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14th Annual Symposium of the
Consortium for Asian and African Studies
October 24th-25th, 2024

Proceedings

Proceedings of the 14th Annual Symposium of the Consortium for Asian and African Studies (CAAS)

Published on Friday April 18th, 2025

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Populist Reason for Hindutva, Islamophilia and the Bahujan Democracy

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Abstract

How the nature of democratic societies is grasped has profound consequences for pursuing democratic politics. By developing a novel way of analyzing democratic societies, Laclau and Mouffe have radicalized the imaginary of democratic action. Their approach holds special significance for contemporary Indian society in which traditionally powerful social classes have developed a certain populist method of politics that has so far managed to tame the democratic aspirations of the socially and economically powerless. This populism involves constructing a political frontier on religious ground in order to subvert the caste frontier. It sustains a particular kind of Savarna Ashraaf minoritarian politics which denies the majority of people the fruits of democratic possibilities. In sustaining this politics, genocidal fantasies of Brahminic Savarna are hard to ignore. Equally disturbing is the potency of democracy in hosting fascist politics. The challenge here is to construct a people, the Bahujan, out of the subjugated majority which is at present fragmented in thousands of castes in addition to several linguistic and faith traditions. This paper is an attempt to work out the language of Bahujan democracy to overcome that challenge and offer an alternative to the Hindutva politics which is rooted in the grammar of South Asian society, history and political culture. Social, legal and political practices guarded by Islamophilic Ashraaf have been made the entry point for this paper. Yet, the emphasis throughout is on Ashraaf Savarna co-constitutive nature of the hindu-muslim horizon which facilitates Hindutva success at the cost of the Bahujan society. Thus, this paper is a reflection on social and political strategies to preempt genocidal formations through radical democratic politics.

Keywords: Populism, Democracy, Politics, Hegemony, Minority, Majority, Genocide, Co-constitutive

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"Democracy is grounded only on the existence of a democratic subject, whose emergence depends on the horizontal articulation between equivalential demands. An ensemble of equivalential demands articulated by an empty signifier is what constitutes a 'people.' So the very possibility of democracy depends on the constitution of a democratic 'people.'"[2]

Introduction

No society can ever escape from the totalizing effects of its constituent parts. Nor can the parts be constituted outside the society worthy of a name. Mutual imbrication between parts and the whole is precariously achieved through hegemonic game in which a part, without ceasing to be part, becomes the whole, and the whole is absorbed by the parts to produce successive society effects. This hegemonic game is played under the shadow of contingency, antagonism and power which makes it an inexhaustible source of social and political meaning. Here the social ultimately reveals itself as contingently articulated political inscription. This inscription is realized by the logic of difference and a chain of equivalence with an antagonistic frontier against the constitutive outside splitting the social into 'us' versus 'them' polarity. It means that no individual or community gets created without power relations. But, for the same reason, nor is the individual or community ever completely powerless to take affective action in relation to the hegemonic order or social totality. However, the displacement of an existing hegemonic order by a new order is not guaranteed by some immanent laws of history. Everything depends on the political articulation that contingent historical subjects are able to make and their radical investment in throwing it into the discourses of hegemonic struggle. These are some important conclusions drawn by Laclau and Mouffe with the object of radicalizing democratic life.[3] This paper is an attempt to use their social and political theory to explore the Hindutva phase of Indian democracy from its contingent origins to its current dominance. It is specifically focused on the

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2 Ernesto Laclau, "On Populist Reason," p. 156 (Verso, London, 2005).

3 For a detailed conceptual detour of these conclusions see, Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, "Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a radical democratic politics" (Verso, London, 1985); Ernesto Laclau, "New Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time" (Verso, London, 1990); Chantal Mouffe, "The Return of the Political" (Verso, London, 1993); Ernesto Laclau, "Emancipation(s)" (Verso, London, 1996); Chantal Mouffe, "The Democratic Paradox" (Verso London, 2000); Ernesto Laclau, "On Populist Reason" (Verso, London, 2005); David Howarth ed., "Ernesto Laclau: Post Marxism, Populism and Critique" (Routledge, New York, 2015).

totalizing effects generated by Ashraaf[4] discourse of Islamophilia on different social and political formations since the advent of Hindutva. This paper focuses on several inconsistencies and contradictions induced by Ashraaf practices in the articulation of Bahujan democracy as an alternative to the Hindutva project. It is further focused on those existing legal and social practices guarded by Ashraaf which expand the distances among constituent Bahujan groups, thereby jeopardizing the prospects of Bahujan democracy.

At present, the Indian social and political imaginary is characterized by the BJP-RSS led vocabulary of pro-hindu nationalist politics which is denounced as an anti-muslim majoritarian politics led by the Congress party and its allies. Scholars aligned to the former present their discourse as hindu nationalism, and intellectuals sympathetic to the latter express themselves as secular, liberal progressives encompassing both capacious hindu and ordinary muslim. It is clear that hindu and muslim form two poles around which all social and political meaning radiates as far as the language of electoral politics and democratic resistance is concerned. Social and political articulations outside of these channels are simply submerged under the weight of the hindu-muslim cacophony. It is widely acknowledged that the present hindu pole is cathected by the Hindutva ideology systematically articulated about a century ago. Articulated in the backdrop of competitive reformist, revivalist movements led by Ashraaf Savarna, Savarkar's Hindutva was explicitly posited as a defense against the militant triumphalism of resurgent Ashraaf performing as "muslim minority" aided and abetted by the colonial patronage.[5] Sayed Ashraaf triumphalism in the north, rooted as it was in the memory of military and theological superiority recalling preceding centuries, engendered a profound sense of lack animated by memories of shame and humiliation among the Brahmin Savarna. This lack must be overcome by the Brahmin Savarna performing as "hindu majority" at any cost to simultaneously crush

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[4] Note on the terminology used in this paper: The social term "Ashraaf" has been used to refer to upper castes who self-identify as socially superior castes by birth using Islamic symbolism. The term "Savarna" has been used to refer to upper castes who self-identify as socially superior castes by birth using Brahminic symbolism. Jointly they have been referred to as "Alpjan." The sociopolitical term "Bahujan" has been used to signify the Dalit, Pichda, Ati-Pichda, Adivasi and Pasmanda groups. The legal terms "Scheduled Castes" (SC), "Scheduled Tribes" (ST) and "Other Backward Classes" (OBCs) have been used in their present legal sense whereby Pichda, Ati-Pichda and Pasmanda are absorbed in the OBC category while tribal Pasmanda are included in the ST category but Dalit Pasmanda are excluded from the SC category.

[5] Hamid Umar Dalwai, "Muslim Politics in Secular India" (Nachiketa, Maharashtra, 1968); Mushir U. Haq, "Muslim Politics in Modern India" (Meenakshi Prakashan, Meerut, 1970); Mushirul Hasan, "Indian Muslims Since Independence: In Search of Integration and Identity," Third World Quarterly, Vol. 10, No. 2, pp. 818-842 (1988); B R Ambedkar, "Pakistan or the Partition of India," Vol 08, pp. 265-268 (BAWS, Maharashtra, 1946).

Bahujan movements inaugurated by Mahatma Jotirao Phule.[6] In this sense, the idea of Hindutva was constituted against the theocratic supremacist notions of the post-1870s Ashraaf gentry as the constitutive outside simultaneously subsuming the Bhaujan masses as the hapless inside.[7]

However, as no inside can be constituted by escaping the "presence by absence" of that which is outside, the outside throbs at the very heart of all that is inside.[8] In other words, although the dagger of Ashraaf norms and values cut and shaped the heart of Hindutva articulation, yet even after that dagger was partially removed by partition, it was condemned to live and breathe Ashraaf militancy in saffron color. This is one important reason why a century later militant Hindutva triumphalism so closely mirrors the Ashraaf theodicy of the early 20th century in its monotheistic avatar.[9] This is not to suggest that the Brahmin Savarna didn't have a heart before—they surely did, and a very castest and patriarchal one.[10] However, Gandhi Nehru secular nationalism and Savarkarite communal nationalism shared one important characteristic feature. Both projects were built on the systematic repression of the anti-caste democratic aspirations represented by the Phule-Ambedkar-Ansari-Periyar quartet. These aspirations far exceeded Gandhian and Savarkarite attempts to completely absorb them and eventually erupted in the 1980s in the form of various Bahujan anti-caste movements which the secular liberal camp of Savarna Ashraaf could no longer contain. This gave the conservative Brahmin Savarna of the Hindutva camp a renewed sense of urgency. At this juncture, Ashraaf-propagated Islamophilia, preserved as "the permanent muslim minority," again emerged as the most reliable building block for the Hindutva project as a "return of the repressed histories of caste."[11]

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6 See, Jotirao Phule, "Slavery" (Education Department, Maharashtra, 1873) and "The Whipcord of the Cultivators" (Education Department, Maharashtra, 1881); Gail Omvedt, "Jotirao Phule and the Ideology of Social Revolution in India," Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. 6, No. 37 (1971).

7 For the argument that "Hinduism" itself acquired its naming and meaning in an effort to distinguish social practices from what was named and identified as "Islam," see, David N. Lorenzen, "Who Invented Hinduism," Comparative Studies in Society and History, Vol. 41, No. 4, pp. 630-659 (1999).

8 See Note 2, pp. 133 to 140.

9 For the ideological affinity of liberal Hinduism and conservative Hindutva see, Anustup Basu, "Hindutva as Political Monotheism" (Duke University Press, London, 2020); Jyotirmaya Sharma, "Hindutva: Exploring the Idea of Hindu Nationalism" (Harper Collins, New Delhi, 2018); Perry Anderson, "The Indian Ideology" (Verso, London, 2015); Prakash Chandra Upadhyay, "The Politics of Indian Secularism," Modern Asian Studies, Vol. 26, No. 4. pp. 815-853 (1992); and Gyanendra Pandey, "The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India" (OUP, New Delhi, 1990).

10 BR Ambedkar, "Caste in India: Mechanism, Genesis and Development," Vol. 1 pp. 3-22 (BAWS, Maharashtra, 1916); B R Ambedkar, "What Congress and Gandhi Have Done to the Untouchables," Vol 9 pp. 1-297 (BAWS, Maharashtra, 1945); G. Aloysius, "Nationalism Without a Nation in India" (OUP, New Delhi, 1998); Braj Ranjan Mani, "Debrahmanising History" (Manohar, New Delhi, 2005).

11 For a similar pattern of Bahujan mobilization followed by communal violence in the period between 1880 and 1947, see Dilip M. Menon, "The Blindness of Insight: Essays on Caste in Modern India," pp. 1-31 (Navayana, Chennai, 2006).

Ashraaf Islamophilia as the Erasure of Democratic Language

Once the British began to gradually introduce limited representative government in India from the late 19th century, Ashraaf began to close themselves against democracy around certain Islamophilic ideas. I will attempt here to briefly elaborate the phenomenon named "Islamophilia" from its present sedimented meaning which will be used throughout this essay. Islamophilia can be defined as a sense of superiority which Ashraaf assert over everyone who does not conform to their notion of society. For an Islamophile, it is not enough that someone considers all religions to be equally valid, does not believe in any religion or even believes in some form of Islam. One must believe in the same version of religion that is held sacred by Ashraaf to be worthy of equal treatment and dignity. Integral to this sense of the sacred are patriarchal notions of society. Thus, Ashraaf mark themselves by a triple sense of superiority: caste,[12] religion[13] and gender.[14] Whether the sources of such supremacist sense are theological, colonial, epistemological, social, political or cultural can be explored through different disciplines and channels. However, the problem remains that from whichever side the question of democracy is broached with Ashraaf, it gets stuck in Islamophilia. Ashraaf, owing to their triple sense of superiority, can not make any sincere attempt to establish a chain of equivalence with different sections of society considered inferior in their view. As a result of this blockage, Ashraaf could not build a majority with any group that falls outside of their comfort zone.[15] For to build a majority one must accept as equal, at least in principle, those with whom equivalence is sought to be established. At the least, building a social and political majority involves voluntarily diluting some of the claims of one's own superiority. Inherent to this process is molding entrenched social and cultural practices to make space for the "other" who is sought to be politically aligned and socially accommodated. As such adaptation and molding is done willingly for strategic and hegemonic purposes it is experienced as an autonomous euphoric enterprise rather than forceful imposition.

However, for Islamophile Ashraaf anyone who does not believe in their triple notion of superiority is unworthy of dignified social engagement. No wonder democracy becomes an object of

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12 Khalid Anis Ansari, "Revisiting the Minority Imagination: An Inquiry into the Anticaste Pasmanda-Muslim Discourse in India," Critical Philosophy of Race, Vol. 11, No. 1, pp. 120-147 (2023); Papiya Ghosh, "Muhajirs and the Nation: Bihar in the 1940s," pp. 141-161 (Routledge, New Delhi, 2009); Ali Anwar, "Masawat Ki Jung" (Vani Prakashan, New Delhi, 2001); Masood Alam Falahi, "Hindustan Mein Zaat-Paat Aur Musalman" (Al Qazi, New Delhi, 2007); Imtiaz Ahmad, "Caste and Social Stratification among Muslims in India" (Manohar, New Delhi, 1973).

13 See Note 5.

14 Firdous A Siddiqui, "A Struggle for Identity: Muslim Women in United Provinces" (CUP, New Delhi, 2014).

15 A few occasions where Ashraaf did reach out to groups falling outside their comfort zone in the 19th and 20th centuries were motivated by Islamophilic ideals. See Barbara D. Metcalf, "Islamic Revival in British India: Deoband, 1860-1900" (PUP, Princeton, NJ, 1982).

disdain in their world. In terms of practical action, all that they can think of is to try and establish the supremacy of their version of Islam, undergirded by castiest and patriarchal notions. Sayed Ashraaf remain distinctly uncomfortable in any gathering which does not honor their self-righteous supremacism. The presence of a religiously different person, an independent woman, a political Pasmanda or a glass of wine is enough to shatter their confidence. An Islamophile Ashraaf, for all practical purposes, is a socially, culturally and politically crippled man. It implies that Ashraaf can approach with confidence only those persons or groups who are already properly converted in their view. As Ashraaf women are maximally converted to the creed of Ashraaf men, the Ashraaf chain of equivalence begins and ends with their womenfolk. Is it surprising then why Ashraaf have organized and agitated most successfully on issues which militate against those women who they claim to be their own. This mode of thinking invariably pushes Ashraaf into frantic religious and misogynist campaigns.[16]

Finding an Islamophilic majority hard to come by, Ashraaf turn to preserving whatever can give them an illusion of supremacy, such as segregated educational institutions, a secluded Madrasa system, confessional social and political organizations, communal and patriarchal personal laws and so on. Hence, there's could only be a conservative minoritarian cultural enterprise. This is nothing but the logic of self-imposed apartheid.[17] In Ambedkar's prescient words, "An anti-social spirit is found wherever one group has 'interests of its own' which shut it out from full interaction with other groups, so that its prevailing purpose is protection of what it has got."[18] In this process they often cling to some of the most reactionary antidemocratic language and practices. But through their obduracy, Ashraaf do manage to contaminate the social and linguistic practices of every other group interested in playing the "political game" in a democratic context.[19]

The effects of Islamophilic Ashraaf on the experience and practice of Indian democracy needs to be specifically grasped in order to develop a viable alternative to Hindutva.[20] In the discourse of Laclau and Mouffe, democracy means successive attempts to politically construct a people by establishing a chain of equivalence with heterogeneous groups in competition with similar other

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16 Politics around the Muslim Personal Law (Shariat) Application Act, 1937, to the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Act, 1986, rested on these premises.

17 Ernesto Laclau, "Emancipation(s)," pp. 48-49 (Verso, London, 1996).

18 BR Ambedkar, "Annihilation of Caste," Vol. 1, p. 52 (BAWS, Maharashtra, 1936).

19 Here the expression political game is used as a competitive and hegemonic construction of 'a people' with the aim of occupying the universal place of power in the Laclauian sense. See, Ernesto Laclau, "Why Constructing a People Is the Main Task of Radical Politics," Critical Inquiry, Vol. 32, No. 4, pp. 646-680 (2006).

20 For a similar work albeit with different social categories and methodology see, Anupama Rao, "The Caste Question: Dalits and the Politics of Modern India" (University of California Press, London, 2009).

attempts. Establishment of a chain of equivalence with heterogeneous groups entails moving from constitutive heterogeneity to symbolic homogeneity by an appeal to some principle of equality. Viewed from this perspective, the practice of democracy is inevitably contaminated by Ashraaf refusal to come to terms with democracy. If Ashraaf presence in the social must be marked by their superiority over the rest and their refusal to partake in the game of democracy then all political players must adapt their game owing to this fixed pole. Avenues for appeal to some principle of equality gets limited by the fixity of this pole as all political players must always take this pole as one immutable unit. As a result, a large number of permutations and combinations are excluded from the democratic game of constructing "a people.". It is like handing over a canvas with a tree or chair already drawn on it to different painters. Any painting that can be made on such a canvas will inevitably be limited by the image prefixed on it. The creative talents or aesthetic sense of different painters can only find limited expression due to the limiting presence of that tree or the chair on the canvas.

By firmly fixing their position vis-a-vis democracy, Sayed Ashraaf mediate the very language in which democratic discourse could be articulated by different political formations. If pre-Gandhian Savarna wanted to make any political progress it had to be through Hindu-Muslim unity pacts mediated by the Ashraaf. For the Gandhian Congress to be converted into a mass movement it had to adopt Ashraaf-developed Khilafat vocabulary. Later, the language of secularism was adopted by a section of Savarna to counter Ashraaf, led by the Muslim League to a great extent.[21] Savarkarite Hindutva too was explicitly articulated against the Islamophilic Ashraaf militancy to fill the martial lack among the Brahminic Savarna.[22] The language of Hindutva acquired its discursive presence only as an inverted version of the Islamophilic vocabulary. Sayed Ashraaf emerged as the linchpin around whom the entire politics of India could be organized. Partition was its biggest casualty where Ashraaf Savarna utilized the hindu-muslim horizon to pursue their interests.[23]

Post-partition, the so-called Nehruvian consensus thrived on the language of secularism developed to placate Ashraaf self-conception on one hand and Hindutva votaries on the other. This form of secularism became such a natural horizon for politics that political parties with divergent

[21] Papiya Ghosh, "Muhajirs and the Nation: Bihar in the 1940s" (Routledge, New Delhi, 2009).

[22] This sense of lack is captured succinctly by Savarkar through the "militarize the hindu, hinduize the military" slogan. See V. D. Savarkar, "Six Glorious Epochs of Indian History," pp. 108-379 (Bal Savarkar, New Delhi, 1971) and "Essentials of Hindutva" (Smarak Trust, Pune, 1923). Also See, Vinayak Chaturvedi, "Hindutva and Violence: V. D. Savarkar and the Politics of History" (SUNY Press, Albany, 2022); Thomas Blom Hansen, "The Saffron Wave: Democracy and Hindu Nationalism in Modern India" (PUP, Princeton, 1999); Peter van der Veer, "Religious Nationalism: Hindus and Muslims in India" (University of California Press, Berkeley, CA, 2003).

[23] Ishtiaq Ahmed, "Jinnah: His Successes, Failures and Role in History" (Penguin, New Delhi, 2020); H M Seervai, "Partition of India: Legend and Reality" (Emmenem, Bombay, 1990).

ideologies competed to carry the tag of a secular party. It was particularly helpful for the Brahminic Savarna. Under pressure from anti-caste democratic discourse, Brahmin Savarna latched on to Ashraaf conceptions of a communal society, initially as Nehruvian consensus and later as Hindutva common sense. It is obvious that this "good cop, bad cop" play is enabled by the Ashraaf fixed pole of Islamophila. The repercussions of this play for the Bahujan society has been devastating so far. Savarna Ashraaf routinely deploy secular-communal theatrics to suppress Bahujan democratic aspirations and to keep them colonized. Thus, the reduction of democracy to a mere secular-communal slugfest goes on at a great cost to the Bahujan republic.

The erasure of democratic language has also created eviscerating effects on the Ashraaf themselves.[24] Deprived of the language to play the democratic power game, Ashraaf youth increasingly took to the underworld and mafiyahood to fulfill their power drive. The less audacious were left to express outrage from the comforts of congregational groups against real and perceived insults to the prophet, the book and similar other non-material facets of religion. All this had a terrorizing effect on the society at large, creating an ideal breeding ground for Hindutva 2.0.[25] Thus, the terrain for Hindutva success was maintained steadfastly by Sayed Ashraaf in post-partition India as well.

Hindutva as a Counter to Islamophile Ashraaf and the Bahujan Democracy

"People" as a category for mobilization to secure power emerges with the inauguration of representative democracy. As a result, the stage is set for a people versus people confrontation; that is, the practice of populism. Under colonial epistemic and administrative presence, hindu and muslim people were co-constituted through Savarna Ashraaf leadership.[26] Savarna Ashraaf took a hostile turn over the share in British power from the 1870s onward by posing as the representative of the people. Articulated in this background, Hindutva quickly became a democratic demand in the Laclauian sense for a variety of heterogeneous groups.[27] From Dayanand to Vivekanand, from Aurobindo to Tilak Savarkar, Hindutva ideology was gestated by the Brahminic Savarna in a formal struggle with Islamophilic Ashraaf.[28] If Hindutva politics is to be encapsulated in just one slogan it has to be "Hindu

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24 Pratinav Anil, "Another India" (Hurst & Company, London, 2023).

25 Anustup Basu, "Hindutva as Political Monotheism," pp. 195-207 (Duke University Press, London, 2020); J. Barton Scott, "Slandering the Sacred," pp. 1-75 (The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2023).

26 For philosophical arguments highlighting co-constitutive complexities of colonial and postcolonial agency, see Olúfẹ́mi Táíwò, "Against Decolonisation: Taking African Agency Seriously" (Hurst & Company, London, 2022). Also see Joel Lee, "Deceptive Majority: Dalits, Hinduism, and Underground Religion," pp. 1-30 (CUP, New York, 2021).

27 See Note 2, pp. 125-128.

28 See Note 9.

Khatre Me Hain" (HKMH), that is, hindus are in danger from Ashraaf construed as muslims.[29] From this perspective, Hindutva politics from the 1920s until partition was presented as a defensive demand to create equivalence with diverse groups organized around caste, religion, language, tribe and region. Partition not only vindicated its contingent origins but at the same time consecrated its existence. For a few decades after partition, Hindutva sentiment operated both from inside and outside of the Congress party.[30] However, from the 1980s, the Hindutva faction was driven more by an urge to apply brakes on Bahujan democratic progress. The evolution of Dalit and Pichda politics into Bahujan and Mandal movements threatened the Brahmin Savarna hegemony like never before.[31] From this moment on, Hindutva renewed its anti-muslim populism as anti-Dalit or anti-Bahujan populism could backfire due to the democratic nature of these formations. With anti-muslim populism there was no such danger, as the muslim pole, kept unchanged by Sayed Ashraaf, had a proven track record of not resorting to serious democratic politics even in the face of extreme brutality. Also, the long and traumatic memories of Ashraaf Savarna clashes leading up to the partition could easily be tapped to provide affective charge to the anti-muslim populism. Moreover, Ashraaf agitation against Shahbano judgment gave ample evidence for the existence of the undemocratic muslim pole, which smart Hindutva strategists promptly weaponized through an institutionalized riot system.[32] This is also the time when a conservative backlash against the egalitarian drive of the welfare state was shaping up in the form of neoliberalism globally.[33] Dislocations caused by neoliberal policies from the 1990s onward prepared the ground for Hindutva propulsion into a higher orbit in 2014 in alliance with the global power elite, keeping the hindu-muslim binary as its casting background.[34] Throughout this entire journey, Hindutva was consistently informed by the double logic of confronting Ashraaf aggression on one hand, and suppressing Bahujan aspirations on the other. Thus, the source of the post-partition HKMH jibe lies at the expanse of Islamophilic Ashraaf and Bahujan democratic adduction accounting for the renewed sense of urgency, anger and heightened activity which the Hindutva brigade has demonstrated from the 1980s onwards.

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29 See Note 24 at p. 163.

30 Achin Vanaik, "The Rise of Hindu Authoritarianism: Secular Claims, Communal Realities" (Verso, London, 2017); Christophe Jaffrelot, "Hindu Nationalism: A Reader" (PUP, Princeton, 2007).

31 Arvind Rajagopal, "Politics after Television: Hindu Nationalism" (CUP, Cambridge 2001).

32 Paul R Brass, "The Production of Hindu-Muslim Violence in Contemporary India" (OUP, New Delhi 2004); Shekhar Gupta, Inderjit Badhwar, Farzand Ahmed, "Shah Bano Judgment Renders Muslims a Troubled Community, Torn by an Internal Rift" India Today, January 31, 1986.

33 Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, "Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics," pp. 188-193 (Verso, London 2014).

