution's intelligence work elsewhere—including in the Corrective Labor Camps (ITLs) of the GULag.

In addition to the duties and obligations of the special commandants, the 7 February 1944 prikaz also dealt with the rights and legal restrictions imposed upon the special settlers. Technically, the deportees maintained all their rights as Soviet citizens—except those explicitly truncated by Soviet decrees. The most prominent restriction on the rights of the

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special settlers was on their freedom of movement. They could not leave their assigned village soviet (that is the rural area designated to be represented by a single soviet or council, an area usually consisting of several villages) without explicit permission from their special commandant.

Only in a few exceptional cases related to the attendance of work did special settlers not have to get such permission. Their internal passports were marked as valid for living only in a particular district or city. Outside of that district or city, they needed to have permission from the special commandant and unauthorized absences longer than a day were considered and punished as criminal acts by the Soviet government (Tsarevskaia-Diakina 2004: 400-403, doc. 115). The severe restrictions on the residency and movement of the special settlers made them second-class citizens, somewhere between the status of prisoners and Soviet citizens with all of their (formal) rights.

On 11 May 1944, the NKVD reorganized the special commandant system in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan in order to strengthen its control over deportees from the North Caucasus. This decree established a ratio of one Special Commandant and an assistant to administer and watch over every 350 special-settler families in a raion. This staff would be supplemented by one additional assistant commandant for every 250-350 special settler families in a raion. The special commandants and assistant commandants were to wear NKVD uniforms and carry firearms. In addition, each special commandant in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan was to have under his direction three to seven soldiers from the internal troops of the NKVD led by a sergeant.

These soldiers were charged with assisting the special commandants in fighting against banditism, hooliganism, cattle theft, and flight by the special settlers (Tsarevskaia-Diakina 2004: 416-417, doc. 121). The Soviet government was most of all worried about the last of these problems. The special settlement regime was designed to confine the deportees far away from their ancestral homelands in dispersed and remote settlements, where they could be used for agricultural and other labor.

The Soviet government officially codified the restrictions on the special settlers in the beginning of 1945. On 8 January 1945, the SNK (Council of People's Commissariats) passed two resolutions regarding the legal situation of special settlers and special commandants. The first resolution dealing with the situation of the special settlers had five clauses. These asserted, first, that with the exceptions of the restrictions enumerated in the resolution, special settlers had the same rights as all other Soviet citizens. This was followed by a requirement that all special settlers be occupied in “socially useful labor”. The third clause required that they receive permission from their local NKVD special commandant before leaving the confines of their assigned area of settlement. Leaving these confines without permission was classified as a criminal act. The penultimate clause required the head of household to register all changes in its composition such as births, deaths, and flight with the NKVD special commandant within three days.
Finally, the resolution obligated the special settlers to strictly abide by the existing regime and social order of the special settlement administration, and obey all commands from the special NKVD commandant. The latter had the authority to impose administrative punishments of either a fine up to 100 rubles or arrest up to five days (Bugai and Kontsonis 1999: 92, doc. 27).

The second resolution passed on 8 January 1945, SNK resolution no. 34-14s laid out the powers and responsibilities of the special commandants. This resolution started out by reiterating earlier resolutions on this matter. In addition to again noting the responsibilities of the special commandants, this resolution noted their specific powers. The special commandants had the power to issue the permission slips needed by special settlers to temporarily leave the confines of their assigned areas of settlement. They also had the responsibility to form search parties to look for any special settlers outside these confines without permission.

In addition to their ability to issue administrative punishments of up to 100 rubles or five days arrest, the special commandants also had the power to investigate any cases of flight and other crimes and turn them over to the head of the raion NKVD and the raion procurator. Special boards of the NKVD were to try all cases of flight, banditry and counterrevolutionary crimes by special settlers. All other crimes came under the jurisdiction of normal courts (Bugai and Kontsonis 1999: 93-95, doc. 28). In practice this resolution gave an extreme amount of power over the lives of special settlers to the NKVD special commandants.

In 1948 the legal restrictions on the special settlers became even more draconian. The Presidium of the Supreme Soviet issued a decree regarding special settlers that introduced two new measures on 26 November 1948. First, it declared that the internal exile within the USSR of the Chechens, Karachais, Ingush and Balkars, as well other nationalities deported in their entirety, was “forever” and they had permanently lost the right to return to their places of previous settlement. This decree condemned all of the deported nationalities in their entirety to exile from their ancestral homelands for all future generations. The second thing the decree did was to impose extremely harsh punishments for escape attempts.

Special settlers caught attempting to escape from their areas of mandatory settlement were now subject to sentences of twenty years of hard labor. Free citizens caught assisting fugitive special settlers could get up to five years imprisonment (Alieva 1993: 294-295, vol. I). These measures were undertaken to prevent the deportees from leaving their areas of settlement.

The North Caucasian deportees worked in agriculture, construction, and tree felling. While 68.9% of the deported North Caucasians ended up working in agriculture by 1948, some were mobilized for forced labor in other sectors of the Soviet economy (Bugai 1992: 264-265, doc. 48).
For instance, the Main (State) Administration of Aerodrome Construction (GUAS) of the GULag used the labor of 37 Karachais, 49 Chechens, and one Balkar as of 5 September 1944. Most of the Karachais, twenty nine worked in Moscow Oblast and most of the Chechens, twenty sixin Leningrad Oblast (State Archives of the Russian Federation, GARF) f. 9479, o.1, d. 154, l. 133). Other Karachais and Chechens worked in other areas of the USSR, including GUAS columns in Kazakhstan (GARF f. 9479 o.1, d. 154, l. 134).

