

DERLUGUIAN, GEORGI M. *Bourdieu's Secret Admirer in the Caucasus. A World-System Biography.* University of Chicago Press, Chicago [etc.] 2005. 406 pp. Ill. \$25.00; £17.50; DOI: 10.1017/S0020859008053364

Of the many momentous events which marked the twentieth century, the collapse of the Soviet Union has undoubtedly had the most far-reaching consequences. Since the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, citizens of the fledgling republics have engaged in the post-Soviet restructuring of the region, where old identities have been recast and, in some cases, new ones invented. In the centre of Tashkent the equestrian statue of the fourteenth-century Amir Teymur replaced Karl Marx, and in Baku every effort was made to eradicate the remaining images of the Soviet hammer and sickle from even the city's most isolated buildings, attempting to obliterate the recent past from the public memory. It is in this context that Georgi M. Derluguian commits himself to venture into *Bourdieu's Secret Admirer in the Caucasus*.

Evidently, these forms of iconoclasm have contributed to an anachronistic exploitation of notions such as ethnicity and ethnic groups, nation and nationality, and the institution of the nation state. Thus, in the post-Soviet era, in each independent territorial entity, a titular ethnic group has emerged, representing itself as the sole historical nation asserting absolute claim on such a vital question as territory. Historically, such reconstruction of the past often tends to deny the right to existence of other non-titular ethnic groups.

The formation of eight independent republics in the southern region of the former Soviet territories was accompanied by political tension between neighbouring states and ethnic groupings, which in some cases led to bloody confrontation. Obviously, the roots of ethno-nationalism in the Caucasus and central Asia lie in the Soviet period, within which existed a concealed ethno-nationalism. This was evident not only among the dominant ethnic groups but also among the non-titular ethnic minorities, fostering their own interests rather than those of the titular nations. Such ethno-nationalism was the direct outcome of a peculiar type of ethno-federalist administrative structure promoted by the Soviets. Furthermore, the Soviet establishment attempted to establish a direct link with a constructed titular nation of the state's preference.

Although this policy aimed at achieving socio-political homogeneity, it systematically denied ethnic minorities their basic rights compared with those of the titular nations. Hence, ethno-nationalism became the most dynamic force in local politics during the Soviet era. While the titular nationalities in each republic filled the offices of the local and regional administrations, members of ethnic minority groups had to set up defence systems, mainly based on bribery, favouritism, and nepotism, struggling to secure their positions in specific areas of the administration, which were strictly controlled by the Russians.

The Soviet ethno-federalist administrative structure was supplemented with yet another grand project, namely creating Soviet identity for all the inhabitants of the Soviet Union. However, this cosmopolitan identity was not only functional in forming the Soviet *nomenclatura* but was also successful in creating a new cross ethnic/national identity, unifying all those who challenged the practice of Soviet authoritarian socialism.

Nevertheless, by the mid-1980s, and during the Gorbachev years of *glasnost* and *perestroika*, an increasing tendency towards national exclusiveness and ethno-centrism was developed, undermining the very core of the Soviet identity. One of the main representations of such change was witnessed in Almaty in December 1986, when the Soviet Politburo dismissed the long-serving General Secretary of the Communist Party of

Kazakhstan, Konaev; an ethnic Kazakh was replaced by Kolbin, an ethnic Russian. This resulted in the emergence into the streets of Almaty of tens of thousands of Kazakhs, protesting against Moscow's decision. In the seventy-year history of the Soviet Union, this was evidently the first incident that sent off political shockwaves in the Kremlin. The ensuing political disturbances rapidly spread throughout the periphery, affecting major cities such as Ferghana, Tbilisi, Baku, and Tashkent.

These remarkable events in the early days of Gorbachev's period in power seriously undermined the very notion of the cosmopolitan Soviet identity which was inspired by the Bolsheviks' grand project. Almost immediately, the anti-centre stance of the periphery developed into violent confrontation amongst the diverse ethnic groups, who had until then pretended to coexist, confirming the Soviet stereotype of socialist comradeship for many decades. Moscow began to be addressed by demands from the non-titular ethnic groups for their diminished rights to self-determination. This resulted in a jeopardizing of the most immediate interests of the titular ethnic groups, who had long endeavoured to establish a homogeneous territorial entity.