34 Anand Teltumbde, "Republic of Caste:Thinking Equality in the Time of Neoliberal Hindutva" (Navayana, Chennai 2018).

Bahujan democratic aspirations have consistently challenged the Brahmin Baniya hegemony, from Phule onward.[35] The Bahujan movement poses a real danger to the Brahminic Savarna inasmuch as it threatens to unveil them as being at the core of the Hindutva project and re-symbolize Indianness with anti-caste democratic norms and values. Therefore, BJP-RSS, as the vanguard of Brahminic hegemony, do speak partial truth when they raise the HKMH slogan. Once you replace the source of danger implied in that slogan from muslim to Bahujan, the danger becomes palpable. However, this Bahujan danger could be easily displaced to the muslim as the Ashraaf, through their anti-democratic practices, keep producing a symbolically aggressive muslim camp. Violent, threatening slogans like "Gustakhe Rasool Ki Ek Saza, Sar Tan Se Juda Sar Tan Se Juda"[36] (there is only one punishment for insult to prophet, beheading, beheading) create the same effect as the equally diabolical slogan, "Jab Mulle Kaate Jayenge, Tab Ram Ram Chillayenge"[37] (when muslims will be cut into pieces, they will chant ram ram). During such periodic performances by the Savarna Ashraaf, the Bahujan is reduced to making benign legal and moral appeals, deserting the political terrain completely to be minted by the Hindutva forces. For Hindutva votaries, revolting against Sayed Ashraaf is an easy escape from the self-deprecating challenge of annihilating caste. Caste can be comfortably dismissed as anti-Hindutva while they are busy fiercely outraging against the muslims hegemonized by Islamophilie Ashraaf.

In this background, Hindutva strategists could easily design their key agenda items, like Babri mosque/Ram temple, Article 370, and the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) perfectly anticipating the response of every political player constituted under the stubborn spell of Islamophile Ashraaf. This is such a winning arrangement for the Hindutva players: while they know in advance all the possible moves that their adversaries could make to counter them they remain free to experiment and improvise their strategy. On their part, Ashraaf confined their social and political agenda to the preservation of Muslim Personal Law (MPL), the Waqf system and Minority Educational Institutions (MEI), including the archaic Madarsa system. These issues appear to be in the nature of self harm at first glance but there is some degree of complexity involved in it. The triple axis on which Islamophila rests implies that the major burden of MPL is actually borne by the women and Pasmanda sections. Issues concerning maintenance, triple talaq and four marriages under MPL affect women and not Ashraaf men. These

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35 See Notes 6, 10, 12 & 30.

36 Gulam Rasool Dehlvi, "Who to Blame for the 'Sar Tan se Juda' Fatwa?," SabranIndia, October 12, 2022. Available at: https://sabrangindia.in/who-blame-sar-tan-se-juda-fatwa/

37 Hanan Zaffar and Hasan Akram, "Anti-Muslim Slogans Raised in Indian Capital, Suspects in Custody," Aljazeera, August 10, 2021. Available at: https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/8/10/india-anti-muslim-slogans-hindu-groups-new-delhi.

issues have been fought for with totemic ferocity by Ashraaf men, often by manufacturing the consent of women deploying Islamophilic influence; hijab is only the latest addition to this list. Similarly, MEIs providing modern education exclude Pasmanda men and women and condemn them to the Madarsa system due to their financial and social limitations. The burden of communal violence too falls overwhelmingly on Pasmanda men and women.[38] On the other hand, Brahminic Savarna valorize and mimic Islamophilic Ashraaf to symbolically reproduce the hindu camp. Thus, Ashraaf Savarna jointly colonize muslimness and hinduness to kill the prospects of Bahujan democracy. Sadly, the proponents of Bahujan democracy, despite all the evidence from the Pasmanda movement, dread to take on the castiest core of the hindu- muslim joint enterprise. They prefer to isolate Brahmin Savarna from this enterprise for contestation but seek to preserve the norms and values of Sayed Ashraaf in the guise of protecting minority rights. Such an approach leads to glaring inconsistencies and subverts the Bahujan project in multiple ways manifested in weird, contradictory, self-defeating conceptual and institutional practices.

Contradictions and Inconsistencies Induced by Ashraaf in the Bahujan Discourse

As Ashraaf mediates the language of democracy for all players by refusing to play the game of democracy, the Bahujan language of democracy too has been affected in peculiar ways. Let's take the example of the All India Backward and Minority Communities Employees Federation (BAMCEF) to demonstrate this tendency. Over the period of its existence from the late 1970s, BAMCEF broke into many factions but they all share the common goal of organizing the lower-caste majority against the anti-democratic impulses of the upper-caste minority. However, all the factions of BAMCEF keep courting the "minority" community though they construe it in a religious sense. So, while the larger aim of BAMCEF is to organize against the powerful "caste minority," it ends up reinforcing only the existence of a "religious minority" by its title and mobilization approach. Such an emphasis on the existence of a religious minority, that too muslim by all means, further establishes Brahmin Savarna as the leader of the "religious majority." How so? Because there is no way for a muslim minority to be identified as such without reference to some religious majority. Who can that religious majority be except for the hindu majority and who has assumed the leadership of this symbolic majority if not Brahmin Savarna! In order to avoid this outcome some BAMCEF factions have developed a linguistic sleight of hand. They claim that they are trying to organize SC, ST OBC and religious minorities

[38] Santosh Singh, "Almost All Victims of Mob Lynching, 'Bulldozer Culture' are Pasmanda Muslims," Indian Express, February 24, 2024.

converted from them. This is hardly any progress as one could always ask about the organizational leadership of the religious majority from SC, ST, OBC not so converted. That religious majority would still be a hindu majority and RSS-BJP its undisputed leader. No matter how much one stretches the definition, as long as the Bahujan movement retains the category of religious minority in its organizing principle, it is contaminated beyond recognition. This is not one isolated case of conceptual inconsistency by a one-off Bahujan organization. There are numerous other Bahujan organizations which keep strengthening, by their name and action, the very same class of people who they take to be their adversaries. Slogans like "Dalit-Muslim unity" or "Dalit-Pichda-Muslim unity" are some other forms of this malaise. The effects on Bahujan politics are similar, for if these unities are legitimate then Shudra-Hindu unity is also legitimate which again is a win-win situation for the Hindutva. How does such a glaring discrepancy keep recurring in Bahujan conceptualization? Enter the Islamophile Ashraaf. Ashraaf along with their Savarna counterparts establish and sustain the myth of muslims as a monolithic religious block without caste or hierarchy forever antagonistic to all forms of pantheistic traditions. Savarna strategists, full with the supply of frozen muslim, weaponize the HKMH slogan to avert the danger posed by the Bahujan movement. Bahujan strategists and activists, finding the muslim on antagonistic terms with the powerful Savarna, rush to rescue the damsel in distress. Ergo, the frozen muslim is incorporated into the Bahujan struggle as a distressed minority, muddling the entire Bahujan conceptualization as described above. The discursive grip of Islam understood as an egalitarian religion informed by an essentialist understanding of religion in general and the religion of Islam in particular contributes in ample measure to such a self-defeating approach.[39] Moreover, the presence of anti-democratic Ashraaf in the name of "religious minority" eats into the democratic character of the Bahujan camp, giving a significant edge to the Hindutva camp.

There is a more fundamental problem in trying to ingraft Ashraaf and Pasmanda jointly as a religious minority within the Bahujan movement. This has to do with the objective of establishing Bahujan democracy by annihilation of caste. If caste is to be annihilated, then it must be obliterated from all walks of life and from all sections of society. To include Ashraaf, who preserve caste through material, theological and political means, within the Bahujan movement is to preserve caste in a very large section of society. Caste order cannot be annihilated if the very movement which seeks to annihilate caste at the same time indulges in preserving it in the name of protecting a religious minority. Moreover, if caste-practicing Ashraaf can be mobilized in the name of "religious minority," what

[39] See Note 12.

justification can be given to exclude the caste-practicing Savarna minority? Will that not amount to discrimination against Savarna only on the basis of religion? To remain consistent with this logic, caste-practicing Savarna too will have to be included in the Bahujan movement. If such Savarna too are included within the Bahujan movement, who is left to be confronted at all?

Moreover, to say that there is casteism in any section of society today is to imply that there are caste and communal modes of identification in that section. The communal modes of identification could be present in antagonistic or sympathetic form but it is impossible to describe casteism without communalism anymore. Quality and quantity may vary from group to group, but caste order today imbibes both caste and communal elements. Ambedkar's century-old thesis that creation of caste order involved the superposition of endogamy on exogamy[40] can be reformulated to describe the present social order as involving the superposition of communalism over casteism.[41] Combining that with the effects of multiple social, cultural and political movements raging against caste for over a century begs a few questions about the nature of the present caste order itself. Did these movements effect any change and transformation in the nature and mechanism of caste? Was the caste order anywhere not shaken by the scathing critiques of Phule, Ambedkar, Ansari, Periyar?[42] Did Savarna Ashraaf increasingly not give communal color to the caste order to subvert such a critique? Did communal partition and the associated violence leave the caste structure untouched? What about periodic communal riots leading up to the Babri mosque demolition? What was the aim of the Ayodhya movement? Was it not an ambitious attempt to displace the caste sense of Brahmin Baniya power in relation to lower and middle castes to the communal sense of power in relation to the muslim other? Was not the symbolic inclusion of SC, ST and OBCs in that movement, from the laying of the first brick to the distribution of the first prasad, from soil collection to the making of trust and priests, to including 10 out of 15 Jajman/patron in prana pratishtha at Ayodhya temple directed against the Bahujan movement? Has communalism not displaced untouchability as the coercive force of caste order to a certain extent? Has communalism not emerged as the organizing principle of maintaining the caste order in contemporary times?[43] Whether untouchables are not being replaced with muslims as the 'constitutive outside" of the 21st-century caste order?[44] Under such circumstances, is it really possible

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40 B R Ambedkar, "Castes in India: Their Mechanism, Genesis and Development," Vol. 1, pp. 3-21 (BAWS 1936).

41 Dilip M. Menon, "The Blindness of Insight: Essays on Caste in Modern India" (Navayana, Chennai, 2006).

42 K. Veeramani, "Collected Works of Periyar E.V.R" (The Periyar Self-Respect Propaganda Institution, Chennai, 2007).

43 Anand Teltumbde, "Hindutva and Dalits: Perspectives for Understanding Communal Praxis" (SAGE, New Delhi, 2020).

44 Dilip Mandal, "Under BJP, Muslims Are Becoming New 'Bottom' of Society. It's a Message for Dalits, OBCs," The Print, April 22, 2022.

to dissolve the present caste order in any sense of the term without dismantling the structures of communalism as well? If not, then how justified is it to court Sayed Ashraaf and leave them in peace to co-breed caste and communal structures with Brahmin Savarna while the latter is singled out for special treatment? If communalism has become a necessary ruse to maintain the caste order, then how wise is it to leave untouched its co-author in the name of religious minority? Under these changed circumstances, either we will find the courage to take on the Islamophilic Ashraaf or watch helplessly the death of the Bahujan democratic dream.

Challenges to the Common Education System

What does it mean to take on the Ashraaf in order to progress towards the Bahujan democracy? There are quite a few specific issues. Let's take the fundamental Bahujan democratic ambition: the Common Education System (CES). One can not make any real progress towards CES without confronting the Ashraaf obsession with MEIs which is inscribed as a fundamental right under Article 30 of the constitution. MEIs, as they stand today, erect a solid wall of separation between different sections of the Bahujan class in four distinct ways. First, the rights of MEIs are invoked directly by Ashraaf Savarna to undercut steps towards the CES.[45] Second, MEIs providing modern education are used to deny reservation in admission and staff appointments to the SC, ST and OBC candidates despite the last two categories being formally inclusive of the minority category as well.[46] Third, MEIs are being used to constitutionalize the privatization of education since the early 1990s.[47] Fourth, MEIs of the Madarsa variety are so designed that no other section of the Bahujan except for helpless Pasmanda inhabit that space. The combined effect of such an arrangement is the creation of three exclusive educational spaces highly incompatible with Bahujan upbringing. One, MEI spaces providing modern education are shared by Ashraaf as muslims and some of their Savarna counterparts as hindus. Second, private educational spaces are almost exclusively occupied by the Brahmin Savarna. Third, the Madarsa variety of MEIs are almost exclusively populated by the financially weak Pasmanda. General public educational space is the only place where the possibility of joint Bahujan presence remains open. However, here too, Pasmanda remain conspicuous by their absence owing to the interruption caused by the above three

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45 See In Re Kerala Education Bill AIR 1958 SC 95.

46 This operation was conducted by the Supreme Court from In Re Kerala Education Bill AIR 1958 SC 95 to St. Stephen's College v. The University of Delhi AIR 1992 SC 1630.

47 T.M.A. Pai Foundation v. State of Karnataka, AIR 2003 SC 355. For detailed analysis of the judicial process behind these conclusions, see Ayaz Ahmad & Nachiketa Mittal, "Constitutive Functions of Minority Rights and Social Justice in India" Journal of the Indian Law Institute, Vol. 64, No. 3 (2022).

exclusive educational spaces. It is not difficult to see how this whole MEI business makes it impossible for different components of the Bahujan class to come together at common educational spaces and develop a shared language of Bahujan democracy. CES is crucial to transform sections of the Bahujan formation, dispersed by graded inequality, into a democratic Bahujan unity. Ashraaf Savarna keep up the business of MEIs in order to reproduce the "muslim," which in turn is made the constitutive outside of the "hindu," symbolically absorbing Dalit, Pichda, Ati-Pichda, Adivasi in its fold. Ashraaf through MEIs make the Bahujan unity so much more difficult than it already is.

Challenges to the Shared Family, Living and Spiritual Experience

Let's now turn to the social effects of Ashraaf obsession with MPLs. The strongest social relations generally are developed through familial ties. Ashraaf insistence on separate MPL means that the constituent parts of Bahujan class born into different religious worlds cannot easily form family relations with each other. The persistence of hindu-muslim laws is a huge source of their social and political reproduction. They contribute significantly to the feeling of permanent division on the basis of religion between Dalit, Pichda, Ati-Pichda and Adivasi on one hand and Pasmanda on the other. Add to that, periodic Ashraaf eruptions, such as the one against progressive Shahbano judgment or those in support of triple talaq, burqa/hijab, sharia law or protesting insults to prophet/holy book. No segment of Dalit Pichda could ever identify with such conservative reactionary agitations. Shrill Savarna love jihad, and Ghar Wapsi campaigns only add fuel to the fire. The effect again is reduction of Pasmanda combined with Ashraaf to muslim minority and part absorption of Dalit, Pichda, Ati-Pichda and Adivasi as hindu majority along with Brahmin Savarna. Once Ashraaf imposed MPL on one part of the society, the law for the remaining part had to be the "Hindu Code Bill." It didn't matter that the latter was spearheaded by Babasaheb Ambedkar himself, for there was no way he could name it the "Common Family Code." Where is the space for constructing Bahujan identity in such a scenario?

Ashraaf segregational practices are so pervasive that when the constitution reduces the question of social welfare and reform or throws open religious institutions of a public character to all classes and sections of Hindus inclusive of Sikh, Jaina and Buddhist religions, it hardly raises an eyebrow.[48] Whatever little shared spiritual space existed in the form of Sufi shrines or Mazar culture has been systematically cleansed of everyone except muslims by Devbandi, Wahabi, Tablighi, Shuddhi and Ghar Wapsi movements. Ashraaf ensure that even spiritual conversations remain strictly communal within

[48] Explanation II - sub-clause (b) of clause (2) of Article 25.

some version of the Islamic monotheistic imaginary. Those conversations ruthlessly denigrate everything remotely perceived as polytheistic or un-islamic. The Islamophilic Ashraaf cannot stand a Baudh Vihara, a Raidasiya/Kabir temple or even a modest bust or portrait of Phule, Ambedkar, Ansari or Periyar. Naturally, this creates an equivalence among Dalit, Pichda, Ati-Pichda and Adivasi polytheistic, monotheistic including atheistic spiritual traditions vis-a-vis the Brahmin Savarna. For the reasons discussed above, the segregation of living spaces among Bahujan groups along caste and religious lines is the work of Ashraaf to a great extent, although the violent contribution of Brahminic Savarna towards such segregation has risen considerably in recent times. Therefore, efforts to establish a Common Housing System for Bahujan communities must overcome Ashraaf Savarna joint resistance to it. Similarly, Buddhist, Muslim, Christian, Hindu, Sikh, Jain, Polytheistic, Atheistic, Rationalist and Agnostic faith traditions, as the internal diversity of the Bahujan class, must struggle against the joint Ashraaf Savarna resistance to them. A plurality of festive and spiritual aspects of religion may give in cheerfully to a more-the-merrier sobriquet. In any case, what needs to be contested is not that various Bahujan communities or Ashraaf Savarna practice similar or different religions, but that Ashraaf Savarna attempt to make religious difference "only or primary" principle of social organization. The latter is a definite power move to reserve the fruits of democracy exclusively for Savarna Ashraaf. Against this power move one can gainfully deploy Akeel Bilgrami's characterization of secularism as a clear political stance regarding religion only so far as it affects the polity, and leave the process of secularization to the wisdom of time.[49]

Several other linguistic, cultural and theocratic practices of Ashraaf produce communally reductive effects on the Bahujan discourse. For instance, it took decades for the Bahujan movement to establish Savitribai Phule as the first woman teacher and a great social reformer. Fatima Sheikh was also brought to life along the way as a co-teacher and supporter of women's education from the time when Sir Syed and Tilak were dead against it. For a long time Ashraaf Savarna ignored the contribution of Savitri Fatima. But after their legacy took hold among Bahujan activists, somehow Fatima Sheikh began to be endorsed as the first muslim woman teacher of India.[50] The effect of such a move on both the Bahujan icons is epiphenomenal. If Fatima Sheikh is the first "muslim"woman teacher of India then Savitrimai by default becomes the first "hindu" woman teacher of India. Brahminic Savarna could not be happier. The legacy of both stands dwindled, plucked out of the Bahujan universe and placed

[49] Akeel Bilgrami, "Secularism, Identity, and Enchantment," pp. 3-57 (Harvard University Press, Massachusetts, 2014).

[50] Kaleem Azeem, "फातिमा शेख का किरदार इतिहास में नजर क्यों नहीं आता?," January 20, 2022. Available at: https://kalimajeem.blogspot.com/2020/09/blog-post_10.html.

comfortably in the hegemonic hindu-muslim binary to serve Savarna Ashraaf interests. Thus, the limits of Bahujan discourse are firmly determined by Islamophile Ashraaf.

Social Totality Co-Constituted by Islamophilic Ashraaf and Brahminic Savarna

Multifarious social segregations installed and defended by the Islamophilic Ashraaf sustain the myth that "muslim" is a singular, monolithic whole beyond the pale of *caste as an enclosed class.*[51] Similar propaganda by the Brahminic Savarna produces the casteless "hindu"' unified against the muslim. Thus, Savarna Ashraaf guard the caste order through strong communal fencing. If the caste order is to be really shaken, then the communal fences must be brought down. However, undemocratic hegemonic Ashraaf practices ensure that the bulk of Dalit, Pichda, Ati-Pichda and Adivasi find greater equivalence and space sharing with Brahmin Savarna than Pasmanda Bahujan. Sometimes such spatial distances get manifested in active opposition to the measures aimed at reducing the distance within a particular Bahujan segment, like the removal of the communal bar from the SC list or the subclassification of reserved categories.[52] Under these conducive circumstances, how difficult is it for the resource-rich, organized and determined Brahmin Savarna to organize a section of Dalit, Pichda, Ati-Pichda and Adivasi against distant muslims, including Pasmanda, framed as a danger to the hindus? Is it really possible to build the Bahujan republic without establishing a clear frontier between the Bahujan majority (Dalit, Pichda, Ati-Pichda, Adivasi and Pasmanda) on one hand and the Alpjan minority (Brahminic Savarna and Islamophilic Ashraaf) on the other? It is essential to recognize that the Brahminic Savarna and Islamophilic Ashraaf constitute two antagonistic poles of the same discursive Alpjan formation operating against the Bahujan interests.[53] These Alpjan jointly reiterate the hindu-muslim horizon and trap the Bahujan democracy in it. Using "Alpjan" to encapsulate Savarna and Ashraaf has the practical advantage of covering the whole range of the ideological and organizational spread of the upper castes across the liberal secular, conservative communal and socialist communist spectrum. No group of people can be described as hegemonic without such an ideological and organizational spread.

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51 See Note 40, p. 15.

52 Khalid Anis Ansari, "Muslim Quota Row Deepening Fault Lines among Dalits," The Times of India, May 11, 2024; Chandraiah Gopani, "Categorisation of Scheduled Caste Reservations: An Ambedkarite Perspective," Prabuddha: Journal of Social Equality, Vol. 5, No. 1, pp. 40-51 (2021).

53 Ashis Nandy argues that they even share similar motivations and inhabit the same psychological world. See Ashis Nandy, "Secularism in Crisis," India International Centre Quarterly, Vol. 22, No. 1, pp. 35-64 (Spring, 1995).

One can immediately anticipate the objection to clubbing Ashraaf together with Savarna in the Alpjan camp: that it is a false equivalence. The Ashraaf hardly have any power today, and they are mostly at the receiving end of the Hindutva power. However, such an objection completely misses the co-constitutive nature of the Savarna Ashraaf relationship.[54] When it is claimed that two elements constitute a singular totality, what is asserted is that the presence of both elements is necessary for the constitution of that totality, not necessarily that both carry equal weight or measure. It is like two black dots on a white sheet or two white dots on a black sheet. Here the unified image that gets created is black plus white or white plus black. One can never describe such an image by simply asserting that it is either black or white. It would be a wrong description of the image. There is no way to describe this image correctly without talking about the presence of both the colors. One can still manage by saying that it is a white image with only two black dots and vice-versa. What is involved here is describing the presence of two colors, not that they are present in equal proportion. This can be further specified with the example of black tea. Black tea is made tasty by shaking tea leaves in hot water. The quantity, taste, or fragrance of tea and water in the preparation is never equal or same. Yet the only way to correctly describe black tea is to say that it is made of both tea and water. To remove either of the two from the picture would not get you the tea at all. In the same fashion, the power of Brahmin Savarna in hindu form is produced with the support of the muslim form taken by Sayed Ashraaf and vice-versa. It is in this sense I insist that Ashraaf Savarna co-constitute the hindu-muslim social totality which can be best described as the Alpjan image or tea, if you like. This hindu-muslim horizon encompasses secular liberal, conservative communal as well as communist socialist objectivity to constitute the social totality of the Alpjan from which the Bahujan is excluded by intuition, by legal and judicial reason as well as social and political perception. Social, political, legal and judicial perception of the Alpjan constituted in such a way ensures that even their critical intellectual work remains very much within the zone of reaffirming the status quo.

Thus, the Alpjan camp in its present form cannot be maintained in the absence of Sayed Ashraaf and their minoritarian politics. Brahmin Savarna decide their agenda and formulate their strategies anticipating the Ashraaf response to the last comma and full stop. Events and programs designed in this manner often give the impression that both are tied to the same bullock cart. For instance, the whole Kamandal against Mandal movement was designed on the assurance that Ashraaf would give only one specific response to the Babri mosque assault even if a few thinking heads could

[54] Khalid Anis Ansari, "Contesting Communalism(s): Preliminary Reflections on Pasmanda Muslim Narratives from North India," Prabuddha: Journal of Social Equality, Vol. 1, pp. 78-104 (2018).

suggest some alternative course that could preempt that political move.[55] Three decades later, the inauguration of Ram temple after razing the Babri mosque demonstrates how well Brahminic Savarna understand the nature and temperament of Islamophilic Ashraaf.

However, the symbolic social totality constituted by the Alpjan camp would not remain stable unless a critical mass from the Bahujan camp also subscribes to it. This effect is achieved by providing token representation to different Bahujan sections in Alpjan controlled social, cultural and political institutions. Sayed Ashraaf mock such inclusion by claiming that one section of the Bahujan has become "hindu," while Brahmin Savarna ridicule another section for being exclusively "muslim.". Indeed, Alpjan seem to have mastered the art of symbolic inclusion by placing a few Bahujan faces prominently in decorative positions while retaining decision making powers for themselves. Such efforts go a long way in universalizing particular Savarna Ashraaf norms and values into hindu and muslim collective social and political identities. However, the material gains of such symbolic inclusion remain negligible for the Bahujan masses. For instance, on all substantive parameters of representation the Hindutva camp not only falls short but can be seen actively subverting it.[56] Yet, to overcome this challenge one needs to move away from the politics of symbolic representation to a programmatic commitment to the construction of a Bahujan system. I now turn to this important subject which has the potential to transform India from "third world anemia" to first world health.[57]

Building the Bahujan System

The discussion so far makes it clear that the Bahujan democracy directly espousing the cause of 90% of the people cannot make much progress by aiming to get accommodated in "the system" designed to serve the Alpjan. There is no way a system structured to serve just 10% of the population can accommodate the additional 90% of the Bahujan people. That is why the Alpjan autocracy tries to manage Bahujan aspirations via the high-decibel hindu-muslim Hindutva rhetoric. Hence, Bahujan

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55 Javed Anand, "Why Muslims Should Have Gifted Away the Babri Masjid: The Mandir that Could Have Been," The Indian Express, January 20, 2024.