In March 1949, a thorough MVD (Ministry of Internal Affairs) recount of special settlers identified 8,894 North Caucasians on the rolls that had served in the Red Army (Bugai 2002: 110-111, doc. 102). A large number of demobilized Karachai, Chechen and Ingush soldiers ended up felling trees in the Urals, at the Buinsk and Galich lumber trusts in Kostroma. In October 1944, out of 1,183 Karachai, Chechen and Ingush special settlers working at these two trusts a full 955 had been removed from the ranks of the Red Army (Berdinskikh 2005: 627-628, doc. 2). The vast majority of North Caucasian special settlers, however, spent their entire time in exile working on kolkhozes and sovkhozes in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

Return to the North Caucasus

The release of the deported North Caucasians from the special settlement restrictions and the return of most of them to their Caucasian homeland occurred only during the Khrushchev era. The new First Secretary of the Communist Party of the USSR, Nikita Khrushchev, had specifically denounced Stalin's deportation of the Karachais, Chechens, Ingush, Balkars, and Kalmyks at the 20th Party Congress on 25 February 1956. However, the Soviet government took no concrete action on this matter until spring.

The Balkars were the first of the North Caucasian groups to be completely freed from the special settlement restrictions. The Presidium of the Supreme Soviet issued an Ukaz on 28 April 1956 releasing Balkars, Crimean Tatars and Meskhetian Turks from the special settlement regime, but without the right to return to their former places of residence or recover their confiscated property (Bugai 1992: 273, doc. 57). The remaining North Caucasian special settlers, Karachais, Chechens and Ingush, only received freedom from the special settlement restrictions in the summer of 1956.

A decree from the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet on 16 July 1956 released the Karachais, Chechens and Ingush from the special settlement restrictions. However, like all such decrees removing deported nationalities from the rolls of the special settlement administration, it also declared that they did not have the right to return to the place from which they were deported or to recover any confiscated property (Document reproduced in Aliева 1993: 227, vol. II). The Supreme Soviet only issued an Ukaz to examine the question of allowing the Chechens and Ingush to return home to a restored autonomous territory on 9 January 1957 (Ibid: 228, vol. II). A similar decree regarding the Karachais was also passed the same day (Bugai 1992: 276-277, doc. 61). The Presidium of the Supreme Soviet restored the Chechen-Ingush ASSR, although not all of its territory, a month later on 9 February 1957 (Document reproduced in Aliева 1993: 229, vol. II). The restoration of the national autonomous
The systematic ethnic cleansing of the Karachais, Chechens, Ingush and Balkars during 1943-1944 should be judged upon its results, not on the supposed motivations and intentions of the perpetrators. These nationalities were singled out and deported in their entirety to places where their legal rights were restricted on the basis of their ancestry—and where over a quarter of them died premature deaths in less than a decade. The effect of imposing such legal restrictions and lethal living conditions upon entire ethnic groups clearly fit the definitions of racial discrimination and genocide.

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Web Sites


Assessment of the paper ‘Scourging the Caucasus’

(First Critical Response to J. Otto Pohl’s “Scourging the Caucasus: The Soviet Deportation of the Karachais, Chechens, Ingush, and Balkars in 1943-1944”)

This is an extremely important article that deals directly with a couple of very controversial issues in Soviet studies in a bold and systematic way. I have some suggestions that would not take much time to incorporate but would dramatically improve the impact of the article. As for the facts, the author has an encyclopedic knowledge of the events. The analysis of the deportations is comprehensive and accurate.

As for the author’s assertion that these acts are genocide and that they were motivated by racial considerations, these are of course both controversial subjects. I happen to agree with the author’s assertion that the deportations were in fact genocide, and I feel that the author has made a strong case in this regard. It does open up the possibility that the single term
“genocide” needs to be rethought—genocide brings to mind mass murder, but in fact it is possible to destroy a nation (which is the definition of genocide) through means other than outright murder of the entire population. I think the author addresses this well, but I really feel that this does need to be emphasized more in the conclusion. I felt the conclusion was too short—the author does not do justice to the case made in the body of the paper. More reference back to the specifics of the case, perhaps putting them together in a way that emphasizes the author's point (somewhat like the closing argument of an attorney) would make this article much more persuasive.

I think his emphasis on result as opposed to motivation is something that needs to be examined more generally in genocide studies, and maybe the author can refer to other similar cases in this and future papers. This is just a suggestion, but if there is some way of emphasizing the significance of this particular assertion it should be done.

As for the racial component, I am somewhat unfamiliar with this aspect of Russian history and so I do not have a lot to add on this. I do however agree that the arguments that the peoples were deported for strictly political reasons or that since Russians were deported as well it could not have been racially motivated, fall apart very quickly under close examination. Again, however, I do think the author needs to recapitulate this in the conclusion. I cannot emphasize this enough. This is a truly great article that addresses an extremely important issue, and the conclusion is just too short to reinforce for the reader just what a strong case the author has made.

- Anonymous

Critique on the manuscript ‘Scourging the Caucasus’

(Second Critical Response to J. Otto Pohl's “Scourging the Caucasus: The Soviet Deportation of the Karachais, Chechens, Ingush, and Balkars in 1943-1944”)

The author is less original than he/she implies. There is, for instance, J. Otto Pohl's article ‘Stalin's Genocide against the “repressed peoples” ’, in Journal of Genocide Research, vol. 2 (2000). Of course, this manuscript can employ materials that appeared since then.

I would modify the conclusion. Genocide scholars deduce intent from the results; they do not evaluate events by ignoring completely what may have been their purpose(s). Using the UN definition or not, they generally do not speak of "genocide" unless they have deduced an intent to destroy a people. Most of the time, this is done on the basis of the outcome.

Speaking of “militant opposition” and “militant insistence [resistance]", the use of the word "genocide" seems to imply that the scholars involved are malicious. Rather than such language, it would be better to present their views early on, with quotations. This would include Statiev's point that there was a typically Soviet randomness about which ethnic group to deport, and which one not.