The intertwined fate of the Soviet republics symbolized the Russian *matryoshka* model, in which each entity was unavoidably connected to all others. Accordingly, the core concept was to align the peripheries' goals and objectives to outcomes that strictly followed Moscow's strategic agenda. It was, however, plausible that institutional inconsistency and political instability in one entity would almost immediately have a critical effect in another, turning not only peripheries against the core but also peripheries against other peripheries and leaving the Soviet Union suffused with active political resentment.

On the eve of the Soviet fall, the call for a pluralistic society within the framework of a democratic nation-state was the most plausible choice by some local intelligentsias, who in the Soviet era were affiliated to various dissident caucuses. Nevertheless, a brand of titular ethnic group soon dominated the initial democratic call, denying the very basic rights of the non-titular ethnic groups.

Concealed ethno-nationalism was, therefore, hoisted to a position of territorial nationalism, where the titular ethnic groups enjoyed the status of the sole nation. Nostalgia towards an imagined past and ancient glory found most of its cultural counterparts in the nation's genealogical roots. Ethnic continuity and ethnic recurrence of nation is often bonded with territorial associations and linguistic affiliations. Evidently, such practice of identity-building could only evolve into ethnic conflict. Following the demise of the Soviet Union, the Abkhazians and Ossetians turned against the newly independent Georgian state; the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh seceded from the republic of Azerbaijan; and the Chechens challenged the Russian colonial rule acrimoniously. All these bitter episodes made one of the darkest pages of the history of the Caucasus a terrible reality, threatening the security of the entire region.

The last days of Soviet rule and the early years of the post-Soviet era have been the subject of many academic as well as non-academic studies. The fall of the Soviet Union, the diversity in the process of disintegration, the persistence of pre-Soviet legacies, as well as the acuteness of the Soviet and post-Soviet crises in refashioning the socio-politico-economic structures of the region are amongst the many topics that are still confronting researchers from many disciplines.

Amongst those who have contributed to conducting scholarly research into the historical, social, and cultural impact of the demise of the Soviet Union is Georgi

Derluigian. His *Bourdieu's Secret Admirer in the Caucasus* is undoubtedly one of the most engaging endeavours in the field. As a student of Immanuel Wallerstein, Derluigian assesses the validity and application of Wallerstein's world-systems analysis by investigating the political life of Musa Shanib, a local Caucasian intellectual, who changed his career from being an academic with a particular interest in the sociology of Pierre Bourdieu, to becoming a radical nationalist figure. Born in Kabardian, a small Muslim ethnic community in the centre of the Caucasus, Musa Shanib then adopted the Soviet cosmopolitan name of Yuri Muhammedovich Shanibov. During the late 1960s, following Khrushchev's anti-Stalinist campaign, he identified himself with the dissident intellectual circles that were almost simultaneously emerging throughout the Soviet Union.

Indeed, the political background of many leaders and activists in the Caucasus and central Asia, during the last turmoil-filled year of Gorbachev's term, links with the same dissident circles that, later on, resorted to nationalism as a means of mobilizing their peoples. In Georgia, Shakespearean scholar, Zviad Gamsakhurdia became President in 1990 and, in Azerbaijan, Abulfaz Elçibay, a scholar well-versed in the Arabic language, together with his companions, mostly members of the Azerbaijan Academy of Sciences, founded the Azerbaijani Popular Front in 1990. The latter became the first elected non-communist President of Azerbaijan in 1992. Shanib, too, opted for radical nationalism during the breakdown of the Soviet Union. Like his fellow nationalists in Georgia and Azerbaijan, Shanib rapidly climbed the political hierarchy to be elected as the first President of the Confederation of Mountain People of the Caucasus.

Nonetheless, the category of ethno-nationalism that was promoted by Shanib and his nationalist counterparts across the border did not last long. By the mid 1990s, the political life of Shanib's generation had almost come to an end. In December 1993, Zviad Gamsakhurdia died under mysterious circumstances while he was engaged in a bitter political battle with the Moscow-backed government in Tbilisi. In Azerbaijan in 1993, the presidency of Abulfaz Elçibay ended after a year through a coup d'état engineered by yet another veteran member of the Soviet *nomenclatura*. Also in 1993, following the Abkhazian war, what was left of the Mountain Confederation was merely a name. In the years following, Shanib finally ended up in internal exile. He then returned to an academic career teaching sociology.