56 Prannv Dhawan, Christophe Jaffrelot and Kalaiyarasan A, "Supreme Court's EWS Verdict: Why Diluting Caste-Based Reservations Is a Counterproductive Move," The Indian Express, November 18, 2022; Namit Saxena, "Disproportionate Representation at the Supreme Court: A Perspective Based on Caste and Religion of Judges," Bar and Bench, May 23, 2021; Shyamlal Yadav, "Reservation Candidates Are Under-represented in Govt's Upper Rungs," The Indian Express, January 17, 2019; "Who Tells Our Stories Matters," Oxfam India Report, August 2, 2019; IDIA Diversity Survey Report, 2018–2019.

57 Naren Bedide, "The Brahmin Keeps India in the 18th Century," Prabuddha: Journal of Social Equality, Vol. 2, No.1, pp. 26-33 (2018); Gail Omvedt, "Dalit Visions: The Anti-caste Movement and the Construction of an Indian Identity" (Orient Longman, New Delhi, 2006); Kancha Ilaiah, "Buffalo Nationalism: A Critique of Spiritual Fascism" (SAGE, New Delhi, 2004).

democracy can only be a movement of constructing a radical democratic future if it is to transcend the hindu-muslim binary. That the future for the Bahujan lies in building certain democratic systems is made obvious by the history of the aspirations of the Bahujan movement, which can be listed inexhaustibly as follows: 1) Common Education System, 2) Common Health System, 3) Common Housing System, 4) Common Family System, 5) Proportionate Employment System, 6) Creative Knowledge System, 7) Social Security System, 8) Land Redistribution System, 9) Proportional Representation System, 10) Representative Media System, 11) Representative Police and Judicial System. The institution of these systems is actively blocked by the Alpjan communal hubris. Nevertheless, Bahujan society must carry on this affirmative program as part of the struggle to abolish the Alpjan plutocracy. Sadly, most of these democratic concerns have been starkly missing from the constitution since its inception. Therefore, efforts to inscribe these demands in the constitutional body itself have to be carried out even in the face of threat to the existing constitution, whether perceived or real. Radicalizing the constitutional infrastructure by translating Bahujan concerns into legal language is necessary for this purpose. Political struggle carried around a common constructive program alone can generate the social cement necessary to keep various Bahujan castes and tribes together for the radical democratic mission.

The common constructive program of the Bahujan majority is also necessary to dispel another notion fashionable among certain liberal and secular sections of the Alpjan who characterize BJP-RSS governments as majoritarian. If the BJP-RSS government functioning since 2014 was indeed majoritarian it would have taken some steps towards the implementation of this programmatic agenda in order to empower the majority. Instead, all that one can produce is legislative and executive action to empower and benefit the small minority of 9 to 10% Brahmin Savarna at the cost of the Bahujan.[58] This operation is covered up by hyper-religious action through direct political and media channels. Yet, even the most informed liberal and secular sections of Savarna Ashraaf keep confusing the issue by referring to such a profoundly minoritarian government as majoritarian. Such is the perversive effect of Ashraaf politics that you can't even call a completely minoritarian politics "minoritarian." This limit of liberal secular objectivity rooted in the Alpjan ethos displays a stunning continuity from the British Raj to the Brahminic socialist and capitalist republics.[59] The moment we abandon the seductive charm of the

[58] Recalling Demonetization, EWS Reservation, Lateral Entry Scheme, GST, Low Capital Gains Tax, NEP and so on.

[59] See Note 54. Also, Aakar Patel, "When Will the Brahmin-Bania Hegemony End?," Livemint, August 28, 2009. Available at: https://bit.ly/3oKmGGV.

Ashraaf Savarna constructed "muslim as minority" and "hindu as majority," the vacuity of majoritarian claims becomes too glaring to ignore in the face of empirical data.[60]

However, universal functions of particular struggles in transcending their particularity to produce the Bahujan subject does not mean that particular struggles lose their particularity. On the contrary, particular claims of representation and empowerment to overcome different historical disabilities become all the more relevant as a means to elevate the Bahujan democracy. Particular struggles bring to the surface asymmetric social, economic and political status in the present society caused by different historical experiences, some of which can be remedied only through a differential policy framework. Therefore, every organization and institution designed to create the Bahujan public must incorporate the democratic demands brought forward by Dalit, Pichda, Pasmanda Ati-Pichda and Adivasi Bahujan (DPAB) struggles. Towards this end, demands for representation in existing public and private institutions acquire a new militancy. Representation is one of the most important means of transforming the present institutional apparatus to serve the Bahujan society. Present institutional arrangements so transformed—in conjunction with the new set of institutions needed to implement the above programmatic agenda—can not only reverse democratic slide but also put India on the revolutionary road to progress and prosperity, catapulting all of South Asia.[61]

In this caste society characterized by ladder-like graded inequality, it is necessary to break the chain of hierarchy at some point for the caste order to fall apart and for the desired Bahujan society to become a reality. Naturally, any caste or group of castes from DPAB willing to break the ladder rung at some point would assume a central signifying role in the Bahujan democracy. Which specific caste or group of castes will do it can not be foretold. As there is no privileged agent of historical change,[62] all castes stand equal chance of destroying the chain of hierarchy and of becoming the core that illuminates the Bahujan society. A caste or group of castes which can rise above caste and communal considerations to address the problem of pitting one constituent of the Bahujan against another would acquire increasing centrality. This is not to say that the wrongs committed by one section of the Bahujan against another can be simply ignored for the sake of Bahujan unity. What it means is that the guilt of such wrongs can be worked out and treated as an inevitable effect of the undemocratic Alpjan practices. This problem necessarily involves dual struggle: one against the undemocratic Alpjan world,

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60 See Note 52. Also, Nitin Kumar Bharti, Lucas Chancel, Thomas Piketty, and Anmol Somanchi, "Income and Wealth Inequality in India, 1922-2023: The Rise of the Billionaire Raj," Working Paper, World Inequality Lab, March 2024; Atul Kohli, "Poverty Amid Plenty in the New India" (CUP, Cambridge, 2012).

61 Kancha Ilaiah "Post-Hindu India" (SAGE, New Delhi, 2009).

62 See Note 33, pp. 80-87.

and second against the undemocratic impulses latent among a few members of the Bahujan world. The ambition of destroying such an oppressive world could generate a unifying effect on all components of the Bahujan republic. Thus, the question of immediate and remote oppressors needs to be approached by taking into account the nature of the Alpjan social totality and Bahujan rainbow of collective life.

Bahujan versus Alpjan Democracy

The discussion so far points to the sheer impossibility of realizing Bahujan democracy as an alternative to Hindutva without defeating Ashraaf disdain for democracy. Miseries caused by the minority politics of Ashraaf should serve as a living warning to all DPAB groups about the dangers of pursuing purely minoritarian interests in the context of electoral democracy.[63] The options are clear: either expand to become something more than yourself like a Bahujan majority or shrink to become something less than yourself like the muslim minority. Any social, legal, economic or political practice which makes it difficult for different segments of the Bahujan to rub their shoulders with each other in the spirit of fraternity is an impediment to the development of Bahujan democracy. However, this does not mean that the various constituents of the Bahujan formation would completely lose their particularities by transforming themselves into Bahujan universality. Far from it. By transforming itself into a universality, a particularity gains much more than it loses by diluting some of its particulars. For instance, nobody in her right mind would argue that the Brahmin Savarna or Sayed Ashraaf by transforming themselves into the hindu and muslim nations incurred more loss than what they gained in the process. As a matter of fact, Ashraaf Savarna managed to expand their particular cultures significantly in the name of muslim culture, hindu culture, secular culture, Hindutva culture, Indian culture, Pakistani culture and so on. Similarly, transformation of DPAB groups into the Bahujan nation will only universalize the particular cultural interests of each group jointly. As the flowering of Hindutva has taken place in the geographical stretch of South Asian Islamophilia since the 1920s, its displacement by the Bahujan republic in India cannot be without consequences for the rest of the region. With the enactment of the Citizenship Amendment Act of 2019, the pan-South Asian dye has been recast afresh, reminiscent of the pre-partition geographical power play. If Bahujan democracy manages to subvert the Alpjan power this time around, the social, economic and political life of South Asia might witness greater social, economic and political integration than what has been experienced so far.

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[63] See Note 17, pp. 48-49.

However, the Alpjan are committed to maintaining communally segregative practices at any cost, including through violent means like riots, police atrocities and lynching. It is imperative to develop some sort of Bahujan Defense Force (BDF) to counter Alpjan communal violence. Reproduction of hindu-muslim antagonism with a view to chip away parts of Bahujan society for their hegemonic purposes is a mainstay of Alpjan strategy. For the same purpose, token representation for a few Bahujan faces after their ideological reorientation in the Alpjan camp is encouraged. The Alpjan energy is never spent on any affirmative program directed to empower the Bahujan in any significant way. Even Sayed Ashraaf, despite their dwindling fortunes, never consider taking up the Bahujan affirmative program in their remaining zones of influence (MEIs, for instance). On the contrary, the Alpjan remain hellbent on trampling Bahujan dreams through institutional power and social control. This is evident from the little or no progress on most of the Bahujan empowering programs delineated above. Instead, what we are witnessing through the massive privatization of public sector enterprises including education, increasing concentration of private corporate entities in the hands of a few, emasculation of thought, repression of civil liberties and perversion of public discourse is that Alpjan power is determined to undermine whatever little progress could be made since the commencement of the constitution. India has been held hostage to the minoritarian imagination of the Alpjan. The challenge is to beat the civilizationally destructive Alpjan through the constitutional and radical means of Bahujan democracy.

At this juncture one must acknowledge the extraordinary contribution made by the Pasmanda movement in terms of developing a language through which democracy can be made to serve the Bahujan interests. The organization of the Pasmanda movement by Ali Anwar and its scholarly articulation by Khalid Anis Ansari as "*postminority*" have supplied the missing vocabulary for the Bahujan democratic project.[64] The ideas expressed in this paper have been made thinkable by the tireless, creative work of Pasmanda activists and scholars. However, there is no a priori guarantee for the success of a democratic project.[65] It all depends on how spaces for social mobilization and joint action are conceived, articulated and worked out. Any conception of Bahujan democracy that leaves Pasmanda out of its imagination will fail to dent the hindu-muslim binary, and hence cannot provide an alternative to the Alpjan plutocracy. Such a project, so to say, is doomed from the beginning. Therefore, all the proponents of Bahujan democracy trying to resist the Alpjan oligarchy would do well to listen

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64 Khalid Anis Ansari, "Revisiting the Minority Imagination: An Inquiry into the Anticaste Pasmanda-Muslim Discourse in India," Critical Philosophy of Race, Vol. 11, No. 1, pp. 120-147 (2023).

65 See Note 2, pp. 150-156.

more seriously to the notes and concerns raised by Pasmanda ideologues, activists and scholars. The Pasmanda movement has already taken a democratic turn as signified by its slogan "Dalit Pichda Ek Saman, Hindu Ho Ya Musalman" (Dalit, Pichda are alike whether they are hindu or muslim). The Pasmanda have long discarded minoritarian politics and firmly placed themselves in the Bahujan democratic project. In practical terms, this means that in states with a large Pasmanda presence, like UP, Bihar and West Bengal, every third or fourth Chief Minister can be a Pasmanda. The creation of a real possibility for Pasmanda Chief Ministers in other states as well as for a Pasmanda Prime Minister is necessary in order to decimate the hindu-muslim binary decisively. For this to become a reality, the minoritarian politics of the Alpjan needs to be defeated fairly and squarely.

The Place of Alpjan in the Bahujan Democracy

There is no such thing as identity by birth or natural identity, only contingent social forms of identification and embodiment. To the extent a person is brought up under a certain form of identification, she embodies or lives that collective identity.[66] However, gradual sliding away from one form of identification to another is the best evidence of the socially contingent nature of all popular identities.[67] For this reason, explanatory categories like "false consciousness," "stooge," "caste traitor" and "foot soldier" fail to explain the nature of social and political allegiance. A person is Brahmin, Savarna, Sayed, Ashraaf or DPAB only to the extent and until the time he or she identifies with the respective universe of meaning. However, when individuals brought up under one universe of meaning begin to identify with a different universe of meaning their inherited identity undergoes profound transformation. This process is slow, painful and unpredictable but it is a real possibility that destabilizes all forms of collective identities. To the extent that a few Bahujan individuals identify with the Alpjan projects of Hindu or the Islamic state, they for all practical purposes become part of the Savarna or Ashraaf society. There is no gain in branding them as opportunistically misled foot soldiers. This no doubt poses a serious challenge to the votaries of the Bahujan dream. There are only two ways to overcome this challenge. First, by making Bahujan democracy as the most meaningful experience for all its constituent sections, and second by attracting a few members from the Alpjan camp, again through the stirring charm of the Bahujan republic. The first course of action involves progressively eliminating the caste, communal, gender and tribal divide from Bahujan society and nurturing an associated mode of living that works towards a democratic, peaceful and prosperous life. This process

[66] Chantal Mouffe, "The Return of the Political," pp. 74-78 (Verso, London, 1993).
[67] Laclau describes this process as constant displacement of the hegemonic frontier. See Note 2, pp. 129-138.

culminates in living the Bahujan identity in such a way that anyone who identifies with it feels greater than herself. This alone should be sufficient to realize the second objective. However, to ascertain whether a few members from the Alpjan genuinely identify with the Bahujan democracy would call for some additional tests.

The test to find out whether someone from the Alpjan world has begun to identify with the Bahujan democracy cannot be a superficial formality. Mere lip service to the Bahujan project once it acquires some momentum is certainly not enough. Members of the Alpjan class are so powerful precisely because they pick up the art of camouflage quite early. They develop mastery in the art of joining the adversary camp in the garb of progressive politics only to implode it from within. The fate of Buddhism, Islam, Christianity, Communism, Socialism and Liberalism in India after the ruling castes joined these ideologies in cohorts is not hidden from anyone. Hence the need for extra caution. Ashraaf Savarna who genuinely identify with the Bahujan society will feel an irresistible urge to bring down their Alpjan world for they are closest to the source of the stench. Once their nostrils become sensitive to the stench, it will be impossible for Ashraaf Savarna to bear it. So forget allyship or solidarity, intersectional or otherwise. Either one joins wholeheartedly in destroying the symbolic Alpjan world in order to build the Bahujan world or one remains firmly within the Alpjan camp as a Bahujan adversary. Hence the Alpjan trying to join the Bahujan project must pass a twin test: First and foremost, provide direct evidence of hammering down the Alpjan world, and second, show genuine identification with the Bahujan democracy by fully subscribing to its vision and programmatic agenda. Providing a place of dignity within Bahujan society to such Alpjan who thoroughly commit to the Bahujan democratic task might expand the democratic revolution in quite unexpected and interesting ways.[68] Buddhist and Sufi values of love, care and fellowship shower all humanity. Hence, only the Alpjan who choke and suffocate the Bahujan dream, are expelled from the Bahujan democracy and not the retrievable humanity of the former. Individual members of the Alpjan class who pass the twin test as described above can redeem their humanity and for all practical purposes become active progenies of the Bahujan democracy.

In any case, destruction of the symbolic Alpjan world doesn't mean that Alpjan are going to lose it all. Sure, they will likely lose some wealth and property and a space at the high table. However, Ashraaf Savarna will more than make it up through newly gained creative freedom and their humane self. At last, they will be in a position to produce some work of art and beauty worthy of democratic

[68] See Note 33, pp. 167-188.

deliverance. Under Bahujan democracy, Ashraaf Savarna will finally overcome their profound lack of humanity and creativity to experience unprecedented exhilaration. With the spread of democratic knowledge and education with increasing emphasis on creative and innovative life, the Alpjan might endorse the Bahujan democracy to shore up their own intellectual development. In any case, a group of people becomes hegemonic only by building a meaning cosmos in which it is capable of providing meaning not only to its original members but also to some members of the hegemonized group of people as well. Bahujan democracy in action has enough juice in it for a few members of the Alpjan camp to be drawn permanently towards it. The slogan Bahujan Hitay, Sarvjan Sukhay succinctly captures this phenomenon. It implies that as the Alpjan on their own find it impossible to make a transition from feudal to democratic life, they remain unhappy, miserable, violent and dissatisfied despite all their power and privileges. Promotion of Bahujan interests through educational, economic, social and political empowerment (Bahujan Hitay) will provide a strong helping hand to the Alpjan. With this help from a strong Bahujan society, the Alpjan will finally be able to make that transition from a feudal to democratic way of life and eventually become peace-loving, creative happy beings.[69] The net result is Sarvjan Sukhay. Hence the slogan Bahujan Hitay, Sarvjan Sukhay through Bahujan struggle.

Conclusion

Once democratic revolution centralized the role of collective identities in politics, the terrain of politics became a struggle about the construction of popular identities. Populist reason is the language of this struggle, as it always attempts to constitute a social totality encapsulated in the idiom of "us" versus "them." Planted on this fertile soil, and with the conservative backlash against the egalitarian thrust of democratic revolution, neoliberal capitalism has transformed and proliferated as totalitarianism in democratic societies at the dawn of 21st century. This conservative backlash often weaponizes sedimented collective identities; in the case of India, hindu and muslim identities. However, deconstruction of these popular identities reveals their contingent and antagonistic inscription by the Brahminic Savarna and Islamophilic Ashraaf, and negative effects on the dreams and aspirations of the Bahujan Bharat. Spread over a century, this inscription is stretched across South Asia. Translation of Indian politics in the language of Laclau and Mouffe's political philosophy has been done here with the hope of gleaning "populist reason" driving Hindutva, Islamophilia and the Bahujan projects.

[69] Kancha Ilaiah, "Why I am not a Hindu?" (SAGE, New Delhi, 2019), and "The Weapon of the Other" (Pearson, New Delhi, 2010).

Exploration of the populist reason for Hindutva inevitably leads to Sayed Ashraaf. The origin, development and sustenance of Hindutva over a century is umbilically connected with the Ashraaf resistance to democratic revolution. Together, Brahmin Savarna and Sayed Ashraaf have reduced the entire social imaginary to a hindu-muslim binary with disastrous consequences for the Bahujan republic. Attempts to build the Bahujan democratic project on a unified muslim minority plank remain trapped in the hindu-muslim horizon, handing a formidable edge to the Hindutva project. In many ways, the muslim minority category has emerged as the Waterloo of all counter-hegemonic democratic politics. However, the articulation of the Pasmanda movement, which has deconstructed the muslim minority category, holds immense promise for the Bahujan democracy. It has inaugurated the possibility of a new "social" which is neither restrained nor obsessed with the hindu-muslim binary. The terrain is open for the first time in history for the articulation of a new social imaginary of Alpjan versus Bahujan that can expand the democratic revolution in many interesting ways. The Alpjan in this social imaginary tend to privilege religious over caste identities, while the Bahujan attempt to transcend both in order to achieve social justice and radical democratic transformation.

When Ashraaf lock themselves behind Islamophilia vis-a-vis democracy they are not the only ones deformed; what is also deformed is the very experience of democracy. The effect of such locking on the people branded as non-muslim and on those strictly reduced to muslim identity is inescapable. The functioning of democracy as a whole is mutilated, and a peculiar kind of apartheid informs social and political life. If all muslims appear to be under siege today it is precisely because Islamophilic Ashraaf have discursively allied with the Brahminic Savarna to police certain boundaries to enable that siege by the latter. Pasmanda men and women of all castes get permanently condemned to silence in the name of pure muslim identity. It is not uncommon to witness Ashraaf wrongs getting rubbed on the Pasmanda shoulders, making it very difficult to sustain democratic DPAB consolidation. Thus, Ashraaf Islamophilia can be described as gangrene attached to the Bahujan democracy; it cannot be avoided or wished away. It can only be removed by an aggressive surgery. Ashraaf block a clear vision of the past, present and certainly of the bright Bahujan future.

The whole edifice of mandir-masjid, hindu-muslim antagonism is constructed on Ashraaf caste, communal and patriarchal consciousness. Savarna, for their part, seem to be intent on keeping the Bahujan out of the corridors of power and away from social progress even if it means taking communal conflagrations to genocidal proportions. However, as the success of Hindutva till now was not guaranteed from the beginning but was a result of contingent decisions taken by multiple political

actors prompted by the fixity of the Ashraaf pole, so are its future fantasies. We are not condemned to be mute spectators of the bloodbath that it fantasizes. Things can be otherwise. Everything depends on the decisions that we are willing to take in the light of contemporary knowledge about democratic politics and our radical investment in them for the construction of Bahujan democracy.

The Destruction of Education in Gaza: Evidence of Educide, and a Call to Action

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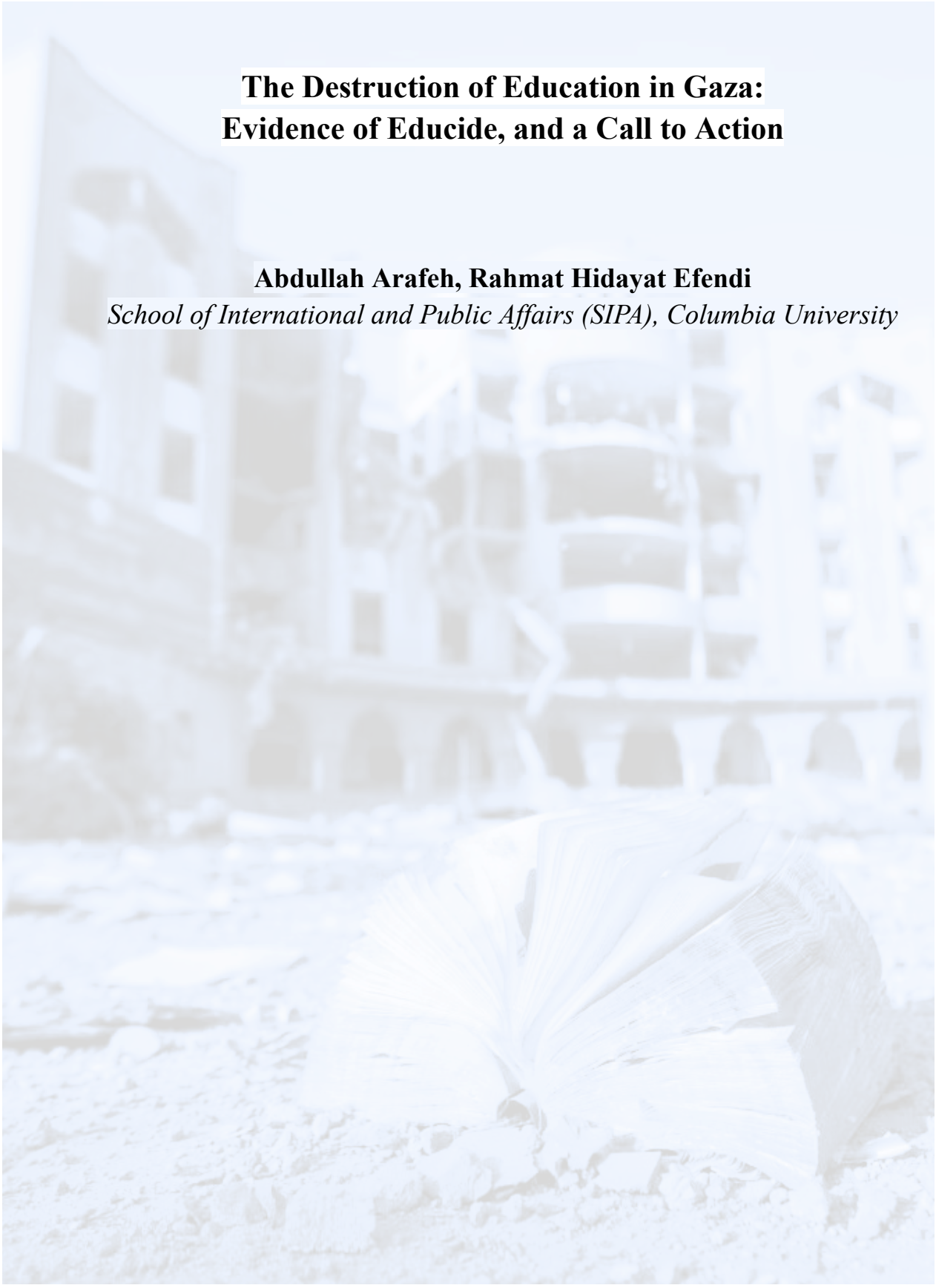


Abstract

This paper examines the alarming phenomenon of educide in the context of the ongoing conflict in Gaza. Educide, defined as the systematic destruction of educational institutions and the denial of access to education, has emerged as a critical issue amidst the violence and instability perpetrated by occupying entities. This study highlights the multifaceted impacts of the genocide on Gaza's educational landscape, including the destruction of schools and universities, the displacement of students and educators, and the psychological toll on the youth.