- Anonymous

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Editorial Comment on J. Otto Pohl’s “Scourging the Caucasus”, and the anonymous Critical Responses to it

The reader may have noted that practically all the Critical Responses are anonymous—also for the other main articles in this issue. We have respected the wishes of the reviewers to stay anonymous, even though we prefer their names to be published along with their reviews as Critical Responses so as to encourage academic debate on sensitive, controversial or otherwise contested topics.

Also noticeable here is the drawback of sending anonymized manuscripts to reviewers. Thus the reviewer of the Second Critical Response clearly did not realize that he or she was reviewing a manuscript written by Jonathan Otto Pohl, when he or she remarks that “the author is less original than he/she implies”, referring to “J. Otto Pohl's article ‘Stalin's Genocide against the “repressed peoples”’, in Journal of Genocide Research, vol. 2 (2000)”. Indeed, another reviewer, who wished to remain both anonymous and his or her review unpublished, wrote that the manuscript's main point “is not a new interpretation. J. Otto Pohl, in Ethnic Cleansing in the Soviet Union (1999), has made the case for ethnic cleansing” already.

Perhaps much of the misunderstanding could have been avoided if Jonathan Otto Pohl would have been less modest in the current contribution, and would have referred to some of his own publications—and would have clarified that most or all of the analysis is based on existing and past research.

We do not mind if contributors present and emphasize some aspects of research already done by them and others—after all, some or many readers may not be familiar with the topic, like Stalin's Deportation intentions and policies and their destructive effects—as long as they explicitly indicate this. So perhaps the author should have clarified better the place of his current contribution in both his own research and that of others. But this shortcoming in an otherwise splendid contribution is also the Editorial Board's fault; we should have noticed this and informed the author about this in a timely manner. Nevertheless, we do not consider this matter grave enough to warrant a further delay of the article's publication.

- Caspar ten Dam, Executive Editor

NB: do you have any comments on J. Otto Pohl's article and/or the critical responses? Please send these to info@ethnogeopolitics.org or post these on http://www.ethnogeopolitics.org. Some of these comments the Editorial Board may publish as Critical Responses (maximum 3,000 words) in the next issue of the journal. Extensive critical responses with own source references may be published as full-fledged, separate articles. Please supply your name, contact details, academic and/or other professional titles and affiliations, as well as your research specialisms and any major publications.
HOW PEOPLE MAKE THE WORLD: The Ten Global Challenges
An essay on politics, civilization and humanity

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Main Article

The TAPI (Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan and India) Gas Pipeline: A Cementing Factor for Turkmenistan's Neutrality Doctrine

Chaudhry Naman Zafar

Introduction

The TAPI (Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India) gas pipeline signed in December 2010 will have tremendous effects on Turkmenistan's politics, economics and society —and particularly on Turkmenistan's doctrine of neutrality. This paper will observe the implications of the TAPI pipeline, keeping in mind different levels of analysis—i.e. international, State and domestic levels.

This paper is comprised of three sections. The first section deals with the historical background of Turkmenistan in order to give the reader a better understanding of the country. In the second section the positive impact of the TAPI gas pipeline for Turkmenistan will be discussed and how its positive outcomes will strengthen Turkmenistan's neutrality doctrine. The third section will offer some concluding remarks. In short, I will argue that the TAPI gas pipeline will be a cementing factor for the Turkmen neutrality policy.

Historical background

Turkmenistan is a predominantly desert country with large hydrocarbon reserves, considered the second or fourth most gas rich country in the world, depending on the estimate one uses. Turkmenistan is an important player in the energy politics of Central Asia and also one of the littoral states of the Caspian Sea. Turkmenistan was among the fifteen former Soviet Republics, which became independent after the disintegration of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) in 1991.
Turkmenistan was one of the least priority republics under Soviet rule for many historical reasons, including the attack of the Takay tribe on the Tsar's Russian army in 1883. In 1948, after a disastrous earthquake, the current capital Ashkhabad witnessed huge devastation. On the eve of Soviet disintegration in 1991, Turkmenistan had very few universities, colleges and other formal education institutions. There was a huge need for a skilled workforce in the country, since former skilled people were mainly Slavic peoples of Russia who had returned to Russia during the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

Inadequate resources, economic deficiencies and political constraints were just a few of the challenges which Turkmenistan had to face in the aftermath of independence. The economy was mainly based on the exports of cotton and gas to Russia. Turkmenistan had the challenges of diversification of its economy and gas supplies, employment creation, expanding tax net for government revenues, foreign currency generation, economic expansion, infrastructure development, improvement in the education and public health sectors, poverty alleviation, combatting malnutrition and drug trafficking, etcetera. The landlocked nature of its geography compounded and helped to maintain its economic fragility. The border dispute between Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan and the dispute on the water resources of Amu Darya intensified the critical situation.

Turkmenistan's first President and former Communist Party leader Saparmurad Niyazov inherited these problems and started ruling the country in a way that can be safely and easily classified as pure authoritarianism. He used a cult of personality to rule the country and also named different months after his mother and his own names. There was no room for political opposition and the personality of the President was assumed as omnipotent and omnipresent. President Niyazov wrote a book titled "Ruhnama" in order to inculcate a sense of primacy in the Turkmen people; it was an attempt to overcome the prevailing identity crisis among Turkmen.

The President followed the principle of neutrality in order to strengthen the country's sovereignty. Turkmenistan requested the United Nations (UN) to pass a resolution in 1995 in which it was accepted that Turkmenistan was a neutral country. It was under the principle of neutrality that Turkmenistan did not join multiple international and regional organizations, like the SCO (Shanghai Cooperation Organization), CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States), and CSTO (Collective Security Treaty Organization). Moreover, Turkmenistan also did not join the Central Asian Union. Turkmenistan was insistent on its neutrality, because of factors such as the potential dangers of disintegration, civil war, economic and political collapse, and the US-Russian rivalry in the Central Asia.