The unfortunate ends of Gamsakhurdia, Elçibay, and Shanib were, however, not rare phenomena. Throughout the Caucasus and central Asia, the return to power of the Soviet *nomenclatura* demonstrated remarkably that the Soviet legacy still weighed heavily on the newly-established republics. From Putin, to Aliev, to Karimov, or to Nazarbayev, the Soviet *nomenclatura* attested that they could, indeed, be more nationalist than their Soviet dissident opponents, if circumstances necessitated. Derluigian's narrative discourse accentuates this by emphasizing certain aspects of the harsh reality of politics in the Caucasus and central Asia.

What can be deduced from Derluigian's work is that even profound changes in the political sphere do not automatically lead to the subjectivity and outlook that shapes social transformation to critical questioning. In the case of the Soviet Union, at least, the root of this subjectivity cannot be exposed in the political sphere alone, but rather in the more obscure and uncongenial layers of the Soviet bureaucracy that still form post-Soviet societies' state machinery.

Although such a diverse and hefty theoretical engagement may hamper the ability of the average non-academic reader to grasp the core concepts behind the alluring yet illusive title

of Derluigian's book, she would certainly be impressed by his insight into one the most significant episodes of twentieth-century world history. The core of Derluigian's investigation, however, takes the reader far beyond the domain of sociology, dealing with the broader consequences of the failure of those states employing developmentalist ideologies and strategies.

Derluigian's attempt to open a new window of opportunity for further investigation into the evolving nature of concepts such as ethno-cultural diversity, socio-political change, and global unrest is, indeed, praiseworthy. If his study does not stretch enough to answer all the lingering questions about the nature of these massive socio-political changes in the dying years of the twentieth century, it allows us to address several other related concerns, the importance of which may well transcend the mere study of *Bourdieu's Secret Admirer in the Caucasus*.

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BREMAN, JAN. *Labour Bondage in West India from Past to Present*. Oxford University Press, New Delhi [etc.] 2007. xi, 216 pp. Rs. 525.00.; £18.99; DOI: 10.1017/S0020859008063360

In *Labour Bondage in West India*, Jan Breman returns to many of the issues which have been raised in his earlier writings, but with a difference. By going back into the historical antecedents of bondage in the pre-colonial period and tracing the politics of reform and abolition in the colonial period he deepens and sharpens many of the arguments which appeared in his classic work, *Patronage and Exploitation: Changing Agrarian Relations in South Gujarat, India* (Berkeley, CA, 1974), more than thirty years ago.

In the opening chapter Breman traces the processes by which agrarian expansion and colonization led to the expropriation and marginalization of tribal groups. While the agrarian classes were concentrated in the central plain area of Gujarat, tribal groups like the Chodhras, Gamits, and Dhodhias continued to practise shifting cultivation in the hilly region to the east well into the colonial period. The Dublas, a category of farm servants in south Gujarat, were in contrast subjugated and de-tribalized much earlier. The extension of agricultural cultivation in the south Gujarat plains, long before colonial rule, was based on the increasing subordination of Dublas to the dominant caste of Anavil Brahmins. The Brahmanization of the latter, Breman emphasizes, was predicated on the servitude of the former. In the course of the eighteenth century a group of Anavils, categorized as Desais, acquired dominance in rural society through their role as intermediaries or revenue farmers. Conditions in eighteenth-century south Gujarat, Breman argues, were typical of a frontier society with an over-taxed peasantry continuously on the move, fleeing from the burden of taxation.

In his analysis of the system of labour bondage in chapter 2, Breman reiterates an argument powerfully made in *Patronage and Exploitation*: the original contract of bondage, he emphasizes, was not made under duress. The Dubla consents; he accepts an advance from the landowner and thus commits himself to working for the master: "By accepting the advance the Dubla became a *hali*, (servant) committing himself to work for the master." He cultivates his master's fields and does any other work the master requires. The contract of bondage included the entire family of the *hali* – his wife and children had to also serve the master. A contract once made was impossible to revoke. The *hali* could