Through a comprehensive review of recent reports, testimonies, and data, the paper presents compelling evidence of the systematic targeting of educational facilities, which has resulted in significant disruptions to learning and the erosion of knowledge systems. The paper draws attention to the challenges faced by students in accessing education, particularly in light of the destruction of infrastructure and the ongoing humanitarian crisis. Initiatives aimed at providing virtual education are discussed, revealing both the resilience of educators and students and the formidable obstacles they encounter, such as limited access to technology and unstable living conditions.

The paper further contextualizes the issue of educide within broader discussions of human rights and international law, emphasizing the moral and ethical imperatives for the global community to respond. It calls for immediate action, including a ceasefire, international support for educational initiatives, and the protection of educational spaces as a fundamental human right. By framing the destruction of education as not only a local tragedy but a global concern, the authors urge policymakers, educators, and advocates to prioritize the safeguarding of education in conflict zones. This paper serves as both a critical analysis of the current situation in Gaza and a rally for collective action to preserve the right to education for all, particularly in occupied regions in emergency settings.

Defining Educide

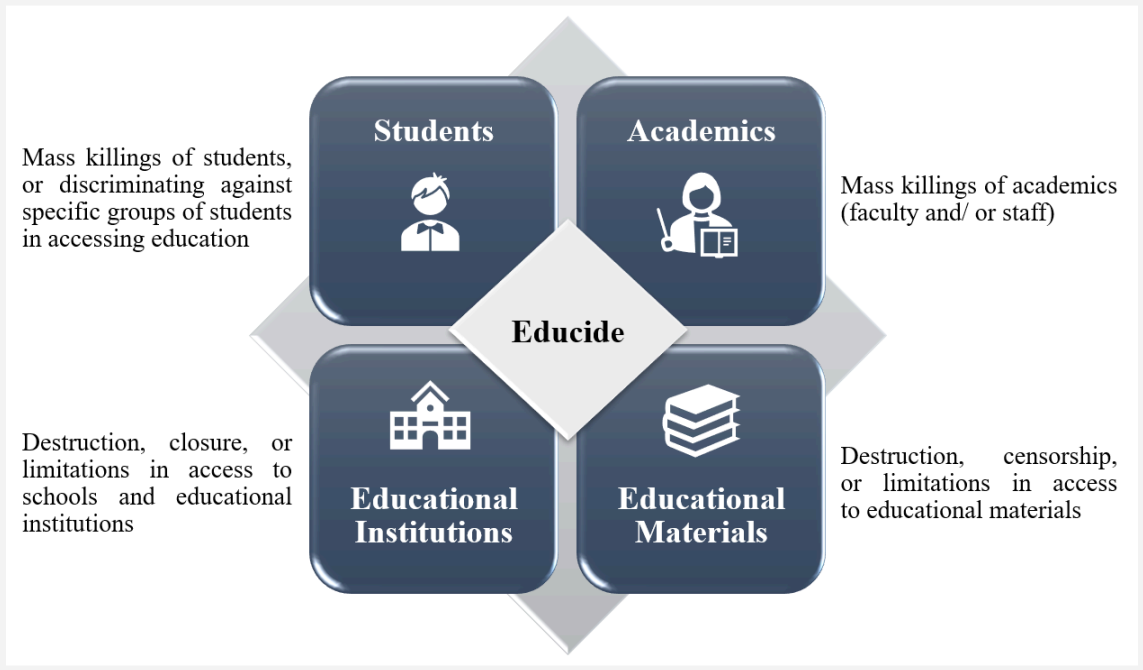
Educide refers to the intended mass destruction of education in a specific place. It's often used interchangeably with terms like "scholasticide" and "epistemicide." The term "educide" combines "education" and the suffix "-cide" (meaning killing). It was coined to draw a parallel with genocide. The term was first used in March 2011 by Hans-Christof von Sponeck, UN Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, in a speech about Iraq at Ghent University. In 2022, Rula Alousi proposed a formal definition[1]: "the mass destruction of a country or region's educational infrastructure because of war, invasion, conflict, terrorism, or mass killings."1. The term has been used to describe educational destruction in conflicts such as tThe Iraq War (2003-2011) and tThe Israeli invasion of Gaza (2023-present). Similar terms, such as "sScholasticide,", were first used by Karma Nabulsi in 2009 to describe the destruction of Palestinian educational infrastructure.[2].

Recently, a group of scholars working under the name “"Scholars Against the War on Palestine”" broadened the definition to include a more comprehensive picture of what is happening during the current assault on Gaza, highlighting the intimate relationship between educide and genocide. They say educide includes[3]:

- The intentional destruction of cultural heritage (such as archives, libraries and museums).
- Killing, causing bodily or mental harm, incarcerating, or systematically harassing educational professionals (in teaching or administrative roles) and students.
- Besieging, closing, or obstructing access to educational spaces.
- Using universities or schools as a military base.3

The characteristics or elements of educide often include the intentional and systematic destruction of existing education in situations of extreme violence (war, invasion, conflict, genocide, etc.), evidenced by the destruction of educational institutions, mass killings of academics and students, and the destruction of educational materials.

Figure 1: Elements of Educide



Source: Desktop Research

Legal Status

There's growing academic interest in studying and defining educide as a concept, though it's not yet widely recognized in legal or policy circles. While "educide" is not currently recognized as a crime in international law, the acts it describes may constitute war crimes, crimes against humanity, or contribute to genocide.

UN experts have called on all parties to respect international humanitarian law and international human rights law, and to protect educational institutions, teachers, and students, sharing: “We remind Israel in particular of its obligations to comply with the provisional measures ordered by the International Court of Justice on 26 January.”[4]

The magnitude of destruction of Gaza's educational system has led thescholars from 'Scholars Against the War on Palestine' to conclude: “"Israeli colonial policy in Gaza has now shifted from a focus on systematic destruction to total annihilation of education.”" As genocide scholar Douglas Irvin-Erickson saidys: the original definition of genocide as first drafted by Raphael Lemkin in 1943 included the idea that “"attacking a culture was a way of committing genocide, and not a different type of genocide.”"[3]

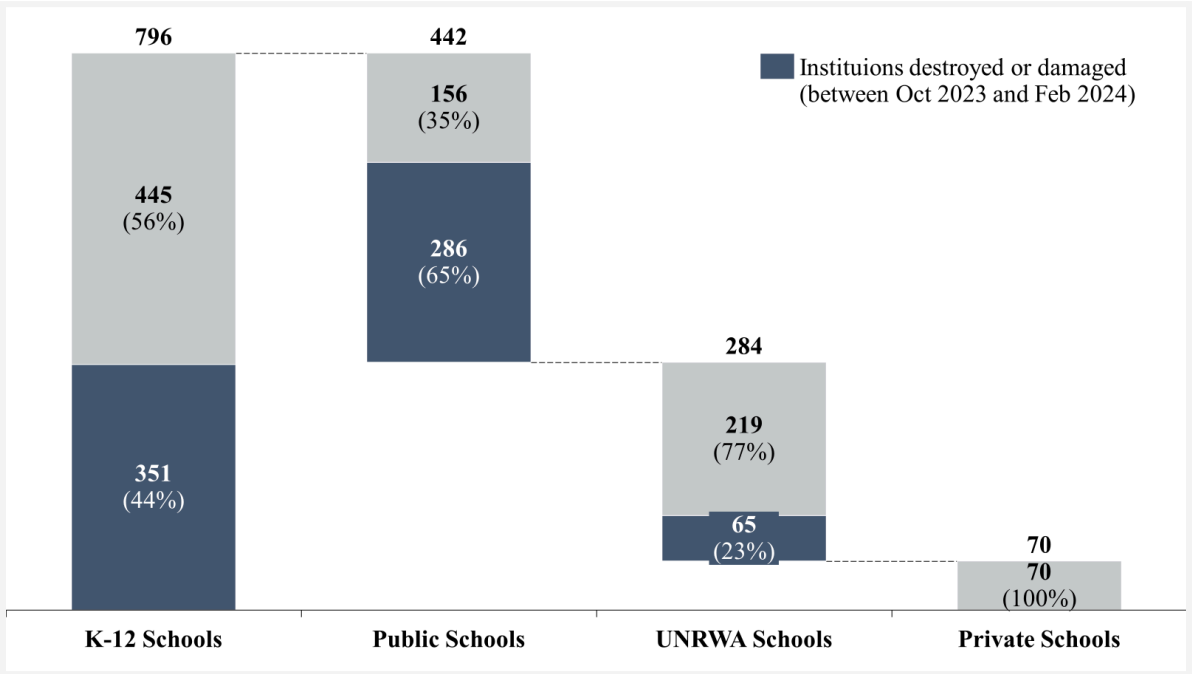
Evidence of Educide in Gaza

UN experts have expressed grave concern over the pattern of attacks on Gaza's educational system, raising serious alarm over the systematic destruction of the Palestinian education system, sharing: “"It may be reasonable to ask if there is an intentional effort to comprehensively destroy the Palestinian education system. … The persistent, callous attacks on educational infrastructure in Gaza have a devastating long-term impact on the fundamental rights of people to learn and freely express themselves, depriving yet another generation of Palestinians of their future. … These attacks are not isolated incidents. They present a systematic pattern of violence aimed at dismantling the very foundation of Palestinian society.”" [4]

Educational Institutions

The Israeli military has systematically attacked a majority of educational institutions and facilities in the Gaza strip. By targeting these educational institutions and facilities, it is evident that the Israeli military seeks to eliminate all educational spaces and obliterate any prospects for young Palestinians. At the beginning of October 2023, there were about 796 K-12 schools in the Gaza Strip; 442 public schools, 284 schools affiliated with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA), and 70 private schools. [5]. In the first four4 months of Israel's genocide ion Gaza, at least 286 public schools and 65 UNRWA schools have been damaged or bombed by Israel. [6].

Figure 2: Destruction of K-12 Educational Institutions in Gaza



Source: The New Arab,[5], AA[6]

In November 2023, Gaza's Ministry of Education suspended education due to Israel's indiscriminate targeting of civilian areas and population centers, which included educational institutions and facilities. Once education was suspended in the Gaza Strip, schools (at least 133 of themschools) were being used as shelters for internally displaced Palestinians in the sStrip, sheltering far more people than their capacity. The continuous attacks on education institutions and facilities persisted after education suspension in the strip, and led to the killing of internally displaced Palestinians who were taking shelter in Gaza's schools. Jason Lee, Save the Children's Director for Palestine, said: “"Attacks on civilian infrastructure, including schools … where children are seeking refuge, are beyond unconscionable. This war is eroding humanity and is spiraling out of control.”" [7]

Among the K-12 schools in Gaza that were used to shelter internally displaced Palestinians are UNRWA schools, most of which were turned into shelters. In July 2024 alone, 21 strikes on UNRWA schools, serving as shelters for internally displaced Palestinians, were recorded across the Gaza Strip. Over 70% of UNRWA schools, most of which were being used as shelters, have been attacked by the Israeli military.[8]. Philippe Lazzarini, UNRWA's Commissioner-General, shared: "Schools are not schools anymore. … UNRWA was forced to close all its schools, turning them into shelters for displaced families. Classrooms that used to welcome girls & boys are now either overcrowded with displaced families or destroyed. Mattresses have replaced school desks. … Schools are no place for learning. They have become places of despair, hunger, disease & death." [9]

Analysis of satellite imagery from July 2024 (10 months into Israel's ongoing genocide in Gaza), conducted by the Global Education Cluster, a research group of aid organizations co-led by UNICEF and Save the Children, has shown that:[10]:

- Over 90% of schools in Gaza have "sustained some level of damage," including direct hits.
- About 85% of schools will require either "full reconstruction or major rehabilitation work" before classes can resume there.
- Over 30% of "Directly hit" and "Damaged" schools are UNRWA-run schools.
- The 344 K-12 school buildings classified as "Direct hit" previously served 59% of the total K-12 student population and 60% of the total K-12 teaching staff, while the 133 K-12 school buildings classified as "Damaged" served roughly 25% of the total student population and 25% of the total teaching staff.
- Over 50% of K-12 school buildings that have been used by internally displaced Palestinians as shelters weare "Directly hit.".
- There is a clear trend linking the majority of K-12 schools "Directly hit" in the Gaza Strip to the areas targeted by the Israeli military's evacuation orders.
- Some K-12 schools in the Gaza Strip are being used by the Israeli military as detention, interrogation centers, and military bases.

Israel's targeting of educational institutions and facilities in Gaza didn't just stop at K-12 schools; , it also extended to higher education institutions in the Gaza strip. All higher education institutions and universities in Gaza werehave been either damaged or destroyed [6] [11],6 11 within the first 100 days of

onslaught by the Israeli military, completely disrupting university education.[7]. Between October 2023 and July 2024, over 20 university campuses werehave been severely damaged, and over 31 university buildings werehave been destroyed.[9]. Israel systematically destroyed every university in the Gaza Strip in stages over the course of the more than 100-day attack. The first stage included the bombing of the Islamic University of Gaza and Al-Azhar University, followed by the remaining universities, which have suffered similar assaults. At least two 2 universities (Al-Israa University and Al-Quds Open University) were totally destroyed after initially being used by the Israeli military (and transformed into barracks or temporary detention facilities). At least two2 universities (University College of Applied Sciences and Al-Aqsa University) were sheltering internally displaced Palestinian families when they were shelled by Israeli forces. [11] [12].

Table 1: Details of Aattacks on Gaza's Higher Education Institutions

#	University	Details
1	Islamic University of Gaza	• Gaza's oldest degree-awarding institution, founded in 1978, and held its first classes in tents. By 2023, it had more than 17,000 students.[11]. • The Israeli military destroyed the campus on the night of 10 October 2023.[11]. • It is not the first time the university has been hit by Israeli forces: it was damaged during air strikes in 2008-2009 and 2014.[11].
2	Al-Azhar University	• Established in 1991. At its peak, it had 12 faculties/ colleges and 17,000 students.[11]. • On 6 November 2023, Israeli air forces bombed the university campus.[11].
3	Al-Quds Open University	• Established in 1991, itand was the first open learning institute in the Palestinian territories.[11]. • At its peak, it had 60,000 students studying across 19 branches and centers throughout the West Bank and Gaza Strip, making it the biggest non-campus university in Palestine.[11]. • Israeli forces turned university buildings into military barracks, before bombing the Gaza branch on 15 November 2023.[11].
4	Gaza University	• Established in 2006, itand had 10 faculties/ colleges.[11]. • The university was destroyed on 4 December 2023, by an Israeli air strike. [11] [13].
5	Hassan II University of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences	• In 1992, the university was founded by King Mohammed VI of Morocco with a $7.8m donation.[11] • The college was destroyed by Israeli forces in December 2023.[11]

#	University	Details
6	Palestine Technical College	● Established in 1993, itand would usually hadve 1,800 students.[11] ● In May 2024, it was used as a shelter for internally displaced Palestinians whothat were forced to leave their homes.[11].
7	University of Palestine	● Established in 2005, as a private institution. It has been used to shelter displaced families post-October 2023.[11]. ● On 17 January 2024, Israel detonated more than 300 mines at the university.[11].
8	University College of Applied Sciences	● Founded in 1998, itand enrolled 8,500 students in 2023.[11]. ● Included a donor-funded non-profit start-up incubator that supported entrepreneurs in the Gaza Strip and helped aspiring entrepreneurs turn their ideas into successful businesses.[11]. ● On 22 January 2024, Israeli forces shelled the university. At the time, the university was sheltering internally displaced Palestinian families.[11].
9	Al-Aqsa University	● Established in 1955, initially to train teachers. By 1991, it had evolved into the State College of Education, before being later rebranded as Al-Aqsa University in 2001. In 2022, it had 32 laboratory spaces and 26,000 students enrolled.[11]. ● On 22 January 2024, Israeli forces shelled Al-Aqsa University, which at the time was a shelter for internally displaced Palestinians.[11].
10	Dar al-Kalima University: Gaza Training Centre	● In March 2020, the Gaza branch of Dar al-Kalima University was opened to empower potential artists through professional training and providing opportunities for young people.[11]. ● It hosted workshops and exhibitions of photography, videography, painting and sculpture, as well as concerts and radio broadcasts of traditional and popular Palestinian music.[11]. ● After Israel attacked Gaza in May 2021, the institution provided art therapy for children dealing with trauma. During Easter Holy Week in late March 2024, Israeli forces destroyed the Gaza branch of the art school.[11].
11	Al-Israa University in	● Gaza's youngest university, established in 2014. It was scheduled to mark its 10th anniversary this year with the opening of a public museum, highlighting Palestinian history and culture.[11]. ● Its main building was occupied for 70 days by the Israeli

#	University	Details
		military (and transformed into barracks and, later, into a temporary detention facility[12]) and then destroyed by explosives on 17 January 2024.[11]. ● The Israeli media released a video clip on 17 January 2024, capturing Al-Israa's explosion.[12]. The Israeli military detonated 315 mines to destroy the strip's last standing university.[7].

Source: Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor,[12], Middle East Eye,[11],
Middle East Studies Association of North America[13]

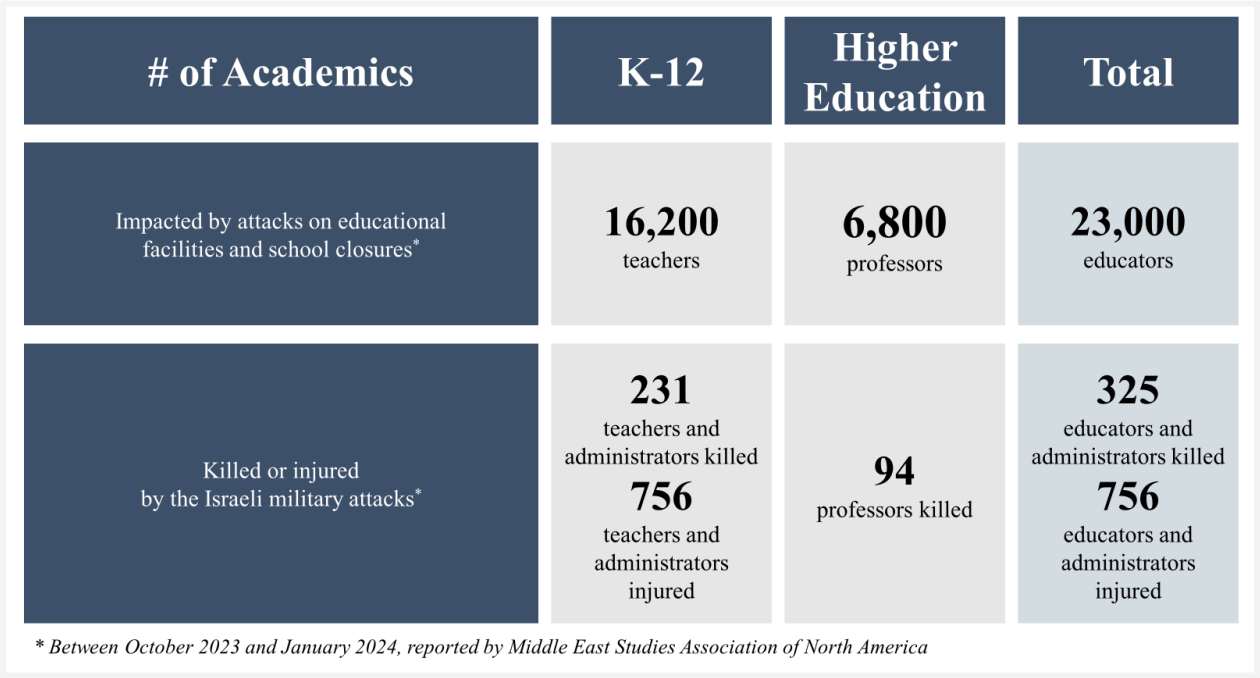
UN experts have saidshared that: "When schools are destroyed, so too are hopes and dreams." [4]

Academics (Faculty and Staff)

The Israeli military has killed at least 94 university professors, along with hundreds of teachers, as part of its genocidal assault against Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, between October 2023 and January 2024.[12]. The Israeli military has targeted academic, scientific, and intellectual figures in the sStrip, in deliberate and specific air raids on their homes without prior notice. Those targeted academics have been crushed to death beneath the rubble, along with members of their families and other displaced Palestinian families in Gaza.[12].

The academics targeted (between October 2023 and January 2024) include 17 academics who held professor degrees, 59 who held doctoral degrees, and 18 who held master's degrees. Due to challenges with documentation brought on by difficulties in movement, disruptions of telecommunications (including the Iinternet), and the existence of thousands of unaccounted-for and missing individuals, estimates suggest that there are many moreadditional numbers of targeted academics (including those with advanced degrees) whose deaths have not been accounted for. The targeted academics studied and taught across a variety of academic disciplines, and many of their ideas served as cornerstones of academic research in the Gaza Strip's universities.[12]. According to the Palestinian Ministry of Education, 231 K-12 teachers and administrators werehave been killed and 756 have been injured, between October 2023 and January 2024.[12].

Figure 3: Details of Educide on Gaza's Academics



Source: Middle East Studies Association of North America[13]

Students

The lack of access to education in Gaza is impacting students' mental health, safety and development, and puttingrisking their future prospects at risk.[14]. Most children in Gaza are busy helping to fetch water and secureing food aid, instead of focusing on learning.[14].

- Over 45,000 6-year-olds (first graders) can't start school in 2024.[14].
- An aAdditional 625,000 youth who registered for school (90,000 of whom are university students) will be missing courses for another school year (as long as Israel's assaults on Gaza continue).[13] [14].
- Among the students who were unable to learn last year are 39,000 students who missed their final year of school and couldn't take their Tawjihi exams (secondary- school exit exam). This marks the first time in decades that a graduating class in the sStrip has faced such a situation.[14].
- The Israeli military has killed thousands of students, as part of its genocidal war against Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, between October 2023 and January 2024.[12].
- According to preliminary estimates, the ongoing Israeli attacks on the Gaza Strip have resulted in the deaths of hundreds of university students, between October 2023 and January 2024.[12].
- Over 4,300 students werehave been killed and over 7,800 others injured, between October 2023 and January 2024.[12].

Figure 4: Details of Educide on Gaza's Students

# of Students	K-12	Higher Education	Total
Impacted by attacks on educational facilities and school closures*	**535,000** students	**90,000** students	**625,000** students
Killed or injured by the Israeli military attacks**	**Thousands** of students killed	**Hundreds** of students killed	**4,327** students killed **7,819** others injured

* *According to OCHA estimates in January 2024*
** *Between October 2023 and January 2024, reported by Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor*

Source: Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor;[12]
Middle East Studies Association of North America[13]

For older children, the disruption to their education has created uncertainty and anxiety. Without schooling, young people are at an increased risk of exploitation, child labor, early marriage, and other forms of abuse, and most importantly they are at risk of dropping out of school permanently.[14] For younger children, the absence of schooling threatens their cognitive, social, and emotional development. Parents are reporting significant mental health and psychosocial impacts among children, including feelings of increased frustration and isolation.[14]

Educational Materials

Israel's widespread and intentional destruction of Palestinian cultural and historical properties, including libraries and archives, demonstrates its apparent policy of rendering the Gaza Strip uninhabitable. The attacks are creating an environment devoid of basic services and necessities and may eventually force the sStrip's population to emigrate. Experts have stressed that the targeting of civilian objects by armed forces, particularly those that are historical or cultural artifacts protected by special laws, is not only a serious breach of international humanitarian law and a war crime under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, but falls under the purview of the crime of genocide.[12].

UN experts shared that they were appalled by the annihilation of the cultural sector in Gaza, through the destruction of libraries and cultural heritage sites, sharing: "The foundations of Palestinian society are being reduced to rubble, and their history is being erased." [4]

At least 13 public libraries, 195 heritage sites, and 300 places of worship have been damaged or destroyed, this includes the Central Archives of Gaza, containing 150 years of history. [4]

Educide in the Occupied West Bank

The systematic educide observed in Gaza is also prevalent in other occupied territories, such as the West Bank of Palestine;, these areas face deliberate efforts to dismantle or obstruct educational systems, often as part of broader strategies of control, marginalization, and cultural erasure. Schools and universities in the occupied West Bank are already shifting to an e-learning model with online classes as raids and settler violence have dramatically risen since October 2023. This includes 55 schools located in the West Bank's "seam zone"— – an area separated from the rest of the occupied West Bank by Israel's separation wall.[7]. The occupied West Bank has been reeling from rising settler and Israeli forces attacks, with at least 370 Palestinians killed by Israeli forces and settlers since October 2023.[7].