Turkmenistan has been selling its gas to Russia since its independence at very cheap rates because Turkmenistan did not diversify its gas supplies until 1997, when Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin stopped the inflow of Turkmen gas destined to Europe. The Turkmen GDP dropped overnight and the situation forced the Turkmen President to visit Russia to solve the problem; but on arrival he was told that Europe did not want Turkmen gas. President Niyazov immediately proceeded to Europe, where he learned that the flow of Turkmen gas was cut by Russia, not by European customers.
Niyazov held a press conference and criticized the role of Russian Prime Minister Chernomyrdin—who eventually lost his position after this incidence.\textsuperscript{3} It was at this time that Turkmenistan seriously started planning to diversify its gas supplies. The Turkmenistan–China gas pipeline agreement signed in April 2006 was the biggest milestone in this regard.\textsuperscript{4} Another remarkable milestone which Turkmenistan has achieved is the TAPI pipeline, on which we will focus in the next section.

Detailed Analysis on the impact of TAPI

The economic history of Turkmenistan is turbulent, as we have described in the previous section. Turkmenistan followed a gradual approach of transition from a command economy to a fully functioning market economy. The former President Niyazov did not take any far-reaching steps towards economic or political transition.\textsuperscript{5} Turkmenistan has been exporting cotton and gas to Russia at very low prices for a long time due to passive market diversification.

Next to the Turkmenistan-China gas pipeline signed on 3th of April 2006, the TAPI (Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan and India) agreement, signed on 11th of December 2010, is another remarkable milestone towards the diversification of gas supplies. The proposed TAPI gas pipeline will be 1700 km long, which will take gas from Turkmenistan and pass through Afghanistan, Pakistan and will end up in India. This pipeline will supply about 33 bcm of gas annually which will bring huge amounts of foreign exchange revenues to the country.

Turkmenistan has the second-largest proven gas reserves in the world\textsuperscript{6} and used to sell most of its gas to Russia. However, Moscow, due to the global financial crisis, significantly reduced its purchases in 2009 following a pipeline explosion and a subsequent price row with Turkmenistan.\textsuperscript{7} As a result, Turkmenistan’s total gas exports dropped to one-quarter of 2008 levels, according to the US Energy Information Administration. It was the problematic behavior of Russia that made Turkmenistan decide to redirect a major shipment of gas from the Dauletabad field, which used to go to Russia, toward the south, explains John Roberts, oil and gas expert from Platts, a company that analyzes the energy market.\textsuperscript{8}

Currently, Turkmenistan is thus the only country in Central Asia that is looking in all directions for the export of its gas, which shows and strengthens Turkmen neutrality in the region.

Economic Impact

The economic impact of the TAPI gas pipeline will leave indelible marks on the economy of Turkmenistan. The TAPI project is a clear indication that Turkmenistan does not want to put all its eggs in one basket (i.e. Russia), as it used to do before the agreement on the Turkmen-
China gas pipeline was decided on in 2006. Turkmenistan very wisely decreased its dependence on Russia and started supplying gas to China. The country concurrently initiated the TAPI project to ensure that it does not become overly dependent on the Turkmen-China pipeline either.

Moreover, TAPI is supported by the United States of America (USA), as an alternative to the IPI (Iran, Pakistan and India) gas pipeline. This support is a clear indication of Turkmenistan's success in keeping its neutrality in state affairs—in this instance by keeping equal distance to both Russia and the USA, i.e. maintaining normal relations with both.

Turkmenistan's current administration is working hard to transform the outlook of the country. Turkmen President Gurbanguli Berdymukhamedov is investing huge sums of money in the education sector. He has built a new national university, a new national medical university, an institute of engineering, an institute of energy and several schools throughout the country. The government is withdrawing Niyazov's book "Ruhnama" from the syllabus, and is introducing new books and literature in schools and colleges.

Therefore, the current government is making significant investments in the education sector, which will have long-lasting effects on the overall fabric of the society. It will give rise to a civil society which definitely will demand the rule of law. Turkmenistan is sending almost 10,000 students abroad for education; on their arrival back to Turkmenistan they should be able to run the country effectively in spite of the new challenges.

Moreover, the new government has rebuilt the capital Ashkhabad and many other cities as well. The new government is also emphasizing the diversification of the economy, by establishing spinning mills to process cotton inside the country. Now there is no need to send this cotton to Russia for processing. The agriculture sector was in a very bad condition, yet the current administration has been able to revive this important sector, by introducing reforms and establishing a new agriculture university in Dashuz.

The economy of Turkmenistan had been the victim of widespread poverty, a poor education system, and the misuse of governmental revenues. In order to improve social and living standards in rural areas, the current administration approved the National Rural Development Program (2008-2020) in December 2007 by committing to invest part of the country's considerable natural resource wealth in rural infrastructure projects. The program has been geared heavily towards the massive improvement of the rural infrastructure such as communal services (water, electricity, and gas), rural health facilities, schools, kindergartens and rural access roads. Thus the overall outlook is favorable given that Turkmenistan's gas export prices are still catching up with European market prices, with new onshore and offshore hydrocarbon discoveries.

All of the above-mentioned reforms initiated by the central government require huge sums of money, which can be funded with revenues from the TAPI gas pipeline. The gas income is collected in a Stabilization Fund established in 2008; this fund will receive revenues from TAPI gas sales and eventually will be used to strengthen the country and maintain its neutrality doctrine.
Political Impact

The TAPI gas pipeline also has implications for the political future of Turkmenistan. Since its first day Turkmenistan has been trying to portray a neutral picture of Turkmenistan in the region and across the world because of many reasons.

The former President Niyazov followed the principle of neutrality in order to strengthen sovereignty of the country. Turkmenistan requested the UN to pass a resolution in 1995 in which it was asked to be accepted that Turkmenistan is a neutral country.\textsuperscript{11} As mentioned in the first section, it was this principle of neutrality that explains why Turkmenistan did not join the SCO, CIS, CSTO and the Central Asian Union as well.

The TAPI gas pipeline project will have an impact on the fragile security situation in Afghanistan and Pakistan, because this pipeline needs the goodwill of all TAPI's four involved countries. "Along with commercial and economic benefits, this project will also yield a stabilizing influence on the region and beyond," Turkmen President Berdymukhamedov said after the leaders signed a document supporting the project.\textsuperscript{12} After all, the land-locked central Asian countries need transportation routes to export their potential resources and products to the outer world, wherever their resources and products are needed. The TAPI project provides an opening for Turkmenistan gas to the Indian Ocean as well.

The TAPI project is significant, because it is the first systematic, sustained effort in linking the energy-rich Central Asia with the energy-deficient South Asia. Moreover, the project would provide an outlet to the landlocked Central Asian Republics (CARs) through the shortest possible route for the rest of the world. At a regional level, the project would support the regional integration of South and Central Asia. The regional resources would be consumed by regional countries. It is worth mentioning that as compared to the former routes of oil and gas from the CARs to rest of the world through Russia, Pakistan provides the shortest access to the regional countries for export and transportation of their natural resources, via Arabian Sea as well as the overland route.\textsuperscript{13}

The project is a remarkable achievement, if only because Pakistan and India are still very hostile to each other, both with nuclear capabilities. Both countries are playing opposite roles inside Afghanistan against each other, and are thus involved in a zero-sum, win-lose game there.\textsuperscript{14} The TAPI project will bind these countries in a mutually beneficial project which demands cooperation and collaboration—also with and inside Afghanistan.

Pakistan actually welcomes Indian participation in this gas pipeline project. The terrorist-ridden country expects and hopes that all those who promote, abet and finance terrorism and sub-nationalism in Pakistan would now desist from this nefarious act for the greater cause of economic prosperity in South Asia. So TAPI could well become the symbol of peace, stability, and economic prosperity in South and Central Asia.\textsuperscript{15}
Indeed, “An important positive development, which is accentuated by the project participants, is the project’s significance in terms of strengthening the long-term stability and security. Obviously, the joint construction of the gas pipeline, which will connect the four states with common interests and objectives, will promote mutual understanding and trust between them and serve the improvement of the situation and political climate in Asia on the whole”.16

Last but not least, this project will decrease the Russian influence on the political affairs of the country. This project might bring Turkmenistan to device a more friendly foreign policy towards Azerbaijan, because irrespective of TAPI, Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan are working together to construct a 60 km portion of the pipeline, which will attach Turkmenistan with that gas distribution system which is supplying gas to Europe via Georgia and Turkey.

If both countries successfully construct the 60 km section on the Turkmenistan side, and Turkmenistan joins this gas distribution system then it will have obvious benefits both for Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan which is only supplying its gas to the Western side, after joining the 60 km of the Turkmen side, will be able to supply its gas in the opposite direction. Conversely, Turkmenistan will be able to supply its gas to Western customers without the help of Russia. This clearly shows that Turkmenistan's principle of neutrality will be upheld in this way as well. But in order to enjoy the full benefits, Turkmenistan needs to devise a friendly foreign policy towards Azerbaijan, which is considered—perhaps surprising to some—as a role model for Turkmen political and economic development.

More generally, The TAPI gas pipeline will play a role in the revival of the historical silk road, connecting four key regional countries. If as a result of new developments in the region, the longstanding Kashmir dispute is resolved between India and Pakistan as well, the whole region will become prosperous in a relatively short time.

In the political sphere, Turkmenistan will become a very important hub in the region after the completion of the TAPI gas pipeline. As a result its principle and policy of neutrality will be strengthened—as such an energy-distribution hub should be very neutral and impartial towards all parties involved.

**Strategic Impact**

Strategically, the TAPI gas pipeline will enhance the importance of Turkmenistan in the region. To reiterate, Turkmenistan is trying to diversify its gas supplies in all directions. As mentioned before, Turkmenistan has already a supply line with Russia, one supply line to China, is building the 60 km part to join Azerbaijan gas distribution system, and now TAPI should extend it towards South Asia. All these pipelines make Turkmenistan a very important strategic location, where the energy interests and securities of various countries coincide. This factor demands complete neutrality of Turkmenistan, which will increase the confidence of the clients and also the stability in the political and economic fields of Turkmenistan.
China has emerged as the biggest consumer of oil and gas in the world, surpassing the USA in recent years. On 2 January 2011, the China-Russian oil pipeline started operation, and Russia will pump 15 m tons of oil every year—which means 300,000 barrels a day. At the same time China is importing gas from Kazakhstan, Iran, and Turkmenistan for its energy needs. In this energy puzzle Turkmenistan enjoys strategic importance as a reliable gas supplier.

Turkmenistan's decision to join TAPI and the Azerbaijani gas distribution system will increase the strategic importance of Turkmenistan in energy politics. In the light of current developments, no energy-related strategy can be finalized without the consent of Turkmenistan—which underlines the strategic importance of this country. The successful decisions on the diversification of gas supplies have cemented the neutrality doctrine of Turkmenistan, because now its government can take decisions while remaining neutral according to the national interest of the country.

Social Impacts

The cohesive nature of Turkmen society is also one of the blessings of this country, which helped President Niyazov to rule in an authoritarian way. Since all the people belong to the same ethnicity (five major tribes), they accepted the rule of the former President and hardly ever protested against him. The strict secular leadership succeeded in avoiding religious and any interethnic violence such as experienced by neighboring Tajikistan during the 1990s.