Children in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, weare also affected as the school year starteds. Increasing violence and movement restrictions since October 2023 have created new learning barriers for the 782,000 students there. Data from the Ministry of Education and the Education Cluster suggests that, on any day since October 2023, between 8% and 20% of schools in the West Bank have been closed. Even when schools are not closed, the fear of violence, movement restrictions, and mental health concerns have led many students to skip school, leading to more learning loss.[14].

In both the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, attacks on schools and education have increased in recent weeks. In the Gaza Strip, at least 84% of schools will require full reconstruction or significant rehabilitation before schooling can resume. In the West Bank including East Jerusalem, there have been 69 attacks on schools and 2,354 incidents affecting schools, students and teachers in or around schools.[14].

Effects of the Educide in Gaza

The systematic destruction or undermining of a nation's or community's educational system is typically used as a tool of oppression or genocide. These actions or policies are usuallytypically designed to deprive a population of education in order to erase its cultural identity, weaken intellectual and societal development, and prevent future generations from gaining the knowledge and skills necessary for self-determination, often as part of a broader strategy of marginalization, control, or extermination.

Call to Action

About 40% of Gaza's population is 14 years old or younger, and the median age in 2020 was 18, making Gaza one of the world's youngest populations. Youth in Gaza have started their second year without formal education (both in K-12 and higher education), due to Israel's indiscriminate attacks on Gaza's educational ecosystem (including institutions and infrastructure, students, academics, and educational materials). This devastation has caused dire consequences for Gaza's youth and their future, especially in a society where education is so important [9] (as evidenced by the literacy rates of Palestinians, which are among the highest in the world[7]).

Call for a Ceasefire

It is imperative that a ceasefire be implemented immediately to facilitate the resumption of education. All necessary actions, as required by international humanitarian law, must be taken to ensure the protection of schools, allowing them to remain safe and functional for educational purposes. Additionally, the right of children to education, as enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, must be upheld, even in times of emergency, as affirmed by UN Resolution 64/290 (2010).[10].

Students with international scholarships are being prevented from attending university abroad.[4]. A ceasefire and re-opening of borders is also crucial to allow prospective students from occupied territories in Palestine to pursue an education and build a future.

UN experts havealso expressed a need for accountability for the violations, and this includes an obligation to finance and rebuild the education system, sharing: "Attacks on education cannot be tolerated. The international community must send a clear message that those who target schools and universities will be held responsible." [4]

"We owe it to the children of Gaza to uphold their right to education and pave the way for a more peaceful and just future." [4]

UNICEF Middle East and North Africa Regional Director Adele Khodr shared: "All barriers preventing us from doing our important work must be lifted. We must urgently be able to bring education and recreational supplies into Gaza at scale, have safe spaces to run learning hubs, and have guarantees students and teachers can safely access, live or learn in school buildings. Above all else, we need a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip and a de-escalation in the West Bank so all children can return to the classroom and damaged schools can be rebuilt."[14]

Call for Education Support Services

Educational service providers must be prepared to commence and/ or resume appropriate educational activities once Israel's assaults are halted, with particular attention to the psychosocial, cognitive, and physical health and well-being of children. In addition, it is essential to develop and implement alternative learning solutions, such as distance education or non-formal learning environments, to ensure that children's education continues despite the challenges posed by the conflict.[10].

Amid the trauma of the genocide, experts have advised that Gaza's youth will need both educational support, and mental health and psychosocial support, for years to come. Many of Gaza's youth have been displaced several times, have family and friends scattered across Gaza, have lost loved ones, and have no home to return to. The UN estimates that the genocide has displaced over 1.9 million people, almost the entire population of 2.3 million people. Some aid agencies and private initiatives have set up informal programs to help K-12 and higher education students in the strip.[9].

Some universities in the Israeli-occupied West Bank began initiatives aimed at offering virtual classes to students in Gaza, allowing them to continue their studies, even if only on a partial basis. Andira Abdallah, a lecturer at Birzeit University, volunteered and has helped students in Gaza from her Ramallah living room. As a teacher, Abdallah struggles with what her students are going through in Gaza, sharing,: "This hour-and-a-half is probably the only chance for them to discuss something other than surviving. … We only discuss academics. I know I can't do anything to help them or ease their pain."

These initiatives face several challenges, including [7] [9]:7 9

- Accessing telecom services: Students in Gaza struggle with accessing virtual classes, due to limited and intermittent availability or the blackout of telecommunication services (including internet and phone services), even though some classes are audio only.
- Accessing electricity: Students, most of whom have been forced to flee their homes and shelter at refugee camps or in tents, do not have access to stable electricity, and would struggle to find a place to recharge the devices (including laptops or phones) they need to access the virtual classes.
- Remaining focused: Students said it was often hard to focus for even an hour, or for the duration of athe class, given their current living situation. Some of Gaza's students spend hours daily looking for food and water. Some struggle with safety and relocation, due to evacuation orders in the areas they reside in. These are just some of the factors that cause a mental toll on Gaza's youth, and distracts them from remaining focused on learning.

Regardless of the challenges that students in Gaza face in accessing the virtual classrooms, Gaza's youth remain determined and hopeful, expressing the importance of these classes to them, as they hope to leverage their learnings from the classes for their future jobs, careers, and lives, once the genocide inof Gaza comes to an end.[9].

Call for Donors

Donors must acknowledge the severe damage inflicted on Gaza's education system and advocate for a lasting ceasefire to end the conflict. It is crucial to prioritize the protection of schools, ensuring they remain safe environments for educational purposes and for children. Additionally, donors should ensure the provision of necessary funding to meet the immediate educational needs and support the long-term reconstruction of educational infrastructure in the region.[10].

Despite these overwhelming and critical needs, education continues to be one of the least- funded sectors in humanitarian appeals. In the State of Palestine, UNICEF's education programming faces an 88% funding gap.[14]. To respond to this situation, UNICEF and its partners have established 39 Temporary Learning Spaces in the Gaza Strip serving over 12,400 students. In addition, recreational activities, emergency learning kits, and Mental Health and Psycho-Social Support (MHPSS) are being offered to children, youth, caregivers, and teachers in shelters.[14].

Rights groups have pointed out that destroying universities and killing academics and students will make it more difficult to resume university and academic life when the genocide ends, saying it may take years for studies to be resumed in an environment that has been completely destroyed.[12]. UNICEF Middle East and North Africa Regional Director Adele Khodr shared: "We must find ways to restart learning and rebuild schools to uphold the right to education of the next generations in the State of Palestine. Children need stability to cope with the trauma they have experienced, and the opportunity to develop and reach their full potential."[14]

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The Role of Higher Education Institutions in Addressing Mass Atrocities

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Introduction

Higher education institutions (HEIs) have immense potential to play a critical role in preventing genocide and mass atrocities, and addressing their aftermath, yet this potential remains unrealized. Despite increasing awareness of education's role in peacebuilding, HEIs have yet to fully realize this mission. Universities and colleges, which shape the minds of future presidents, prime ministers, judges, and other high-level decision-makers, should be at the forefront of this transformative role. So, what is holding them back? If HEIs truly foster critical thinking, advance the study of human rights and international relations, and develop curricula focused on conflict resolution, peace studies, and transitional justice, why haven't they made a more significant impact in preventing violence and promoting sustainable peace? The short answer is ignorance, and it is not a new concept. The former United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan warned us on October 20, 1997:

> When we speak of freedom of expression, pluralism, or of the right to a life free of violence, we are speaking of tolerance. Tolerance promoted, protected and enshrined will ensure all freedoms. …We believe this because we are convinced that it is ignorance, not knowledge, that makes enemies of men. It is ignorance, not knowledge, that makes fighters of children. It is ignorance, not knowledge, that leads some to advocate tyranny over democracy. It is ignorance, not knowledge, that makes some argue that human conflict is inevitable. It is ignorance, not knowledge, that makes others say that there are many worlds, when we know that there is one. Ours.

Ignoring the transformative potential of HEIs to address critical global issues is not just a missed opportunity—it's a dangerous mistake with far-reaching consequences. In our increasingly interconnected world, the power of knowledge and its application has never been more vital. In areas affected by mass atrocities, such as Gaza, HEIs serve as beacons of hope, offering opportunities for students to continue their education, even amidst turmoil. The demolition of Israa University, the last remaining university in Gaza, by the Israeli military on January 17, 2024, raises critical questions about the future of universities, teachers, and students in the Gaza Strip. The global HEIs bear critical responsibility for enabling the continuation of higher education in Gaza. Through curriculum adaptations and innovative approaches, these institutions should help bridge gaps across all levels of education to ensure that future generations are equipped with the skills and values necessary to rebuild societies. Moreover, HEIs in conflict regions often work on developing solutions tailored to the complexities of their environments, contributing to the broader global discourse on the education needed for the future.

When education institutions embrace this holistic approach, the impact extends far beyond campus boundaries. Graduates become agents of change in their communities, workplaces, and on the global stage, creating a ripple effect of positive transformation. This paper sets out a framework of responsibilities for HEIs to help shape strategies to address the educational challenges posed by conflict, ensuring that education remains a driver of sustainable development and peacebuilding in line with the 2030 Agenda. Case studies will be drawn to showcase how HEIs across the globe bear their responsibilities.

Framework of Responsibilities

Global HEIs hold a critical responsibility to address mass atrocities by using their unique position to advance awareness, understanding, and prevention efforts. This role can be structured within the "Five E's Framework," which highlights the key actions that HEIs must undertake to effectively contribute to the prevention of mass violence and the healing of affected societies.

First, **educating** students and the broader community is essential. HEIs must provide comprehensive knowledge about mass atrocities, exploring their causes, consequences, and historical contexts. By developing curricula that encourage critical thinking, empathy, and ethical decision-making, HEIs can combat ignorance and prejudice. Beyond classroom education, extracurricular activities should also foster an environment in which students engage with complex global issues, building awareness and responsibility toward atrocity prevention.

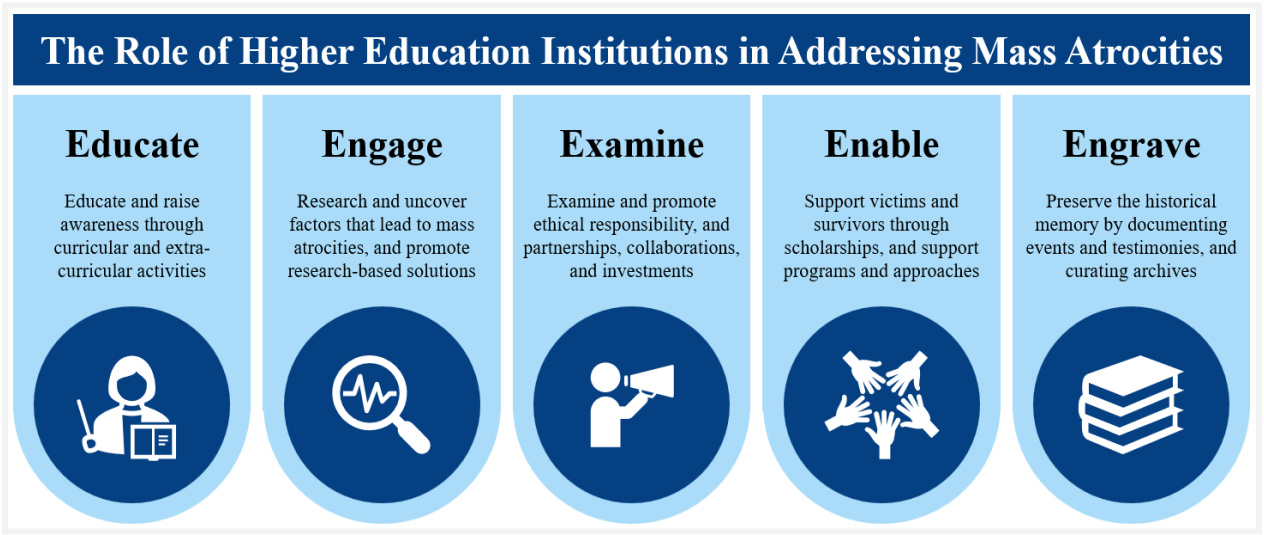
Second, HEIs must actively **engage** in conducting rigorous research. This research should deepen the understanding of mass atrocities by examining root causes, early warning signs, and effective prevention strategies. It is also crucial for HEIs to collaborate with governments, NGOs, and international organizations to bridge the gap between academic insights and practical applications. By doing so, HEIs can ensure that their research directly informs policies and interventions aimed at preventing future atrocities.

Third, HEIs should **examine** their role in promoting ethical responsibility. This involves fostering partnerships, collaborations, and investment in atrocity prevention. HEIs must critically assess their influence in shaping ethical behavior and leadership and encouraging a strong commitment to responsible action within both academic and real-world contexts.

Fourth, HEIs need to **enable** students, faculty, and communities by providing them with the tools, skills, and resources necessary to actively contribute to atrocity prevention. Offering scholarships and other support programs that empower individuals to take leadership roles in promoting peace and preventing violence is key. By equipping their members with these resources, HEIs can cultivate a generation of leaders committed to making a difference.

Finally, HEIs must **engrave** the lessons of history by preserving the memory of past atrocities and honoring the victims. This can be achieved through the establishment of archives and museums and the holding of commemorative events to ensure that historical atrocities are remembered. By making these memories accessible to future generations, HEIs can help prevent the recurrence of such tragedies, fostering a more informed and conscientious global society.

Figure 1: Framework for the role of higher education institutions in addressing mass atrocities.



By embracing these responsibilities, HEIs can play a pivotal role in shaping a more informed, empathetic, and proactive global society capable of preventing and responding to mass atrocities. This framework not only emphasizes the educational aspect but also highlights the broader societal impact that universities and colleges can and should have in this critical domain.

Educate

Global HEIs hold a responsibility to educate their respective communities, and raise awareness on ongoing and past mass atrocities, through curricular programming and extra-curricular events and activities.

Figure 2: The role of higher education institutions to educate on past or ongoing mass atrocities.

Course and Curriculum Development

HEIs should incorporate the study of mass atrocities, human rights violations, genocide and genocide prevention, and crimes against humanity into their curricula across academic programs (especially in programs focused on History, International Affairs, Public Administration, Human Rights, and disciplines with regional focus areas). This helps students understand the root causes, warning signs, and long-term consequences of atrocities, and ultimately helps raise awareness among students and equips future leaders with knowledge to prevent such crimes.

Several universities offer academic programs focused on the study of genocide and mass atrocities, as illustrated by the case studies below. However, a critical gap persists: these programs often overlook or fail to apply the genocide framework to the situation in Palestine. The exclusion of Palestinian experiences, particularly the denial of the fact that mass atrocities have been committed against Palestinians, is a serious oversight that undermines the credibility and inclusivity of genocide studies. Even before the current assaults, Palestinians have been suffering since the 1948 Nakba (Arabic for "catastrophe"), yet their experiences remain largely unaddressed within this academic discourse.

The application of the genocide concept to Israel-Palestine is complex, as noted by Nijim (2022)[70]. He argues that this complexity arises from the fact that the perpetrator in this context is the victim of one of humanity's most heinous crimes, the Holocaust, which became a genocide prototype for early researchers of genocide. These researchers then misconstrued Lemkin and reduced the definition of genocide to mass killing resembling the Holocaust.[71] The interconnection of various forms of violence

[70] M. Nijim, . "Genocide in Palestine: Gaza as a Case Study," The International Journal of Human Rights, 27(1), 165–200. https://doi.org/10.1080/13642987.2022.2065261
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and atrocities against Palestinians, which have persisted over decades, needs to be critically examined within the genocide discourse. This nuanced approach would ensure that genocide studies programs do not ignore or marginalize the experiences of Palestinians and, instead, offer a more inclusive and rigorous analysis of mass atrocities worldwide. Ignoring these realities perpetuates academic bias and limits the potential for these programs to contribute meaningfully to global justice and human rights.

Public Forums

Universities can organize conferences, seminars, and workshops to discuss these issues, raising awareness among students, faculty, and the broader community.

Student Activism and Civic Engagement

HEIs must honor and respect students' right to peaceful protest, in line with human rights standards and General Comment 37 of the UN Human Rights Committee on the right of peaceful assembly. This includes supporting the creation and activities of student organizations or working groups focused on human rights and atrocity prevention, and creating spaces for constructive discussions on sensitive topics related to mass atrocities, in order to facilitate dialogue.

HEIs should also honor, support, and encourage students to engage in civic issues related to mass atrocities and prevention strategies, while maintaining a balanced academic environment. HEIs can achieve this by:

- Partnering with NGOs and international organizations to provide students with volunteer opportunities related to atrocity prevention and post-conflict reconciliation.
- Developing internship programs with relevant organizations, allowing students to gain practical experience in the field.
- Encouraging students to engage in community education projects about mass atrocities and prevention strategies.

Case Studies: Educate

Yale's Genocide Studies Program (GSP)[72]

Founded in January 1998 at Yale University's MacMillan Center, the Genocide Studies

[72] "The Mass Atrocities in the Digital Era (MADE)," MacMillan Center for International and Area Studies at Yale, 2 Oct. 2024, macmillan.yale.edu/gsp/made. Accessed 2 Oct. 2024.

Case Studies: Educate

Program (GSP) conducts research, seminars, and conferences on comparative, interdisciplinary, and policy-related aspects of genocide. The GSP also provides training for researchers from regions affected by genocide, equipping them with the tools needed to advance understanding and policy development in this field.

A key initiative within the program is "The Mass Atrocities in the Digital Era (MADE)," a pioneering project focused on the intersection of technology and mass atrocities. MADE is the first of its kind and explores how emerging digital technologies influence mass atrocities, with an emphasis on accountability, corporate responsibility, and genocide scholarship. The initiative seeks to develop a new generation of scholars and practitioners while creating legal, normative, and business frameworks to safeguard human rights in the digital age.

Binghamton University's Institute for Genocide and Mass Atrocity Prevention (I-GMAP)

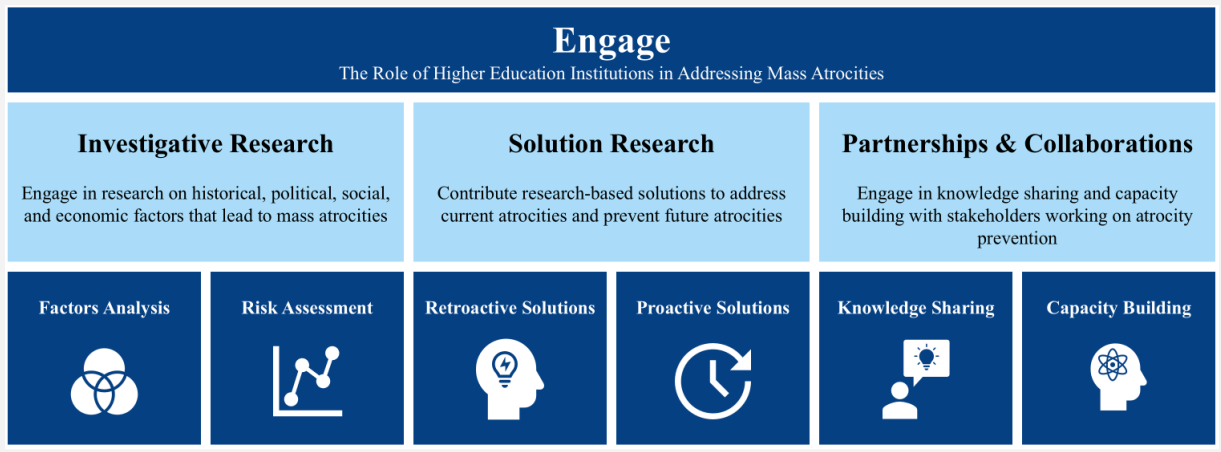
The I-GMAP is committed to positioning the university as a leader in the international atrocity prevention community. The institute engages in a range of curricular, scholarly, and outreach activities aimed at promoting atrocity prevention. I-GMAP offers the world's first Master of Science in Genocide and Mass Atrocity Prevention (GMAP), along with an interdisciplinary undergraduate minor, a graduate certificate, and several other key initiatives. These include:

- hosting post-doctoral fellows who contribute to advancing research and teaching in atrocity prevention;
- overseeing the Charles E. Scheidt Faculty Fellows in Atrocity Prevention program, which supports faculty members committed to the field;
- organizing the annual *Frontiers of Prevention* conference, bringing together global scholars and practitioners;
- hosting resident and visiting practitioners who share insights on the successes and challenges in atrocity prevention;
- developing partnerships with NGOs and other academic institutions to further promote best practices in preventing atrocities.

Engage

Universities are well-positioned to conduct rigorous research on the causes, dynamics, and prevention of mass atrocities.

Figure 3: The role of higher education institutions to engage and alleviate atrocities.



Investigative Research

Academics have a responsibility to engage in research that uncovers the historical, political, social, and economic factors that lead to mass atrocities. Researchers can also develop tools and frameworks for identifying risk factors that make societies vulnerable to large-scale identity-based violence.

Solution Research

HEIs can contribute research-based solutions to prevent future atrocities, informing both local and international policymaking. Academic studies can inform policymakers and practitioners about effective prevention and intervention strategies by showcasing evidence-based solutions.

Partnerships and Collaboration

Universities can serve as hubs for bringing together academics, policymakers, and practitioners to exchange ideas and best practices. Institutions can work with legal scholars and practitioners to support international justice initiatives, including accountability for perpetrators through mechanisms like the International Criminal Court. HEIs can also offer training programs and resources to support organizations involved in prevention efforts.

Case Studies: Engage
The Palestine Program for Health and Human Rights (PPHHR)[73] The PPHHR is a collaborative initiative between Harvard University's François-Xavier

[73] "Palestine Program for Health and Human Rights," Harvard FXB Center, 2 Oct. 2024, fxb.harvard.edu/racial-justice/palestine-program/. Accessed 2 Oct. 2024.

Case Studies: Engage
Bagnoud (FXB) Center for Health and Human Rights and the Institute of Community and Public Health at Birzeit University. This program serves as an academic hub dedicated to examining the health of Palestinians through interdisciplinary perspectives, including historical, political, and social science approaches. By employing widely recognized frameworks in health and human rights, the PPHHR aims to connect the drivers of Palestinian health with those who have worked with similarly affected populations globally. In July 2023, the program launched its inaugural Palestine Social Medicine Course, in collaboration with the World Health Organization's office for the occupied Palestinian territory. This course aimed to foster a critical understanding of the social and structural determinants of health within Palestinian society and encouraged participants to engage deeply with the societal factors that influence health outcomes. The PPHHR's programming activities include (i) knowledge production such as utilizing a "transformational framing" theory to advance new methodologies for understanding Palestinian health; (ii) an education program for students, faculty, and community human rights leaders; (iii) community engagement through collaboration with an international network of institutions, organizations, and individuals; and (iv) a series of webinars aimed at broadening public discourse on Palestinian health and human rights issues.

Examine

It is within the global HEIs' social responsibility to advocate for communities affected by mass atrocities, by ensuring institutional practices promote ethical responsibility (in both supply chains and cooperation programs) and by engaging with stakeholders working on atrocity prevention, to support their mission to share knowledge or build capabilities.

Figure 4: The role of higher education institutions to examine their involvement in atrocities.

Ethical Responsibility

Universities must examine their own practices and partnerships to ensure they are not complicit in ongoing atrocities. HEIs should scrutinize their supply chains to avoid sourcing materials or services linked to human rights abuses. Universities must also carefully consider partnerships with institutions in countries committing atrocities, balancing engagement with ethical concerns. In addition, universities must also carefully consider their investments in corporations or institutions that are complicit in ongoing atrocities.

Some global universities have formally revisited their cooperations and investments and adopted measures to ensure they are not complicit in supporting or benefiting from ongoing atrocities. These actions, outlined in the case studies below, demonstrate that HEIs can adopt proactive, ethical stances without compromising their academic missions. By taking such steps, universities can lead by example, aligning their values with the broader global struggle for justice and human dignity.