Benjamin Muller in his article “State to Nation balance”, states that the higher the degree of social and ethnic homogeneity, the more there will be a stable and peaceful state. This argument is very valid in the context of Turkmenistan. But in spite of the cohesive nature of Turkmen society, the people naturally demand prosperity, security, health, and education, which can only be provided if the country had ample revenues to fulfill the demands of the population.

The TAPI gas pipeline will be a remarkable source of revenues for the Turkmen government. In the presence of abundant resources, there should be hardly any social strife and social disturbance, and in the absence of social disturbance the country can easily pursue neutrality in the region because among the population there will be no preference for any specific outside country.

Drugs emanating from Afghanistan are making their way via Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan to Europe and Russia, representing a major regional issue. The international community remained very concerned about this issue, because if we look into the facts and figures the average age of a drug addict is not more than 8 years old. Therefore it is a ruining factor for any society in the world. But the TAPI pipeline passes through Afghanistan as well, and the Afghan government is and will be getting handsome amounts of money as a transit fee. These revenues should enable the Afghan government to uplift the living standard inside the country, which eventually will bring the poor people to stop poppy cultivation inside the country.
The TAPI pipeline can thus be seen as a crucial asset in a war against drugs in the region. The Turkmen society will also benefit from this, because TAPI will also bring benefits for local society and Turkmen people will thus be less inclined to get and remain involved in drug-related businesses.

TAPI will also offer a shield against transnational terrorism. Arguably, a major cause i.e. breeding ground of terrorism is poverty and a low living standard in multiple countries, like Afghanistan. As we have discussed, once TAPI becomes fully operational, Afghanistan and Turkmenistan will get huge amounts of money; and this money can be easily utilized for the alleviation of poverty, education and health infrastructure, etcetera. In the presence of good conditions of life hardly any individual would be attracted towards terrorism.

Turkmenistan has had a bad history of relationships with Azerbaijan and once closed its embassy there; but after TAPI and the ongoing process of completion of the 60 km portion on the Turkmen side to attach it to the Azerbaijani gas distribution system, Turkmenistan eventually will be able to have friendly relations with Azerbaijan. Actually, Turkmen society always has looked at Azerbaijan's greater social openness and prosperity as a role model.

TAPI will also bring Turkmen society near to Azerbaijani society because of many factors. Azerbaijan is a clear example of a relatively secular, open, Western-oriented and progressing society which the neighboring Turkmenistan admires. TAPI revenues will support all activities towards a progressive direction of society, therefore Turkmenistan will come closer to Azerbaijan in the greater interest of the country.

Thus one can easily figure out the positive impacts of the TAPI gas pipeline for Turkmenistan. This pipeline will have a multidimensional impact on the political, economic, strategic and social aspects of the country. Turkmenistan, which is very touchy about its doctrine of neutrality, will get strength from TAPI to maintain this doctrine.

Conclusion

Turkmenistan is a vital player in the energy politics of Central Asia. Turkmenistan did not follow the so-called shock therapy of rapid transition from the Soviet political and economic system to liberal democracy and market economy. Turkmenistan remained very conscious regarding its relations with the outside world. The first Turkmen President Niyazov followed the doctrine of neutrality keeping in mind the then prevailing scenarios. This country was so worried about its neutrality, that it requested the UN General Assembly to pass a resolution accepting the neutrality of Turkmenistan.

During the post-independence years, Turkmenistan remained dependent on Russia for its gas and cotton exports; Russia kept exploiting this situation in its own national interest and to get maximum benefit out of it. After realizing this fact, Turkmenistan's former President decided to diversify the country's exports in order to decrease its dependence on any one country. As a result of this decision, Turkmenistan successfully started supplying gas to
China which rightly has been considered a great setback to Russia’s primary natural gas company, Gazprom.

On 11 December 2010, Turkmenistan signed a gas supply agreement with Afghanistan, Pakistan and India. As a result of this agreement, Turkmenistan will supply 33 bcm (billion cubic meters) of gas to these countries. This deal will bring huge benefits for Turkmenistan in the political, economic, strategic and social fields; eventually these will assure the strength of the country’s neutrality doctrine.

In the coming years both Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan will emerge as vital players of energy security in the world. Yet, Turkmenistan still has a long way to go, since it is still facing lower domestic living standards, and higher income poverty levels than most other countries in the region. Continued inflationary pressure and real appreciation of currency are also longer term risks to the development of the private sector. Paradoxically, the very isolation from the international financial system and banking system has saved Turkmenistan from getting hit by the international financial crisis since 2008. In 2009 the real growth rate was 6.1%, GDP per capita was $ 6700, budget revenues $ 1.459 billion, and reserves of foreign exchange and gold were $ 9.551 billion.\(^7\)

All these economic indicators clearly show that the country is moving in the right direction. This gradual engagement with the Western world is producing encouraging results for the country, but at the same time demands more reforms in the political and economic fields at the domestic and national levels. One cannot regard the situation as ideal; still, the government is trying to move in the right direction. The Turkmen–China gas supply deal was the first step towards the diversification of exports and the maintenance of Turkmen neutrality. The more recent TAPI gas agreement will cement the neutrality doctrine and increase the independence and cohesion of Turkmenistan as one country even further.

Therefore, the TAPI gas pipeline will be a crucial catalyst of national prosperity and development, and of regional stability and cooperation. TAPI will prove to be the cornerstone behind the maintenance of Turkmenistan's principle and doctrine of neutrality.

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NB: do you have any comments on Chaudhry N. Zafar's article? Please send these to info@ethnogeopolitics.org, or through the contact form at http://www.ethnogeopolitics.org.
Criticism of the paper on the TAPI gas pipeline

(First Critical Response to Chaudhry Naman Zafar's “The TAPI (Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan and India) Gas Pipeline: A Cementing Factor for Turkmenistan's Neutrality Doctrine”)

I recommend that the author be invited to resubmit the paper after significant edits and rewriting. I understand that the thesis of the piece is to argue that TAPI will strengthen Turkmenistan's policy of neutrality by strengthening the state and contributing to regional security, which itself will help to guarantee Turkmenistan's stability. That is, of course, a very interesting assessment and offers a great look at the geopolitics of resource management.