Case Studies: Examine
Hampshire College (USA) [74] [75] In 2009, Hampshire College became the first college in the United States to divest from companies based on their involvement in the Israeli occupation of Palestine. The companies (including Caterpillar, United Technologies, General Electric, ITT, Motorola and Terex) have

[74] "Hampshire Cuts Ties with Companies Invested in Israel," The Amherst Student, 18 Feb. 2009, amherststudent-archive.amherst.edu/current/news/view.php%3Fyear=2008-2009&issue=16&section=news&article=01.html . Accessed 16 Sept. 2024.
[75] "Chapter 6: Divestment," Hampshire College, 16 Sept. 2024, www.hampshire.edu/chapter-6-divestment. Accessed 16 Sept. 2024.

all provided the Israeli army with equipment and services in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

The college's administration shared that the decision to divest from the companies was based on the moral standards to which the college holds its business partners. According to a statement released by the Board of Trustees, "The investment committee's decision was based on the consultant's finding that [the companies] engaged in multiple violations of the college's investment policy". The violations cited by the Board were discovered in a comprehensive review of its finances by the college's investment committee and a consultant. The college found that the companies' practices (including unfair labor practices, environmental abuse, military weapons manufacturing, and unsafe workplace settings) violated the college's policy of maintaining "socially responsible investments." Divestment is not new to Hampshire; the college was also the first in the United States to divest from South Africa, in 1977, due to Apartheid. Soon after, the college severed its connections with the South African government (an action that schools from across the nation followed).

OsloMet, University of Southeastern Norway, University of Bergen, Bergen School of Architecture, Nord University, University of Stavanger (Norway) [76] [77] [78]

Six Norwegian universities have suspended agreements and ties with Israeli universities complicit in the occupation of Palestinian territories.

- OsloMet ended ties with Haifa University and pledged not to enter into any new agreements with complicit Israeli universities. Additionally, the university is ending procurement contracts with suppliers linked to Israel's military or illegal settlements.
- The University of Southeastern Norway ended ties with Haifa University and Hadassah Academic College, sharing that they want to give a clear message that the warfare that Israel is carrying out is unacceptable and undermines the democratic foundation on which all universities must build.
- The University of Bergen ended its cooperation agreements with Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design after it created a workshop on campus to design and sew uniforms and gear for the Israeli military.
- The Bergen School of Architecture ended its cooperation agreements with Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design over its work with the Israeli military.
- Nord University ended co-operation with Israeli institutions, including its exchange agreements with two Israeli universities. Nord said it would "discontinue any activities in these agreements" and would not enter any new agreements with Israeli universities until

[76] "Four Norwegian Universities Cut Ties with Israel Over Gaza Genocide," BRICUP, 21 Feb. 2024, bricup.org.uk/article/four-norwegian-universities-cut-ties-with-complicit-israeli-universities/#:~:text=OsloMet%2C%20the%20University%20of%20South%20Eastern%20Norway%2C%20the,Boycott%20of%20Israel%20%28PACBI%29%20describes%20the%20decisions%20here. Accessed 16 Sept. 2024.

[77] "Norwegian University Cuts All Ties with Israel Over Violations of International Law," AA, 6 Jun. 2024, www.aa.com.tr/en/europe/norwegian-university-cuts-all-ties-with-israel-over-violations-of-international-law/3242525. Accessed 16 Sept. 2024.

[78] "Why Five Institutions Suspended Ties with Israeli Universities," University World News, 5 Apr. 2024, www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20240405121109461. Accessed 16 Sept. 2024.

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further notice.
- University of Stavanger (UiS) decided to terminate all institutional agreements and cooperation with Israeli institutions in response to its complicity in human rights and international law violations.

University of Leeds, University of Manchester (UK) [79] [80] [81]

In 2018, the University of Leeds became the first university in the UK to divest from companies (Airbus, United Technologies, and Keyence Corporation) that provided arms and services to the Israeli military and were found to be complicit in the violation of Palestinian human rights. The university's investment managers also placed another company (HSBC) under review for its provision of loans to Elbit Systems, Caterpillar, and BAE Systems, all of which sell weapons and military equipment to the Israeli government. In 2020, The University of Manchester followed suit and divested from companies complicit in Israel's occupation of Palestine. This included Caterpillar, a long-standing supplier of heavy machinery used to demolish Palestinian homes and infrastructure by the Israeli Military, and Booking.com, one of 112 companies identified by the UN for enabling Israel's illegal settlements. In a statement shared by the university's Investment Committee, the university said that its Policy for Socially Responsible Investment states that the University will adopt investment strategies that seek to "minimize or, ideally, eliminate, irresponsible corporate behavior … leading to these ESG issues."

It is essential to note that in many of the cases listed above, the universities' decision to divest or terminate cooperations with entities complicit in atrocities is typically preceded by campaigns from student organizations and faculty groups, which are often met with resistance or inaction from the universities' leaderships. The student- and faculty-driven advocacy campaigns are a testament to the importance of student activism and civic engagement (part of the "Educate" pillar detailed earlier in the report) and the importance of faculty engagement and participation in decision making (part of the "Engage" pillar detailed earlier in the report). Similarly, the student- and faculty-driven advocacy campaigns are typically contingent on the availability of information on universities' partnerships, investments, and supply chains. This emphasizes the need for transparency and the disclosure of universities' partnerships, investments, and supply chains in order to ensure universities are held accountable for agreements they enter and maintain. Finally, the presence of institutional policies (such as an ESG or Socially Responsible Investment Policy, or an Ethical Investment Policy) is another

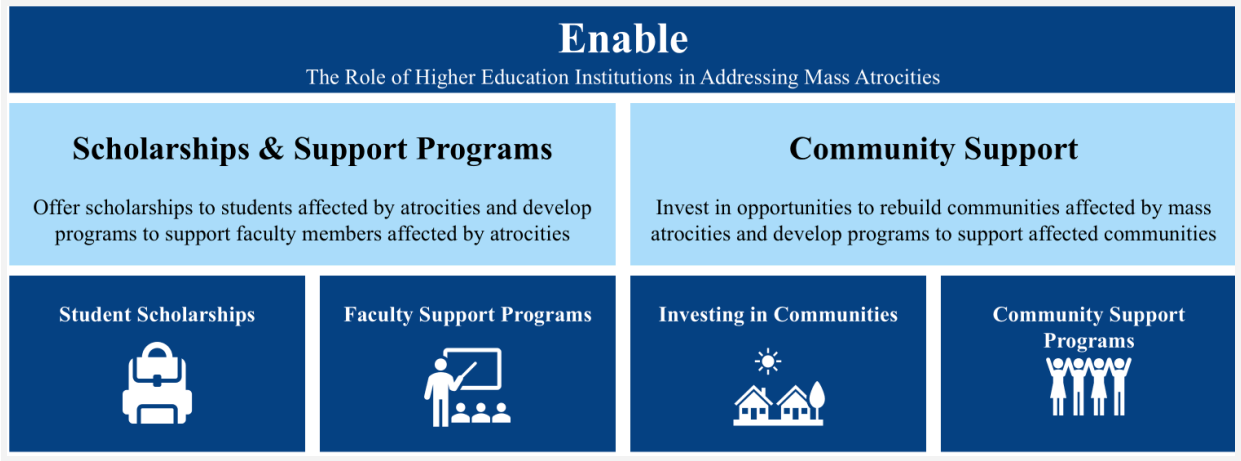
[79] "In First, UK University Divests from Firms Supplying Israel Army," Middle East Monitor, 5 Nov. 2018, www.middleeastmonitor.com/20181105-in-first-uk-university-divests-from-firms-supplying-israel-army/. Accessed 16 Sept. 2024.
[80] "Manchester University Divests from Companies Complicit in the Israeli Occupation,." Middle East Monitor, 5 Aug. 2020, www.middleeastmonitor.com/20200805-manchester-university-divests-from-companies-complicit-in-the-israeli-occupation/. Accessed 16 Sept. 2024.
[81] "Explanation of Investment Decision Regarding Caterpillar," University of Manchester, 19 Feb. 2019, documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=42494. Accessed 16 Sept. 2024.

catalyst to promote ethical responsibilities in university agreements to safeguard and guide universities into entering and maintaining agreements that are compliant with a set of agreed-on and approved ethical standards that all suppliers, partners, and investments must adhere to.

Enable

Global HEIs have a responsibility in supporting the victims and survivors of mass atrocities through the provision of scholarships to prospective students and support programs for faculty members from areas affected by mass atrocities to create continuity in their livelihoods and contributions to their respective communities. The support programs do not need to be limited to students and faculty, they can also extend to the wider community, through investments in opportunities to rebuild the infrastructure and capabilities of communities affected by mass atrocities.

Figure 5: The role of higher education institutions to enable those affected by atrocities.



Scholarships and Support Programs

Universities can offer scholarships and special support programs for survivors of atrocities, refugees, and displaced persons, helping them rebuild their lives through education.

Community Support Programs

HEIs should invest in opportunities to rebuild communities affected by mass atrocities and develop programs to support affected communities.

Case Studies: Enable

Oxford University [82] [83]

In 2024, Oxford University launched the Palestine Crisis Scholarship Scheme as part of its broader commitment to support the advancement of education and the rebuilding of higher education in Gaza and the West Bank. The scheme offers full graduate scholarships to students displaced by the humanitarian crisis in the region, allowing them to pursue studies at Oxford starting in the 2025-26 academic year. This initiative is the latest in a series of scholarship programs aimed at supporting students from displacement backgrounds, reflecting Oxford's long-standing dedication to refugee scholars and its role as a University of Sanctuary.

The Palestine Crisis Scholarship Scheme is specifically designed to address the educational needs of students affected by the ongoing crisis in Gaza and the West Bank, where higher education has been severely disrupted due to the destruction of universities and widespread displacement of people. Since October 2023, hundreds of thousands have been displaced, and the higher education system in the region has been largely suspended. In response, Oxford seeks to provide sanctuary and opportunities for displaced students to continue their education in a supportive and inclusive environment. The scholarship covers tuition fees, provides a living cost grant, and includes additional support for arrival costs.

In addition to the scholarships, Oxford's Bodleian Libraries have made online services and resources available to Palestinian students and scholars who have been displaced or are currently studying in the region. The portal, accessible in both Arabic and English, allows users to access Oxford's vast library resources, including SOLO (Search Oxford's Libraries Online), which provides access to resources. Other services include Scan and Deliver, an electronic document delivery service, and Digital Bodleian, which offers access to over a million images of rare books, manuscripts, and other treasures from the Bodleian Libraries and Oxford college libraries.

University of Waterloo [84]

The Student Relief Fellowship at the University of Waterloo is an initiative aimed at supporting students who currently reside, or have previously resided, in the West Bank and Gaza. This fellowship is particularly designed for individuals pursuing research-based graduate studies, either at the master's or doctoral level, across a selection of faculties at the university. Recipients of this fellowship will not only benefit from financial assistance but also

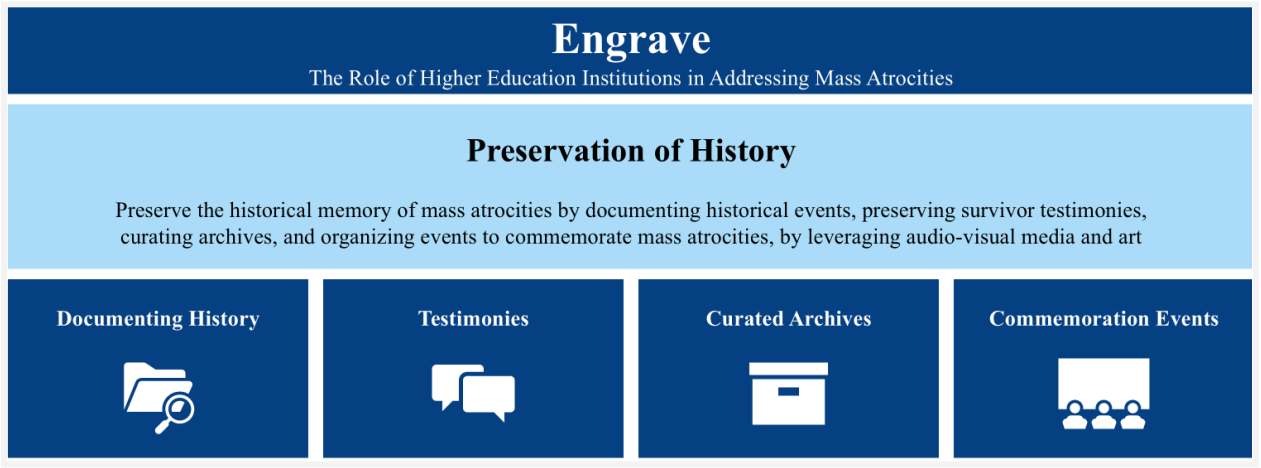
[82] "Palestine Crisis Scholarship Scheme," University of Oxford Admissions, 2 Oct. 2024, www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/fees-funding-and-scholarship-search/crisis-scholarship-scheme. Accessed 2 Oct. 2024.
[83] "Oxford University to Support Students and Academics from Gaza and the West Bank," University of Oxford, 19 Sept. 2024, www.ox.ac.uk/news/2024-09-19-oxford-university-support-students-and-academics-gaza-and-west-bank. Accessed 2 Oct. 2024.
[84] "Global Student Relief Initiative" University of Waterloo, 2 Oct. 2024, uwaterloo.ca/future-graduate-students/funding/funding-research-based-graduate-programs/global-student-relief-initiative?fbclid=PAZXh0bgNhZW0CMTEAAabTAQaL-twavKcMIgcrCocMR3-06ZI6bMedjZjcCpIEj8Zgx5GN-Ylnk_M_aem_AeeoitqGHDFQNg_tlaomDA. Accessed 2 Oct. 2024.

Case Studies: Enable
receive tailored administrative support to enhance their academic experience. Recipients admitted to a full-time graduate program will receive an entrance fellowship of at least $10,000 in addition to other forms of financial and academic support provided by their respective faculties. A key feature of this fellowship is the provision of enhanced administrative assistance to aid students in securing a suitable graduate supervisor to ensure a more seamless transition into their academic journey at the university. The Student Relief Fellowship represents a significant effort by the University of Waterloo to address the educational needs of students affected by the humanitarian crisis in the West Bank and Gaza. By providing both financial support and enhanced academic guidance, the fellowship seeks to empower displaced students to continue their education and contribute to global knowledge production in their respective fields.

Engrave

Global HEIs hold a responsibility in preserving the historical memory of mass atrocities by documenting historical events, safeguarding survivor testimonies, curating archives, and organizing events to commemorate mass atrocities. HEIs must also leverage audio-visual media and art to ensure that these atrocities are remembered and understood by future generations. By doing so, universities not only honor the victims and survivors but also contribute to a broader global consciousness that helps prevent the recurrence of such tragedies. This proactive engagement reinforces the moral and educational mission of HEIs to serve as stewards of historical truth and defenders of human rights.

Figure 6: The role of higher education institutions to preserve the history of atrocities.



Preservation of History

HEIs can play a pivotal role in preserving the historical memory of mass atrocities by documenting events, safeguarding survivor testimonies, and curating archives. Through extensive research and meticulous documentation, universities create vast repositories that serve as invaluable resources for scholars, educators, and the public. These archives, which often include documents, photographs, and artifacts, not only preserve the memory of atrocities but also provide insights into significant historical experiences, as illustrated in the case studies below.

In addition to archiving, universities actively engage in public education initiatives aimed at promoting remembrance and historical awareness. By leveraging technology, many institutions have launched digital preservation projects that ensure evidence of human rights violations and mass atrocities is protected and accessible for future generations. These efforts enhance public understanding and contribute to the global fight for justice and accountability.

Moreover, universities can integrate the preservation of historical memory into their curricula, training future generations of scholars and practitioners to continue this essential work. By doing so, HEIs ensure that the lessons of the past will not not be forgotten and contribute to fostering a more informed, empathetic, and resilient society capable of learning from history and preventing future atrocities.

Case Studies: Enable

UNC Charlotte's "Preserving Memory in the Digital Age" Course[85]

UNC Charlotte's "Preserving Memory in the Digital Age" course is designed to expand students' understanding of cemeteries and their surrounding communities through hands-on research and experiential learning. The course focuses on historical preservation, using Jewish cemeteries in Eastern Europe as case studies. Many of these cemeteries face ongoing threats from neglect and a lack of public awareness about their historical significance and current condition. A key element of the course is a field project in which students travel to Poland to engage in cemetery stabilization, preservation, and interpretive work. This hands-on experience is complemented by in-depth research and a humanities-focused curriculum with a global perspective. While in Europe, students also visit Auschwitz, several museums, and world heritage sites, learning firsthand how historians approach commemoration and memorialization.

By immersing students in public history, the course offers a unique opportunity to explore how historians collaborate with communities, tackle complex issues of memory, and utilize modern digital tools to create materials for public engagement. It not only provides practical

[85] "Preserving Memory: Study of Cemeteries' Role in Communities Takes Global Approach," UNC Charlotte, 26 June 2018, https://chess.charlotte.edu/2018/06/26/preserving-memory-study-of-cemeteries-role-in-communities-takes-global-approach/ . Accessed 10 Oct. 2024.

Case Studies: Enable

experience but also encourages students to think critically about how memory is preserved and presented to the public. Through this process, students gain insight into the broader role historians play in preserving and interpreting historical legacies for future generations.

Columbia University's "Anticaste Archives: Preserving Historical and Cultural Memory" Initiative[86]

Columbia University has spearheaded "The Anticaste Archives: Preserving Historical and Cultural Memory" initiative to preserve and provide greater access to primary sources that document the histories, cultures, and experiences of marginalized communities. This project strengthens the intersection of scholarship, activism, preservation, and the dissemination of knowledge. The project focuses on creating a digital archive of materials produced by communities in India advocating against caste-based discrimination. The Columbia Global Center in Mumbai plays a pivotal role in supporting the project by providing physical space for the archive''s development.

Through this initiative, Columbia University aims to create a lasting and accessible resource for scholars, activists, and the global public, fostering greater understanding of and appreciation for the fight for social justice in India.

Conclusion

HEIs hold a profound responsibility not only to educate but to actively engage in global efforts to prevent, address, and heal from mass atrocities. It is a sobering paradox that while HEIs champion critical thinking, human rights, and conflict resolution, the world remains scarred by persistent wars and atrocities—exposing the gap between academic ideals and real-world impact.

To close this gap, HEIs must move beyond theoretical discourse and take bold, decisive action. They must scrutinize their partnerships, investments, and supply chains to ensure that they are not inadvertently complicit in perpetuating harm. Failing to do so is a grave miscalculation with far-reaching consequences. Furthermore, HEIs must lead in preserving the memory of past atrocities, using archives, documentation, and creative mediums to safeguard historical truth and prevent future violence.

Finally, HEIs have the power to shape the leaders, policymakers, and global citizens of tomorrow. By embracing their role with moral clarity and purpose, they can shift from passive observers to driving forces in the pursuit of justice, peace, and human dignity.

[86] "Preserving Historical and Cultural Memory," Columbia University, 30 January 2024, https://globalcenters.columbia.edu/news/preserving-historical-and-cultural-memory. Accessed 2 Oct. 2024.

Postcolonial Solidarity:

South Asian Nations and Diaspora Support for Palestine

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Abstract

The symposium explores the intricate relationship between the postcolonial South Asian nations of India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh and their solidarity with Palestine. The origins of these nations through the traumatic events of British colonialism and the Partition of 1947 created a foundation for a shared struggle against imperialist forces. This historical context has bred a natural empathy and solidarity with the Palestinian cause, which is similarly rooted in resistance against colonial and settler-colonial oppression.

The narrative of solidarity has transcended borders and has strongly influenced South Asian American college students, especially in the context of post-9/11 New York City. The racial framework of "AMEMSA" (Arab, Middle Eastern, Muslim, and South Asian) that emerged in the wake of 9/11 has facilitated a sense of collective identity and shared experiences of marginalization and racial profiling among South Asians and Palestinians in the diaspora.

This essay will delve into how South Asian American students have channeled this solidarity into tangible activism, mainly through efforts like endowment divestment campaigns aimed at severing institutional financial ties with entities that support the Israeli occupation of Palestine. These initiatives are not only a testament to the enduring legacy of anti-colonial resistance but also reflect the unique sociopolitical dynamics of New York City, where the proximity and interaction of diverse communities foster cross-cultural alliances.

By examining these multifaceted connections, we will highlight the role of universities in acknowledging and addressing genocide, ethnic cleansing, and mass atrocities while also supporting student-led movements that seek justice and equity on a global scale.

Background

The creation of postcolonial South Asian nations—India, Pakistan, and later Bangladesh—paralleled the establishment of Palestine in significant ways, with British colonialism playing a central role in both processes. Both regions were shaped by British imperial strategies of division and control, ultimately leading to territorial partitions that bred long-lasting conflict and displacement. In India and Palestine, British policies were informed by both colonial exploitation and global geopolitics. In India, the British Raj governed for over two centuries, exploiting resources and fostering divisions between religious and ethnic groups, primarily Hindus and Muslims. As independence movements grew in strength, the British, struggling to maintain control post-World War II, hastily drew borders to partition India into two states—India and Pakistan—under the guise of religious self-determination (Ghosh, 2021). This resulted in the largest mass migration in human history, with millions displaced along religious lines, and an ensuing cycle of communal violence that has left scars still visible today (“Oral History Excerpts,” 2011).

Similarly, in Palestine, the British Mandate (1917-1948) involved the contradictory promises of a national homeland to both Jews (via the Balfour Declaration) and Palestinians (Mazza, 2012). Like in South Asia, the British exit was marked by partition—in this case, a United Nations plan to split Palestine into Arab and Jewish states. The result was the creation of Israel in 1948 and the *Nakba* (catastrophe), where hundreds of thousands of Palestinians were displaced, much like the refugees of the Indian Partition (Mast & El-Zabri, 2008). This shared history of colonial exploitation and forced displacement fuels contemporary South Asian solidarity with the Palestinian cause, especially within the South Asian diaspora, as it resonates with the legacy of partition and the ongoing struggle for justice in both regions.

Postcolonial Articulations of South-Asian Solidarity

Postcolonial South Asian leaders, such as India's Jawaharlal Nehru, Pakistan's Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, and Bangladesh's Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, often expressed solidarity with Palestine. Nehru, for example, was an outspoken supporter of anti-colonial movements worldwide, including the Palestinian cause, positioning India as a non-aligned leader in global politics (Heptulla, 1991). Despite later shifts in India's foreign policy, particularly after establishing ties with Israel in the 1990s, this early stance symbolized a broader postcolonial empathy with Palestinians. Bhutto of Pakistan was even more direct in linking the struggles, referring to the Palestinian cause as intertwined with Pakistan’s postcolonial struggles against Western imperialism. Yasser Arafat, leader of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), found significant allies in these South Asian leaders, particularly Pakistan. During the 1970s, Bhutto championed the Palestinian cause internationally, declaring solidarity at the 1974 Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) summit (“PM Says Pakistan Supports Independent Palestine State,” 2010). Arafat also developed connections with Bangladeshi leaders like Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, who recognized the parallels between the Palestinian liberation movement and Bangladesh's fight for independence from Pakistan in 1971.

Both Pakistan and Bangladesh have historically refused to recognize Israel as a legitimate state, reflecting their solidarity with the Palestinian cause and their broader opposition to Israel's policies regarding the occupation of Palestinian territories. For Pakistan, this position is rooted in its founding as a state based on the protection and advocacy of Muslim interests. Pakistan has consistently aligned itself with the Palestinian cause, viewing it as part of a broader Muslim solidarity against Israeli colonialism. Pakistani passports contain

a clause stating that they are valid for travel to all countries except Israel, symbolizing the country's refusal to engage diplomatically or economically with Israel, as long as Palestinian statehood remains unresolved ("Pakistan to UAE: Can't Recognize Israel Until Palestine Resolved," 2020). Bangladesh, which gained independence from Pakistan in 1971, shares this anti-colonial and pan-Islamic stance. While Bangladesh lifted its travel ban to Israel in 2021, there is "no Israeli embassy in Bangladesh and no bilateral trade between the two countries" ("Confusion as Bangladesh Drops 'Except Israel' from New Passports," 2021). Bangladesh's position is informed by its solidarity with Muslim-majority nations and the global anti-imperialist sentiment prevalent in many postcolonial nations. Although Bangladesh has developed diplomatic relations with numerous countries since its independence, it has remained firm in its support for Palestinian self-determination and its opposition to Israeli occupation ("Confusion as Bangladesh Drops 'Except Israel' from New Passports," 2021).

State-sanctioned Violence, Genocides, and Parallels

The occupation of Palestine and Israel's avoidance of accountability for war crimes parallels several other instances of impunity and state violence in modern South Asia, such as the Bangladeshi genocide of 1971, the 1984 Sikh genocide in India, the Rohingya genocide in Myanmar and their displacement as refugees and asylees into neighboring nations, the Tamil genocide in Sri Lanka, and the ongoing militarization of Kashmir. These events are all marked by mass atrocities committed by state actors, widespread civilian suffering, and the failure of international mechanisms to hold perpetrators accountable. In 1971, during Bangladesh's war for independence from Pakistan, an estimated 300,000 to 3 million Bengalis were killed by the Pakistani military in what is widely recognized as a genocide (Bass, 2016). Despite the scale of the violence, critical perpetrators of the genocide

have largely escaped justice, with international pressure on Pakistan for accountability remaining minimal (Bass, 2016). Similarly, the 1984 anti-Sikh pogroms in India, which occurred after the assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, resulted in the killing of thousands of Sikhs (Grewal, 2007). The violence was organized and supported by political actors, and many of those responsible have evaded justice, perpetuating a cycle of impunity for state-sanctioned violence.