That said, the paper's structure is somewhat disorganized (and repetitive), and there are many statements that are simply unsupported. For example, the author argues that TAPI will contribute to the stability of Pakistan, because "terrorists" will recognize the project is in their interests. Later on, he offers a one-sentence declaration that TAPI might even contribute to a solution of the Kashmir dispute, whereafter "the whole region will become prosperous in a relatively short time"—a completely unsupported prediction.

These are just a few examples of statements that are not properly supported and often seem to come from nowhere. There are many more such strong, unsubstantiated statements, like that educational investments by the Turkmen government will always support the creation of a civil society. Likewise, I do not understand how the author's observation of US support for TAPI as an alternative to the IPI (Iran, Pakistan, India) gas pipeline is a clear indication of Turkmen neutrality—rather than simply a move of economic diversification in the face of a difficult Russian Federation.

The author also misses a key opportunity to explore the ethnic dimensions of Turkmenistan's neutrality and the TAPI project. Contrary to the author's assertion, Turkmenistan is not ethnically homogenous. He seems to deny the reality that tribal identities are still salient and still constitute a challenge to state goals. He mentions ties to Azerbaijan and issues in the creation of a Turkmen-state identity, but does not develop these ideas far enough.

Indeed, his assertion that Azerbaijan is socially and politically open and prosperous, to such an extent that it can serve as a role model for Turkmenistan, seems incredulous—Azerbaijan's political system is one of the most authoritarian ones in the region. His statement may be true only in the sense that the formerly very isolated and totalitarian-ruled Turkmenistan first needs to develop towards a model of authoritarianism with some limited modicum of political, social and economic freedom.

Not to press the point too far, but I have serious doubts regarding the neutrality of the author. He seems to argue that TAPI will solve almost every issue in South and Central Asia without offering much support in way of source references and arguments.

- Anonymous
The wider geopolitics of the TAPI gas pipeline project

(Second Critical Response to Chaudhry Naman Zafar’s “The TAPI (Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan and India) Gas Pipeline: A Cementing Factor for Turkmenistan's Neutrality Doctrine”)

This article is a descriptive analysis to praise the project that would in the end of the day benefit the Government of Pakistan. In other words, this is rather a descriptive analysis of the project. I would find myself in a much better position to assess it on its true merits if the article were to examine, in its initial sections, that project objectively against the background of US geopolitics and the oil and gas pipeline rivalries among the energy-producing countries of the region of Caspian-Central Asia in the 1990s. These rivalries continued well into the first decade of the 21st century—in order to isolate Iran in the geopolitics of energy production and transportation during that decade (the 1990s) and beyond in that part of the world.

Without a thorough examination of that very important geopolitical aspect of the case, the article cannot fully convey the message of a geopolitical argument that this paper is designed to do. I look forward to receiving a new copy of a re-examined text—or a new version of the article—that can adequately address the geopolitical factors giving birth to TAPI.

- Anonymous.

Editorial Comment on C. N. Zafar’s article on the TAPI gas pipeline, and the anonymous Critical Responses to it

As the journal’s Executive Editor, I have adopted most of the practical suggestions by the first anonymous reviewer on the original manuscript—and added some modifications of my own, in consultation with and with approval of the author. Moreover, I have restructured some parts of the manuscript in response to the reviewer’s criticisms in that regard—for which the authors also has given his approval.

The criticisms by particularly the first reviewer are often quite severe, like on the author’s praise of Azerbaijan as a role model for Turkmenistan (which indeed seems odd, given the widely shared view that Azerbaijan’s regime is quite authoritarian).

Nevertheless, I and the Chief Editor, Dr. Babak Rezvani, have deemed the manuscript of sufficient quality and relevance to be publishable—certainly with the incorporated modifications. Indeed, both Critical Responses concern an earlier version of Chaudhry Naman Zafar’s article than the one published here.

Naturally, the author still can give a Reaction to the Critical Responses in a subsequent issue of the journal, if he wishes to do so.

- Caspar ten Dam, Executive Editor
An Open Letter To Senators Tester and Daines and Congressman Zinke Concerning Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu's March 3 Speech to Congress

Thomas Goltz

Dear Jon, Steve and Congressman Zinke,

The other day, I received an appeal to send a generic letter asking you (and indeed all US senators and House representatives) to boycott Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's forthcoming speech to both Houses of Congress, set for March 3, 2015.

The appeal was sent by "J-Street," a Jewish-lobbying group in DC that has long declared itself in opposition to the sort of blind support for anything-Israeli as represented by AIPAC, or the American-Israel Public Affairs Committee, and promotes a more balanced approach to US-Israeli ties—including US relations with Iran. This is the generic appeal:

"As U.S. voters, we are outraged that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was invited to speak before Congress. He will advocate for additional harsh sanctions on Iran that will undermine the diplomatic process and possibly lead to war. Netanyahu does not speak about peace in good faith—illegal settlements and human rights violations against Palestinians have only increased under his leadership. We ask you not to attend Mr. Netanyahu's speech, and to instead stand with us on the side of diplomacy and justice."

I agree with the message, and signed and sent it. But I would like to add the following.

My career over the past 30 years has been intimately connected with Middle East issues as a journalist, filmmaker and academic at both UM and MSU, where my tasks included developing a debate class based the real-world, 22-member Arab League. Students were subjected to rigorous study of all manner of issues in the region, ranging from Defense to the Environment; by definition, the question of Israel and Palestine were central themes, as was the issue of Iran.