The Rohingya, a predominantly Muslim ethnic minority group from Myanmar, have faced severe persecution and violence from the Myanmar government and military for decades. This oppression has escalated significantly since 2017, when a large-scale military crackdown led to a humanitarian crisis. The Rohingya have been subjected to mass killings, sexual violence, arson, and forced displacement (Foster & Roberts, 2022, p.117). Over 700,000 Rohingya fled to neighboring Bangladesh, where they live in overcrowded and under-resourced refugee camps (Gorlick, 2022). The Myanmar government has denied them citizenship, restricted their access to essential services, and implemented policies that undermine their fundamental human rights (Foster & Roberts, 2022, p.118). The treatment of the Rohingya parallels the oppression faced by Palestinians in several ways. Both groups experience severe restrictions on their movement and access to resources, as well as systemic violence and discrimination from state authorities. For the Rohingya, state-sponsored violence and discrimination are rooted in ethnic and religious identity, while for Palestinians, the oppression is also linked to national and territorial disputes.

Categorized as a “cultural, physical, economic, biological, and environmental genocide” (Docker, 2017), the Sinhalese genocide of the Tamils predates the 2009 civil war in Sri Lanka and persists to this day and age. In 1981, anti-Tamil riots led to the obliteration of

more than 100,000 manuscripts and palm-leaf inscriptions from the Jaffna Library and the destruction of a Hindu temple as well as of an independent Tamil newspaper office (Docker, 2017). This strategy is mirrored in how Israel looted Palestinian archives (“Israeli Damage to Archives, Libraries, and Museums in Gaza, October 2023–January 2024,” 2024), destroyed the Al-Masjid al-Omari al-Kabir, regarded as the first mosque in the Gaza Strip (Saber, 2024), and killed at least 116 Palestinian journalists (“Journalist Casualties in the Israel-Gaza War,” 2024) in the present-day. Additionally, the “settler-styled” confiscation of Tamil land, which is then redistributed to Sri Lankan military families, the “Sinhalization” of names of villages, the impairment of the Tamil fishing industry, the suppression of mourning rites for Tamils, and continued incarceration of Tamils (Docker, 2017) tragically mirrors how the Zionist project has carried out house demolitions, imposed colonizer naming on lands in Palestine, seized Palestinian farmlands, reduced Palestinian access to fishing, water, fuel, electricity, and food, attempted the destruction of memory, and continued the violation of Palestinian human rights (Docker, 2017).

Today, Kashmir, a region claimed by both India and Pakistan but primarily governed by India, has been subject to a “postcolonial siege manifest in heavy militarization, illegal occupation, and human rights violation” (Zia, 2020, p.357) since the partition of British India in 1947. By “criminalizing the Kashmiri demand for self-determination and independence” (Zia, 2020, p. 363) and propagandizing violence as a valid response to the “Indo-Pak territorial dispute” (Zia, 2020, p.369), the Indian government's repeated use of military force, draconian laws like the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA), and escalating human rights violations in Kashmir are allowed to persist without international accountability. The consistent solidarity between Kashmiri people and Palestinians is a profound testament to shared

struggles against oppression and occupation. This connection is rooted in their parallel experiences of displacement, violence, and the struggle to maintain their cultural and political identities in the face of overwhelming odds.

The Case for Diasporic Solidarity

Descendants of the South Asian American diaspora, today the grandchildren of partition, are influenced by the unresolved traumas and political realities of the subcontinent, have been engaged in university divestment campaigns targeting institutional investments in Israel. More narrowly, the narrative of decolonial solidarity with Palestine has deeply resonated with South Asian American college students, particularly in post-9/11 New York City, where the racialization of Muslims, Arabs, and South Asians under the "AMEMSA" (Arab, Middle Eastern, Muslim, and South Asian) framework became more prominent (“AMEMSA Fact Sheet,” 2014). In the wake of the September 11 attacks, people from these diverse groups were often lumped together as a monolithic "other," largely due to their perceived cultural, religious, and ethnic proximity to Islam, despite significant differences amongst them. The framework emerged as a way to describe how U.S. government surveillance, racial profiling, and discrimination targeted individuals from these communities under a broad label, regardless of their specific nationality, religion, or identity, with policies and practices such as mass surveillance, deportation, visa restrictions, and airport profiling disproportionately impacted Arab, Muslim, South Asian, and Middle Eastern individuals (Duvvuru, 2009). The AMEMSA framework reflects how these communities experienced overlapping forms of state repression, media stereotyping, and public suspicion, particularly in

the context of national security concerns. Summarily, this has drawn South Asian Americans into shared struggles with other marginalized communities, including Palestinians.

The Global War on Terror, as it was announced in the early 2000s, coupled with the racial profiling of South Asians and Arabs, heightened awareness among South Asian American students about issues of imperialism, occupation, and racial oppression. Many of these students see parallels between their own communities' experiences with post-9/11 Islamophobia and the broader oppression faced by Palestinians under Israeli occupation. Maira (2016), in her conversations with Arab, South Asian, and Afghan American youth, found the following:

> For youth who are construed as racialized objects of the War on Terror, the critique of imperial violence in the name of bringing human rights to other populations elsewhere highlights the paradox of why there are different civil rights and human rights for different (racialized) populations. The exceptionalism of U.S. racial wars and U.S.-backed military occupation and invasion drove many youth to engage with the human rights paradigm to make the case that the U.S. should be held accountable for its violation of international human rights law, given that there are subjects who do not have rights, such as in Palestine or Afghanistan or even here in the U.S., that the imperial state purports to support (Maria, 2016, p.121).

The shared history of colonial partition in South Asia and Palestine, both overseen by British rule, further reinforces this sense of solidarity, as both communities experienced displacement, division, and lasting geopolitical conflicts. Moreover, this historical and racial context has fueled activism on university campuses, mainly through divestment movements targeting institutional investments in companies complicit in the Israeli occupation. Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) chapters across various universities, including those in NYC,

have seen active participation from South Asian American students. They view their advocacy as an extension of their community's anti-colonial legacy and a response to modern forms of oppression, connecting their postcolonial identity with the Palestinian struggle for self-determination.

Inter-generational Resistance Movements

In this way, the solidarity between South Asian American students and the Palestinian cause is rooted not only in shared historical narratives but also in the lived realities of racialization and resistance in post-9/11 America, particularly when contextualizing the movement for endowment divestment from Israel today. “Guided by Global South people's knowledge, reimagining, and reclaiming of worlds, of what it means to be human,” students are actively engaged in decolonization from a “rehumanizing and abolitionist” standpoint (Atallah & Dutta, 2021). The anti-apartheid divestment campaign from South Africa during the 1980s played a pivotal role in shaping campus activism around ethical investments, and of note is South African Indians' participation in these efforts. Indians in South Africa, as part of a racially oppressed group under the Afrikaners’ apartheid, understood the importance of international solidarity, including the vital role that economic pressure through divestment could play. Figures like Fatima Meer and Yusuf Dadoo were prominent Indian South African activists who worked alongside Black leaders like Nelson Mandela and Walter Sisulu to resist apartheid. On U.S. college campuses, students mobilized, demanding their universities divest from companies supporting the apartheid regime. This movement was one of the largest student-led campaigns in U.S. history, linking racial oppression in South Africa to broader global struggles for justice.

In the United States, “South Asian, Arab, and Afghan American youth often encountered or deployed human rights in antiwar organizing, in the context of mobilization against the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, drone strikes in Af-Pak, and Israeli wars and military occupation” (Maira, 2016, p.121). The immediate post-9/11 era saw a heightened surveillance and racial profiling of AMEMSA students on U.S. campuses. This racialization resulted in increased scrutiny of political activities, especially those tied to critiques of U.S. foreign policy or solidarity with Muslim-majority nations like Palestine. AMEMSA students were often targeted by law enforcement and campus authorities, stifling their ability to organize freely and express dissent. The surveillance of Muslim student groups and mosques, as well as tactics like entrapment and phone tapping, created an atmosphere of fear and repression. Today, this legacy of post-9/11 surveillance continues to echo on college campuses, where students advocating for divestment from Israel face institutional pushback. Much like during the anti-apartheid movement and also implementing the intra-community lessons learned from the first decade of the 21st century, students are using divestment as a tool to challenge their universities' financial complicity in human rights abuses—in this case, the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories. However, universities are, on the whole, resistant, suppressing divestment campaigns through administrative barriers, increasing scrutiny of pro-Palestinian student groups, and making accusations of anti-Semitism.

This shift is also evident in political engagement patterns among South Asian youth. Regarding both presidential candidates in the 2024 race, young people were disengaged from President Joe Biden due to “(his) apathy tied to the war in Gaza and Biden being an incumbent.” At the same time, former President Donald Trump was seen as “a part of a concerted effort to either erase race or use race to divide America” (Roy, 2024). However, the

nomination of Vice President Kamala Harris as a presidential candidate sparked a surge in political involvement, with previously disengaged individuals showing newfound interest. In fact, “in a span of two weeks, South Asian organizers have hosted dozens of events across the country… where both South Asian men and women hosted Zoom calls with tens of thousands of people in attendance (Roy, 2024).” Yet, despite this rise in engagement, many young people continue to challenge the Democratic Party’s stance on Palestine and demand meaningful action.

New Decade, New Governments: Complacency and Complicity across the Subcontinent

While displays of solidarity exist within the South Asian diaspora, it is critical to address its complacency, or worse, complicity, in the ongoing genocide. Firstly, several South Asian countries have established diplomatic ties with Israel and have offered their support. Secondly, there is a marked rise in the number of nations that are aligning with ethnocentric ideologies and implicitly expressing solidarity with Israel’s actions. Lastly, governments operating on these ethnonationalist platforms are not only endorsing but also engaging in acts of violence that tragically mirror the oppression and brutality witnessed in Palestine.

From a diplomatic perspective, around 700 Indian personnel are stationed at the Israel-Lebanon border as part of UNIFIL (United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon), tasked with maintaining peace and preventing further escalation (Sharma, 2024). Although they are not engaged in direct military operations, the close cooperation between India and Israel – backed by the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh -Bharatiya Janata Party (RSS-BJP) government – raises concerns. Additionally, Indo-Israel international intelligence and spy

satellite collaborations have strengthened under the guise of counterterrorism, solidifying bilateral ties (Krishnan & Paramesha Chaya, 2024). In the same vein, Nepal has also expressed solidarity with Israel, citing the “support provided by the people and government of Israel in search, rescue, and rehabilitation of the victims in the aftermath of the devastating earthquake” in 2015 (“Nepal, Israel Sign Bilateral Consultations Deal,” 2016). This humanitarian aid has paved the way for formalized relations between the two nations.

Recently, a troubling trend in the rise of ethnocentrism has emerged across South Asia. As evidenced by the rise of Hindu Nationalism, there is a visible comparison in how “in India and in Israel, the political mainstream has become nakedly committed to a racially-structured monopoly upon the state” (Roy, 2024). After 2014, there is a clear through line where the “economic and military-technological ties have acquired overtly diplomatic, political, and ideological facets, and there has been a near explicit rejection of the older Nehruvian policy support for Palestine” (Roy, 2024). This resurgence in Islamophobia has escalated to explicit acts of violence, as evidenced by the 2020 pogrom in Delhi, defined as “targeted acts of ethnic violence that exploit existing fissures and stem from the desire to show a community ‘their place’” (Khan & Chakrabarty, 2021), and the 1992 demolition of the Babri Masjid, which was followed by the politically-motivated inauguration of the Ram Mandir in 2024 as a physical testament to the strength of prime minister’s power and an expression of why he should be elected for a third term (“Babri Masjid,” 2024). Sri Lanka has also experienced an escalation in ethnocentrism post-Tamil Elam Civil War and “paved the way for Buddhist right-wing groups to have access through the imposition of religious and cultural directives to dismantle stability” (Sarngadharan, 2023). In an effort by the right-wing religious groups to “restore the ‘us’ and ‘them’ colonial construction…the Sri Lankan state today

described a new other as a new danger, Muslims, nine years after the ethnic annihilation of Tamil militants" (Sarngadharan, 2023).

These ideological trends signal worrying implications for South Asian settler-colonialism. As evidenced by the occupation of Kashmir, "One common strain between Israel and India is that both countries use their democratic identity to hide and obfuscate the heavy-handed tactics they deploy against minorities and those living in areas they occupy" (Clark-Elsayed, 2022). Israel's transfer of surveillance technology to India, including Pegasus spyware, is now being deployed by India in Kashmir (Clark-Elsayed, 2022). This convergence of ethnonationalism and state-sanctioned violence underscores the broader regional and global implications of these ideologies.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the necessity for a rigorous analysis of Global North/South power dynamics becomes increasingly apparent when examining the ongoing solidarity between the South Asian diaspora and the Palestinian cause. This solidarity underscores the irony of the actions of institutions of higher learning, which are often at the forefront of advocating for human rights and social justice while simultaneously perpetuating systems of oppression and marginalization against their students. The historical and contemporary experiences of postcolonial realities, including the struggles faced by Bangladeshis, Sikhs, Kashmiris, Sri Lankans, and the Rohingya, provide a profound context for understanding the South Asian diaspora's commitment to supporting Palestinian human rights and advocating for divestment from Israeli institutions. These interconnected narratives of resistance and injustice not only illuminate the global dimensions of solidarity but also highlight the imperative for universities

and other institutions to align their principles with their practices, acknowledging and addressing the broader implications of their financial and political engagements. By embracing these lessons, the South Asian diaspora in the United States continues to contribute meaningfully to global justice movements, reinforcing the enduring legacy of anti-colonial resistance and shared humanity.

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The Columbia Connection:

The Legacy of the Manhattan Project at Columbia University in Relation to Hiroshima and Nagasaki 79 Years Later

Walter Kenneth Buskirk

14th Annual Consortium for Asian and African Studies Symposium

Panel: Memories of Violence

September 10, 2024.

Introduction

Narratives of the atomic bombings have long been a battleground concerning the ethical implications of memory. Framing the bombing as an event only specific to a particular nation or ethnicity undermines understanding the truly indiscriminate universal destruction nuclear weapons cause. Complicating things further, Japan and the United States' disparate understanding and interpretations of the atomic bombings have solidified into national framework structures that dominate discourse around the atomic bomb. In the Japanese narrative, the atomic bombings are not imagined as what brought the conclusive end of the war but rather represent the dawn of an era of peace. Even within Japan there exists a tension between a national discourse that attempts to incorporate the atomic bombing as an idiosyncratic experience particular to the nation and the mode of commemoration observed in Hiroshima, which promotes a "universal" memory of the nuclear attack to be preserved and shared by all.[87] Examination of the testimonies from *hibakusha*—survivors of the atomic bomb—presents an alternative vision of a community of memory, not divided by national borders but instead universally united around the goal of the abolition of nuclear weaponry. In contrast, the American narrative often portrays the atomic bombs as decisively bringing an end to the war, saving American servicemen's lives and even Japanese lives. The stark disparity in interpretations highlights the differences in public consciousness regarding nuclear weapons.[88]

This paper presents the interaction of Columbia University as a perpetrator and participant in this discourse around the atomic bomb as a "necessary evil" that was needed to end the war rather than an "absolute evil," detaching the destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki from the humanity of the *hibakusha*. Such detachment has silenced the message of the *hibakusha*, which second-generation *hibakusha* and academic Miyamoto Yuki aptly describes as being "obscured by the very image of the mushroom cloud—that spectacular symbol of wartime triumph and scientific achievement, emblem of the division of nations, and dark cloud covering a morass of guilt and self-recrimination."[89] This discourse structure also works with an image that has formed among American citizens, with the cultural expression of nuclear weapons and nuclear power as "symbols of power" and "control" as Miyamoto describes it.[90] Along with discussions of "necessary evil," this paper will also discuss themes of normalization in nuclear discourse and the banalization of violence *hibakusha* continue to endure. Firstly, the paper will present a short background on Columbia University's participation in the Manhattan Project. The next section will investigate the narrativization and discourses around the atomic bombings and nuclear weapons in the United States and Japan, including the perspectives of the *hibakusha*, followed by an analysis of the impact of the Academy Award-winning film *Oppenheimer*

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[87] Yuki Miyamoto, *Beyond the Mushroom Cloud: Commemoration, Religion, and Responsibility after Hiroshima* (New York, NY: Fordham University Press, 2012), 7.
[88] Kenneth Chiu, "'Oppenheimer's Legacy' at Columbia University," Nuclear Age Peace Foundation, November 2, 2023, https://www.wagingpeace.org/oppenheimers_legacy/.
[89] Hiroshi Inoue, "FEATURE: Hibakusha Professor Working to Dispel A-bomb 'Myth' in U.S.," Kyodo News, August 3, 2022, https://english.kyodonews.net/news/2022/08/cd2ffc63a008-feature-hibakusha-professor-working-to-dispel-a-bomb-myth-in-us.html.
[90] Miyamoto, *Beyond the Mushroom Cloud*, 3-4.

and Columbia University's interaction in these discourses as a participant and perpetrator. Furthermore, this paper will critically examine Columbia University's efforts toward increasing awareness for the *hibakusha* and the abolition of nuclear weapons, which will reveal areas of optimism, opportunity, and latent strength; the paper also bring attention to areas of disappointment and make calls for improvement.[91]

The Manhattan Project and Columbia University

Columbia University physics faculty researched the prospect of atom splitting throughout the 1930s; their involvement in what was to become the Manhattan Project began in January 1939 when the Danish physicist Niels Bohr traveled to the United States, bringing with him the news that, in December 1938, German chemists Otto Hahn and Fritz Strassman detected Barium by bombarding uranium with neutrons, subsequently discovering nuclear fission. It was the first time scientists had deliberately induced nuclear fission, in which an atom's nucleus splits apart, creating a new element and releasing energy.[92] Upon arriving in the United States, Bohr reported his news, and word of the discovery quickly spread among Columbia University's physics faculty, which included Isidor Isaac Rabi, Enrico Fermi, Willis Lamb, and John R. Dunning. A team that included both Fermi and Dunning promptly conducted an experiment of their own in which they bombarded uranium oxide with neutrons, releasing bursts of energy, using a custom-built cyclotron that Dunning had created to set particles speeding at up to 25,000 miles per second.[93]

In January 1939, the Columbia University experimental team—consisting of Dunning, Fermi, Herbert L. Anderson, Eugene T. Booth, G. Norris Glasoe, and Francis G. Slack—conducted the first nuclear fission experiment in the United States.[94] Recording the result from their experiment on January 25, 1939, Dunning wrote in his lab book: "Believe we have observed a new phenomenon of far-reaching consequence." The experiment, which took place in the basement of Columbia's Pupin Hall, liberated almost 200 million electron volts from the uranium atoms. Dunning and his team calculated that a pound of uranium-235 could release as much energy as 5 million pounds of coal.[95]

These first instances of splitting atoms' released energy were far short of the scale needed to create an atomic bomb. Yet, the discovery opened the possibility of a nuclear chain reaction, in which millions of atoms would split in fractions of a second, releasing the vast amounts of energy necessary to create an atomic weapon. Fellow Columbia scientists Leo Szilard and Walter Zinn then conducted an

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[91] This paper will present the names of Japanese with the family name first, consistent with the Japanese language.
[92] Laurence Lippsett, "The Race to Make the Bomb. The Manhattan Project: Columbia's Wartime Secret," *Columbia College Today*, Spring/Summer 1995, 18-21, 45.
[93] Christopher D. Shea, "Seen 'Oppenheimer'? Learn About Columbia's Role in Building the First Atom Bomb," *Columbia News*, July 24, 2023, https://news.columbia.edu/news/seen-oppenheimer-learn-about-columbias-role-building-first-atom-bomb.
[94] Ibid.
[95] Ellie Carver-Horner and Charlotte Fay, "The Cradle of the Bomb: Columbia University and the Origins of the Manhattan Project,"*Columbia Daily Spectator*, December 6, 2023, https://www.columbiaspectator.com/podcasts/2023/12/05/the-cradle-of-the-bomb-columbia-university-and-the-origins-of-the-manhattan-project/.

experiment that confirmed that uranium fission emitted neutrons that could spark a nuclear chain reaction. Concerned with the implications of these experiments, Columbia University professors sounded the alarm in Washington, D.C. Dean of Faculties George Braxton Pegram, Edward Teller, who was teaching at Columbia, and Szilard were among those who raised the issue to the federal government. Though the military initially ignored Pegram's warnings, President Franklin D. Roosevelt took action after receiving a letter sent by Albert Einstein at the urging of Columbia professors, including Szilard. The president created an Advisory Committee on Uranium and issued Columbia University $6,000 in research money, the first federal contract to explore atomic energy.[96]

The faculty used the money to purchase graphite; Fermi and Szilard then worked together to use graphite, which can slow neutrons, to isolate the neutrons emitted by fission—a necessary step for achieving a nuclear chain reaction. The pile of graphite mixed with some uranium oxide that they used to this end became the first "atomic pile" or nuclear reactor. Fermi's initial work took place mainly in Pupin Hall, but when he needed more space, he turned to football team members to carry the materials across campus to Schermerhorn Hall, remarking that "It really was a pleasure to direct the work of these husky boys."[97] Dunning, meanwhile, worked with his team of scientists, including the chemist Harold Urey, to develop a process called gaseous diffusion, a separate method of isolating enough of the necessary kind of uranium to ignite a nuclear chain reaction. The method was based partly on Dunning's discovery that U235, a relatively rare, unstable isotope of uranium, was easier to fission and more suitable for use in a weapon than the more ubiquitous and stable U238 isotope. Harold Urey headed a Columbia team working on the invention and perfection of the gaseous diffusion method of separating uranium isotopes, employed at the K-25 gaseous diffusion plant in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, creating the enriched uranium for the Little Boy atomic bomb used in the atomic bombing of Hiroshima.[98]

The government officially established the Manhattan Project in August 1942. It was headquartered near City Hall in New York City, and oversaw research efforts that proliferated nationwide. At its peak, the project employed about 5,000 people across New York, including 700 at Columbia. But the Manhattan headquarters was short-lived; in 1943, the government moved the project headquarters to Tennessee, at least in part because of security concerns about conducting the research in densely populated Manhattan, deemed to be reachable by enemy submarines, and, therefore more easily subject to spying.[99] A lab in Los Alamos opened for operation that same year and became the project's primary research and testing site. Although the project's center moved westward across the country, Columbia faculty remained involved until the end; Rabi declined to join the project as an associate director but served as an adviser to Oppenheimer through 1945. In 1944, Chien-Shiung Wu, often referred to as the First Lady of Physics, joined Columbia University and conducted research for the Manhattan Project on areas such as uranium enrichment. In the waning days of the war, early computer technology developed at Columbia made the calculations necessary to develop the bomb.

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[96] Shea, "Seen 'Oppenheimer'?"
[97] Lippsett, "The Race to Make the Bomb," 18-21.
[98] Shea, "Seen 'Oppenheimer'?"
[99] Ibid.