The MSU teams crushed rival UM in 2008, 2009 and 2010, and earned the right to represent Eritrea at the national level that last year. In 2011 and 2012, we went regional, winning the highest team honor at a multi-school 'Rocky Mountain' competition at the University of Utah in Salt Lake City (we represented a number of Arab states), before once again pushing on to the nationals to represent Bahrain in 2011 and Palestine in 2012, when the 'Cats' went up against heavy-weights like George Mason, West Point and Northeastern and Northwestern, achieving Runner-Up status in a field of 22 leading universities across the USA. Not bad for 'Moo-You'!

Former Senator Max Baucus received our delegation in 2010; his office set up a simulation of the Finance Committee discussion about Iran sanctions in 2011, and then-Congressman Daines was kind enough to receive us in his DC office in 2012; Senator Tester had to cancel a
meeting that year at the last minute, but we met with his staff and had a lively discussion about Israeli settlement policy on the West Bank and other issues.

The main point is that my students had studied the region, and particularly the question of Palestine, which means they also studied Israel and its settlement policies on the West Bank, the casual use of force against Gaza as well as its knee-jerk response to kick Iran at the drop of a hat—and generally use the US-Israeli ‘special relationship’ as a blank-check in dealing with the Middle East.

I am certain that at least some of my former students, as well as my friends and associates in Livingston, Bozeman and beyond in urban and rural Montana would encourage you to ‘stay-away’ from the Netanyahu show in DC next month. But I would like to be more realistic.

Assuming you do attend (both Jon and Steve have received considerable funding from AIPAC-connected sources, which I find personally disappointing) I and my former students will be watching, waiting and hoping that none of you participate in the expected, obsequious standing ovations by a wall of US lawmakers that will be orchestrated into “Bibi’s” speech, just like the last time he spoke before Congress in 2011, when he received 29 standing ovations—something he would never receive from the Israeli Knesset itself.

So gentlemen, please just sit in your chairs, be civil—and make Montana proud of our representatives by showing caution, reason and thus a profound resistance to the standard, obsequious ‘let the tail wag the dog’ response to Israeli-American relations.

We are the dog; Israel is the tail. Please, please, remember that.

*Thomas Goltz, Professor of Political Science at Montana State University, United States*
Life Against Death: Srebrenica—Digest of the first presentation of Kadir Habibović’s book in the Netherlands

Caspar ten Dam & Sahin Sisić

First passage from the book (page 4):

"In order to protect yourself against prejudice, I recommend to everyone who reads this shocking story: imagine your town instead of my Srebrenica, your people instead of my people and your name instead of my name. Then make your judgment and try to answer a question without fear and loudly so that everyone hears: "What have THEY done to the innocent people of Srebrenica?" And never do to anyone what you would not want to be done to you ..."

The presentation of Kadir Habibovic’s book on 22 February 2015 at Café de Keyzer in Leiden from 15:00 to 17:00, jointly organized by the Association for the Study of EthnoGeoPolitics (EGP), Political Committee Stari Most (PCSM), PAXforPeace (PAX), and the International Committee for Humanitarian Intervention (ICHI), was impressive and brought strong emotions. Around forty people attended, including Dutch citizens of Bosnian descent (see photo below).
The initiator of the meeting, filmmaker Sahin Sisić, welcomed the attendees and talked about the background of Kadir's book and the plans to turn the book into a movie: its scenario entitled "Srebrenica: A Voice from the Mountain" is already available for film producers and investors (contact: sahinsisic1@gmail.com).

Sahin then showed the slideshow “Hidden face man Srebrenica” by Armin Smajlović, and the short documentary by Jasenko Korjenić about Kadir and his book in Potočari on 11 July 2014 (see photo on the left), with help from Rudi Klumpkens of Foundation KINO. Then Amina Sisić and Mustafa Hadžiibrahimović, a journalist with the NTR (A Dutch broadcasting corporation) and also interpreter during the event, read passages from the English translation of Kadir's earlier war experiences in the so-called UN “safe area” of Srebrenica.

Writer and journalist Alfred van Cleef, author of, among other works, The lost world of the family Berberović (1994) and its sequel Lost World (2014), read passages from the advancing Dutch translation of Kadir's imprisonment and torture by Serb soldiers after the fall of the enclave. Caspar ten Dam, co-organizer and EGP-secretary, read passages from the English translation of Kadir's miraculous escape from execution and certain death by a firing squad.

Finally, there was a Skype interview with Kadir Habibović followed by some questions from the attendees. Photos were taken by Amina Sisić, Kemal Duraković, Rudi Klumpkens and Fred Rohde, which will become available in multiple fora, including the site www.srebrenica-herdenking.nl. After all, the meeting was also one of the activities within the setting of the upcoming 20-year commemoration of the fall of Srebrenica on 11 July 2015 in Potočari, Bosnia, and beyond, including on The Square in The Hague. For questions and more information, please contact us via info@ethnogeopolitics.org.

For some media reports about or related to the event, see:

www.avaz.ba/clanak/165528/leiden-promocija-knjige-zivot-proтив-smrti-srebrenica
www.ad.nl/ad/nl/1013/Buitenland/article/detail/3870595/2015/02/21/Ik-voel-de-angst-bij-IS-gijzelaars.dhtml
(Special Announcement: second presentation of Kadir’s book in the Netherlands)

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Muqabele - Face to Face with Kadir Habibović’s book: LIFE AGAINST DEATH: Srebrenica

Thursday, 16 April 2015; 20:00h
Beyond Borders presentation in Polygonal Hall
Burgemeester Brokxlaan
building 46, Tilburg
Free Entrance

ŽIVOT PROTIV SMRTI SREBRENIKA

KNIJGA ISTINE: After a daring escape from the firing squad, Kadir is lost in the woods and on the brink of death. He climbs to the top of Mount Udrich and, in a miraculous moment, hears a Voice calling to him... An incredible true story of survival. This is a must read book.

For questions and more information, please contact: ingrid@uyks4@gmail.com