Szilard, who conducted early experiments at Columbia before moving to Chicago, was the lead author of a major petition from scientists who tried to stop the bomb from being dropped on Japan.[100]

The Legacy of the Bomb at Columbia University and *Oppenheimer* (2023)

Discussing the legacy of the atomic bomb at Columbia University requires an understanding of the narrativization and discourses around the consequences of the consequences of the United States deploying nuclear weapons for the first time during wartime. As Dr. Carol Gluck astutely stated at an ethics workshop on Oppenheimer's legacy at Columbia University, in the Japanese narrative, the atomic bombings are not characterized as bringing a conclusive end to the war but instead represent a tragic calamity bringing the dawn of an era of peace.[101] Even within Japan, there is a growing tension between a national discourse that portrays the atomic bombing as an idiosyncratic experience particular to the nation, and the mode of commemoration observed in Hiroshima, which promotes a "universal" memory of the nuclear attack to be preserved and shared by all.[102] Critiques of the "universal" memory pose that designating the atomic bomb as an attack against all humanity obfuscates the victimizing of the Japanese and paradoxically ignores the very deliberate role of the Americans who made and deployed the atomic bomb against humans and the general notion that atomic bombs as inanimate objects are the threat.[103] Yoneyama, to this point, argues that "remembering the atomic destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki as events in the history of humanity has significantly contributed to the forgetting of the history of colonialism and racism in the region."[104] In response, Thompson remarks that this distinction is too dichotomous and, in many ways, understanding the attack against Hiroshima as an attack on all who were present—which included not just Japanese citizens but Korean workers/prisoners, Japanese-Americans, American prisoners of war, and others—and, therefore, potentially as a crime against humankind rather than a certain group, does not exclude experiencing the narratives of the bombing as particular to a community or group of individuals.[105] Examination of *hibakusha* testimonies presents an alternative vision of a community of memory, not divided by national borders but instead universally united around the goal of the abolition of nuclear weaponry. The indiscriminate nature of nuclear weapons, as well as the more than two thousand nuclear tests conducted worldwide and over twenty thousand nuclear weapons currently in existence, make nuclear weaponry a matter of global urgency.[106]

The *hibakusha* have historically been at the center of the politics of remembrance since the immediate postwar period, actively both willing and unwilling participants in what Hashimoto Akiko refers to as a long-running "battle over war history," described as an "explosive culture war in Japan for

[100] Ibid.
[101] Chiu, "'Oppenheimer's Legacy' at Columbia University."
[102] Miyamoto, *Beyond the Mushroom Cloud*, 7.
[103] James Thompson, "No More Bystanders—Grandchildren of Hiroshima and the 70th Anniversary of the Atomic Bomb," *TDR—The Drama Review—A Journal of Performance Studies* 61, no. 2 (2017): 90.
[104] Lisa Yoneyama, *Hiroshima Traces: Time, Space, and the Dialectics of Memory* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1999), 214.
[105] Thompson, "No More Bystanders," 90.
[106] Miyamoto, *Beyond the Mushroom Cloud*, 3-4.

decades" in which the national discourse in Japan and that of the *hibakusha* vie for "the hearts and minds of the next generation."[107] Considering the universal problems represented by nuclear weaponry, the work of the *hibakusha* focuses on the worldwide elimination of nuclear weaponry. The message of the *hibakusha*, far from intending to evoke guilt in the "West," thus focuses above all on the global abolition of nuclear weaponry rather than divisions between victims and victimizers. This conviction on the part of the *hibakusha* is profoundly rooted in their own experiences of the nuclear attacks and reflected in the refrain that is at the center of their discourse: they do not want anyone to go through this pain again. While acknowledging the atrocities committed by the Japanese armies and the violent nature of the social structure of Japan during the war, the *hibakusha* refrain from accusations aimed at the victimizers.[108] Calling for solidarity among all those who have suffered from radiation, regardless of national or ethnic alienation, and seeking to abolish nuclear weaponry globally are the most constructive alternatives to the current discourse around nuclear weaponry, especially prevalent in the United States, framed according to national borders or national interests.

The predominant American discourse on the atomic bombings suggests that dropping the bomb was necessary, ultimately, to save the lives of American soldiers and Japanese civilians. In this context, the bomb is a savior. While the myth of the bomb as salvific is disreputed by scholars such as Barton Bernstein, it remains a monolithic understanding of the event in the American consciousness.[109] This narrative's most infamous public manifestation occurred during the 1994-95 controversy over the Enola Gay exhibit at the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum. Amid the storm of criticism leveled at the Smithsonian, the United States Senate, in the fall of 1994, unanimously voted in favor of a resolution that characterized the atomic bombing as a force that "mercifully" ended the brutal war. The resolution even went so far as to declare that by shortening the war, the bombs saved not only American but also Japanese lives, a statement to which the overwhelming majority of Senators found no objection.[110]

Second-generation *hibakusha* and academic Miyamoto Yuki describes the myth of the salvific bomb as one that excludes the voices of the *hibakusha* by its very nature.[111] Furthermore, Miyamoto points out that such an understanding, resulting from national and cultural pressures since the Cold War, does not consider the atomic bomb as an "absolute evil" but as a "necessary evil," with the image of the mushroom cloud representing "that spectacular symbol of wartime triumph and scientific achievement, emblem of the division of nations, and dark cloud covering a morass of guilt and

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[107] Akiko Hashimoto, *The Long Defeat: Cultural Trauma, Memory, and Identity in Japan* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2015), 89.
[108] Ibid.
[109] Barton Bernstein, "A Postwar Myth: 500,000 U.S. Lives Saved," in *Hiroshima's Shadow: Writings on the Denial of History and the Smithsonian Controversy*, eds. Kai Bird and Lawrence Lifschultz (Stony Creek, CT: The Pamphleteer's Press, 1998), 130-134.
[110] Akiko Naono, "Searching for Grandpa in the Hiroshima Memoryscape, Under the Shadow of the Bomb," *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 4, no. 3 (2003): 486; Senator Kassebaum, speaking on Senate Resolution 257, on September 19, 1994, 103rd Cong., 2nd sess., *Congressional Record* 140, S12968; the resolution was adopted as proposed. Ibid., September 22, 1994, S13315-16.
[111] Miyamoto, *Beyond the Mushroom Cloud*, 178-182.

self-recrimination."[112] Continuing that, the mushroom cloud, as a figure of horror and otherness, represents the division between the victims who actually suffered in its shadow and those inclined to objectify the victims.[113] As historian Ran Zwigenberg distinguishes, normalizing the horror of the atomic bombing did not begin in the twenty-first century. Rather, "Hiroshima's tragedy was rendered harmless to the status quo by the particular way in which it was remembered. Commemorative work in Hiroshima was largely used to normalize and domesticate the memory of the bombing."[114] The efforts to distance the city from the bombing became immediately apparent through U.S. censorship of occupied Japan and in cultural manifestations normalizing nuclear weapons in American society.[115]

The normalizing of the "necessary evil" of the atomic bombings and nuclear weapons in American discourse is caused by unique cultural structures and institutions conducive to this narrative. The United States military as an institution is a monolithic force in daily life with a familiar presence and trustworthy image in American society. Many Americans feel indebted to the military for protecting them and the nation, and this is repaid by showing deference to those who have served. In a similar manner, many Americans find it emotionally difficult to criticize the possession of nuclear weapons. Much like the atomic bombings being a "necessary evil" to end the war, nuclear weapons are a "necessary evil" to defend the United States, especially from other nuclear powers. The concept of nuclear deterrence was not only culturally reinforced during the Cold War but is also emotionally linked in the American consciousness to the concept of the right of the people to "self-defense."[116]

Beyond the enduring impact of the American military and defense, the normalization of the "necessary evil" exists in various representational spaces such as television, radio, literature, movies, songs, comics, and advertising. Within these spaces the "characteristics" of nuclear weapons and radiation are depicted uniquely. Foremost, nuclear weapons are a symbol of "power," not only in the sense of military might and destructive force but also in the desire to control and "tame" this force. Critically, in the 1950s, when American nuclear consciousness was in the process of formation, the government had a decisive influence on future generations' understanding of nuclear weapons by promoting peaceful uses of nuclear weapons and nuclear power, reinforced through consumption and popular culture. Discourse on nuclear power during this period emphasized that although it was a powerful force, the purpose of its use was a decision for humanity; therefore, there were both "good" and "bad" uses of nuclear power. This dichotomy created a fixation around the possibility of its use epitomized by President Dwight D. Eisenhower's "Atoms for Peace" speech to the UN General Assembly in New York City on December 8, 1953.[117] Furthermore, America's patchwork of state-run curriculums rarely introduces students to the damage caused by nuclear weapons. Consequences of nuclear weapons are seldom visualized or learned about in school, so entertainment, such as in movies,

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[112] Yuki Miyamoto, *Naze Genbaku ga aku dewa nai no ka: Amerika no kaku ishiki* [Why the atomic bomb is not evil: American nuclear consciousness] (Tokyo, Japan: Iwanami Shoten, 2020), 7; Inoue, "FEATURE: Hibakusha Professor Working to Dispel A-bomb 'Myth' in U.S."
[113] Miyamoto, *Beyond the Mushroom Cloud*, 3.
[114] Ran Zwigenberg, *Hiroshima: The Origins of Global Memory Culture* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 2.
[115] Monica Braw, *The Atomic Bomb Suppressed: American Censorship in Occupied Japan* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1991), 89.
[116] Miyamoto, *Naze Genbaku ga aku dewa nai no ka*, 69-94.
[117] Ibid., 41-57.

cartoons, comic books, and games, plays a critical role in forming nuclear consciousness. There, the narrative is often not that nuclear weapons are inhumane or anything like that, but that they are something that changes depending on the context of the person who has them and their intentions.[118]

An illustrative manifestation of this fixation around the scientific possibilities of nuclear power in which the atomic bomb is not considered an "absolute evil" was produced at the University of Chicago, which, similar to Columbia University, played an essential role in the Manhattan Project. On December 7, 2017, the University of Chicago commissioned Chinese artist Cai Guo-Qiang to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the first successful nuclear chain reaction experiment. (Interestingly, in 2007, Cai was awarded the Hiroshima Prize for his contributions to peace in the field of art, and the following year, in 2008, he exhibited his work "Black Fireworks" above the Atomic Bomb Dome.[119]) On that day in 2017, faculty, students, and staff of the University of Chicago gathered around the Henry I. Moore bronze statue as Cai Guo-Qiang addressed the crowd through an interpreter. Then, everyone began counting down from 75, and at 3:25 p.m., just as the count reached zero, a rainbow mushroom cloud firework rose from the roof of the Regenstein Library as the crowd erupted into cheers. The fireworks were the grand finale of the University of Chicago's three-month-long 75th anniversary celebrations.[120] The large-scale series of events, named "Nuclear Reaction" after Moore's statue, included special lectures, videos, and exhibits, among other offerings.[121]

Colorful and gorgeous, described as a "birthday cake" with many candles, through the cheers of the fireworks display, it became clear that there was no mourning for the victims of the atomic bomb, whose suffering was made possible by the success of the commemorated experiment.[122] It was just an innocent celebration of the scientific "achievement" of the world's first nuclear chain reaction. However, the very act of commemorating it is nothing more than a reaffirmation of the importance of this historic event to the University of Chicago community and, by extension, to the scientific community, and is entirely at odds with the message of the *hibakusha* and highlights the cultural normalization of the "necessary evil."[123] While those involved argued that these events were commemorations rather than celebrations, the hundreds of cheering spectators, series of special lectures, videos, and the stunning fireworks display specially produced for this event present no doubt that the anniversary of the nuclear chain reaction is a harmful piece of history, but rather is an accomplishment worthy of celebration.

The release of Christopher Nolan's Academy Award-winning film *Oppenheimer* (2023) brought new popular culture interest about the Manhattan Project, while the film itself reinforced the ideal of

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[118] Masato Tainaka, "*Beikoku de kashika sarenu kaku no higai oppenhaimaa eiyushi wa jidaisakugo*," [Nuclear damage that is not visualized in the United States, Oppenheimer's view as a hero is an anachronism], The Asahi Shimbun, June 7, 2024, https://digital.asahi.com/articles/ASS5Z2H3QS5ZPTIL00LM.html.
[119] Aya Nishimura, "Artist Uses Black Fireworks to Console A-bomb Victims," The Chugoku Shimbun, October 29, 2008, https://www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/?p=13901.
[120] Claire Voon, "Cai Guo-Qiang's Pyrotechnic Mushroom Cloud Commemorates the First Nuclear Reaction," Hyperallergic, 5 December 2017, https://hyperallergic.com/414946/cai-guo-qiangs-pyrotechnic-mushroom-cloud-commemorates-the-first-nuclear-reaction/.
[121] Miyamoto, *Naze Genbaku ga aku dewa nai no ka*, 8-9.
[122] Ibid.
[123] Ibid., 1-5.

the “necessary evil” atomic bomb. In some ways, Oppenheimer's remorse is reduced to his own personal guilt, forgiven because he shows so much remorse and was a scientific genius who sacrificed his morals in creating the atomic bomb, a “necessary evil” to end the war. Oppenheimer himself is said to have opposed the hydrogen bomb, but he was not opposed to the atomic bomb or nuclear tests and did not explicitly advocate for the disarmament and abolition of nuclear weapons, favoring strict international arms control to achieve nuclear peace.[124] In many ways, the film reinforces themes of nuclear deterrence theory and national defense as extremely important plot devices while maintaining a distinct disconnect from the inhumane consequences for the victims of nuclear weapons.

Spurred by the sudden popular culture icon of *Oppenheimer*, institutions that contributed to the Manhattan Project, like Columbia University, the University of Chicago, and the University of California Berkeley, explored their historical roles in the Manhattan Project. A few days after the movie’s release on July 21, 2023, *Columbia News*, the official newsletter run by Columbia University’s Office of Public Affairs, posted a story titled “Seen ‘Oppenheimer’? Learn About Columbia’s Role in Building the First Atom Bomb.” The official Instagram page for Columbia then made a post promoting the story, receiving almost 11,000 likes and over 30 comments highlighting the controversy around the bomb, including statements like “Not a flex, Columbia …” and others that sarcastically pointed out the scientific legacy.[125] The *Columbia News* story received mixed reactions, which pointed out one critical detail: that Columbia University played a role in the creation of the atomic bomb and, therefore, contributed to its ultimate consequences.

Later in December, *The Ear*, a podcast run by the *Columbia Daily Spectator*, an independent student-run publication, explored the complicated history of the atomic bomb at Columbia University and how Columbia today reckons with that violent legacy. In the investigation of the feelings of scientists from Columbia University who worked on the project, Mario Salvadori, a close colleague of Fermi’s and former professor of civil engineering and architecture at Columbia, was quoted saying, “Despite my strong wish to destroy fascism, if I had known what the project would be used for, I would have refused to assist with it.”[126] Among his colleagues, Salvadori was certainly in the minority opinion as many of those involved from Columbia did not regret their contributions to the project. When interviewed by the *Columbia Daily Spectator* in 1993, Salvadori attributed this statement to Fermi: “I was put on this earth in order to make certain discoveries. What people or politicians do with them is something I don’t care, and I don’t worry about.”[127] Robert Serber, a research assistant to Oppenheimer who went on to become chair of the Columbia physics department, said, “We were going to invade Japan in October and were to prepare for half a million casualties. It seemed to us [at Los Alamos] that dropping the bomb was certainly the only right thing to do.” He continued, “There were three million men in the Pacific on the way to the war—and they wanted to be home. At the time, everyone appreciated what we did.”[128] Chien-Shiung Wu, a professor of physics at Columbia and one of the only women involved in the project, said, “In physics, in science, we had so many Jews—so many

[124] Masato Tainaka, “*Beikoku de kashika sarenu kaku no higai oppenhaimaa eiyushi wa jidaisakugo*.”
[125] Carver-Horner and Fay, “The Cradle of the Bomb: Columbia University and the Origins of the Manhattan Project.”
[126] Ibid.
[127] Ibid.
[128] Ibid.

Europeans. We were all so aware of what we had to do."[129] Other scientists were more direct. William Havens, a professor of applied physics and nuclear engineering who worked on the project at Columbia, said, "No one had any doubt that if Hitler had the bomb first, he would use it."[130]

Going beyond participants from Columbia University, the *Daily Spectator* questioned Columbia students about inheriting this controversial legacy; one student responded, "I mean, I think academically it's a great legacy. I think it's commendable. I just also think it's kind of tragic that that started here, and that's the legacy that we have."[131] Another student replied, "I think it's very odd that we contributed to the deaths of, like, tens of thousands of innocent people. And I wonder why we did that. Or thought it was a good idea."[132] Such reactions illustrate the mixed legacy of the Manhattan Project as recent as 2023 and shed light on Columbia's complicated fit into a discourse on the atomic bombings as both a participant and perpetrator.

Columbia University and the Sasakawa Peace Foundation

In evaluating the Manhattan Project's legacy at Columbia University, it is also necessary to discuss existing structures that actively confront its consequences and suggest where improvements can be made. Columbia University, with Hiroshima University and the Sasakawa Peace Foundation, are partnered for the Hiroshima University Peace Study Tour, a joint summer program focusing on natural resource management and peacebuilding. The Hiroshima University Peace Study Tour conducted its inaugural program in Hiroshima from July 31 to August 8, 2023; it allowed students to participate from Hiroshima University, Columbia University, and institutions partnered with the Sasakawa Peace Foundation, Columbia University, or Hiroshima University.[133] The inaugural tour accepted 28 students, including a Sasakawa Peace Foundation delegation of 8 students studying at institutions from Indonesia, Thailand, the Philippines, and Iran. Students in the Negotiation and Conflict Resolution program at Columbia University's School of Professional Studies can choose summer practicums to help them put the theoretical skills they've acquired in the classroom to work in the field. In 2024, such practicums were available in New York City, Bogotá, Colombia, and the Hiroshima University Peace Study Tour in Japan.[134]

Dr. Joshua Fisher, director of the Advanced Consortium on Cooperation, Conflict, and Complexity at Columbia University and instructor for the Negotiation and Conflict Resolution program, spearheaded the Hiroshima University Peace Study Tour initiative; he previously ran a similar program in the Middle East for eight years. When discussing the underlying principle of this course, Fisher explained that "SDG [Sustainable Development Goal] achievement is only possible through

[129] Ibid.
[130] Ibid.
[131] Ibid.
[132] Ibid.
[133] "Hiroshima University Peace Study Tour 2023," Hiroshima University Network for Education and Research on Peace and Sustainability, May 10, 2023, https://nerps.org/2023/05/10/hu-peacestudytour2023/.
[134] "Negotiation and Conflict Resolution Summer Practicums Offer Students the Chance to Put Theory into Practice," Columbia University School of Professional Studies, June 10, 2024, https://sps.columbia.edu/news/negotiation-and-conflict-resolution-summer-practicums-offer-students-chance-put-theory.

peace and peacebuilding," and went on to state his belief that peace can itself act as a "mechanism that enables the achievement of all the other SDGs."[135] Lastly, Fisher also highlights the Peace Study Tour's goal of impressing upon the students the idea that progress is only achievable with collaboration and peace. The students participated in various activities, including lectures, field visits across the prefecture, and projects, with most of the nine-day program focusing on environmental sustainability through peacebuilding.[136] Importantly, the program also provides students with valuable access to the personal testimony of *hibakusha* Ogura Keiko, a group tour of the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, the annual Peace Memorial Ceremony, other Hiroshima University Peace Project events, and International Network of Universities events as part of the scheduled program.[137]

While the Hiroshima University Peace Study Tour is an exciting new step in educating students in peace studies and confronting the legacy of the Manhattan Project, Columbia University should also pursue an official partnership with the Hiroshima and Peace Summer Program, hosted by Hiroshima City University, specializing in war and peace studies. Since 2003, the Hiroshima and Peace Summer Program has aimed to provide students with a general understanding of the nature and attributes of war and peace studies by discussing various aspects of wartime experiences, including the atomic bombing of Hiroshima, and exploring contemporary issues related to world peace in the modern era of globalization.[138]

In addition to lectures, the course features several special programs, including visits to the Atomic Bomb Dome and Peace Memorial Museum, attendance at the Peace Memorial Ceremony on August 6th, and discussion with atomic bomb survivors.[139] Unlike the Hiroshima University Peace Study Tour, focusing on sustainability, environmental management, and peace, the Hiroshima and Peace Summer Program prioritizes teaching about peace and non-nuclear issues from various specialized fields, including international politics, history, literature, media studies, and sociology. So far, more than 700 students from 50 countries and regions have gathered, and each year, students from more than 10 countries participate in the Hiroshima and Peace Summer Program.[140] Although not officially partnered, it is commonplace to see pamphlets for the Hiroshima and Peace Summer Program present at the Saltzman Institute of War and Peace Studies in the International Affairs Building as it provides an excellent opportunity for those with broader interests in international politics, history, literature, media studies, or sociology to directly encounter *hibakusha* and confront the consequences of the Manhattan Project.

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[135] Sofia Emina Takahashi, "Achieving Positive Peace using Sustainable Development Goals—An Emphasis on Student Collaboration and Natural Resource Management: SPF Student Delegation Participates in 'Hiroshima University Peace Study Tour 2023'," Sasakawa Peace Foundation, August 31, 2023, https://www.spf.org/en/spfnews/information/20230831.html.
[136] Ibid.
[137] "Hiroshima University Peace Study Tour 2023," Hiroshima University Network for Education and Research on Peace and Sustainability, accessed January 31, 2025, https://nerps.org/2023/05/10/hu-peacestudytour2023/.
[138] "HIROSHIMA and PEACE Summer Program," Hiroshima City University Faculty of International Studies Graduate School of International Studies, accessed August 28, 2024, https://intl.hiroshima-cu.ac.jp/en/hiroshima-and-peace/.
[139] Ibid.
[140] Ibid. The Japanese language webpage offers more information about the program.

Furthermore, it is necessary to discuss the Sasakawa Peace Foundation, an organization named after its highly controversial founder, Sasakawa Ryōichi, and its connection to the Hiroshima University Peace Study Tour and Columbia University. Sasakawa Ryōichi, who lived from 1899 to 1995, was a staunch ultranationalist and enthusiastic supporter of the wartime Imperial Japanese government; only in the later part of his life did he set about creating a cohesive self-portrait that would serve as the basis of the grand narrative of his kin and the foundations he financed, reinventing himself from war criminal to global philanthropist.[141] Utilizing its vast financial resources to fund publications on the Sasakawa legacy, the resultant works, with the financial backing of the Sasakawa network, have sought to erase negativity by ignoring the criminality of Sasakawa's history and cultivate a positive image by claiming that Sasakawa "volunteered for indictment" in 1945 and was eventually "acquitted."[142]

However, not only is it well established that the Allied occupation government had strong cause to arrest him, but also that the charges levied against him were never formally dropped. Therefore, Sasakawa was never formally acquitted of "class-A" war crimes categorized as crimes against peace.[143] The file on Sasakawa produced by General MacArthur's team after thorough screening by the International Prosecution Section in October 1947 said that the "Subject is clearly one of the worst offenders, outside the military in developing in Japan a policy of totalitarianism and aggression. He was active in the war and grew rich off ill-gotten gains." It concluded by recommending that the "subject be retained in custody as a Class A war criminal suspect and tried before an International Military Tribunal in Tokyo."[144]

Following his release, Sasakawa Ryōichi put his financial resources and extensive network of important friends to use, becoming a key political fixer and power broker through his business enterprises. Later in life, "Godfather Sasakawa," the frequent nickname in the Japanese press referring to Sasakawa, operated his philanthropical network mainly from the Japan Shipbuilding Industry Foundation, which was established in 1962 as a private, non-profit grant-making organization and changed its name to the Nippon Foundation in 2011.[145] Sasakawa financed his activities through the lucrative Japan Motorboat Racing Association, a legalized gambling concession. According to the Central Intelligence Agency, the Japan Motorboat Racing Association's gross income in 1976 equaled Japan's entire defense expenditures for the previous fiscal year, 1975.[146] Utilizing this vast personal fortune, Sasakawa built an enduring global political and philanthropic empire promoting Japanese relations and interests. This empire's influence increasingly reached institutions and academia, including Columbia University.

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[141] Karoline Postel-Vinay and Mark Selden, "History on Trial: French Nippon Foundation Sues Scholar for Libel to Protect the Honor of Sasakawa Ryōichi," *The Asia-Pacific Journal* 8, no. 17 (April 26, 2010): 2.
[142] Ibid., 4.
[143] Ibid., 4-6.
[144] SCAP to the War Department, 28 October 1947. National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.: Record Group 331, Sasakawa, Ryoichi Biographical File, Entry 1289, Box 1416, File 010-2.
[145] Sasakawa, Ryoichi Textual Records. National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.: Record Group 263, Box 111; "Foundation History 1952-1970," The Nippon Foundation, accessed October 20, 2024, https://www.nippon-foundation.or.jp/en/who/about/history/01.html.
[146] Sasakawa, Ryoichi Textual Records, Record Group 263, Box 111.

During his long lifetime, Sasakawa never once apologized for being a prominent supporter of the Imperial Rule Association regime that was responsible for abysmal destruction, including millions of deaths and unspeakable atrocities across Asia. From his imprisonment at Sugamo until his death, Sasakawa also showed an unmistakable consistency in revealing his true personal loyalties. In a letter sent in November 1946, intercepted by the censorship services of the occupation government, Sasakawa wrote that "A newspaper reported that the Allied Authorities executed the first-class war criminals of Germany and scattered their ashes over the ocean to eliminate the idea of revenge. This will not destroy the mighty soul. It certainly will be criticized by future historians as a lowly, inhuman act on the part of a people who knew no religion and had no faith."[147] In the same line of preoccupation and loyalty, Sasakawa went to the Philippines in 1964 to search for the remains of several condemned executed Japanese war criminals who were allegedly not given proper burial. The war criminals included Yamashita Tomoyuki, General of the Japanese Army in the Philippines, accountable for overseeing large-scale atrocities committed in Manila, and former Lieutenant-General Homma Masaharu, held responsible for the Bataan Death March. Sasakawa gave a press conference explaining that no "true friendship" could be established between Japan and the Philippines if the remains of the executed were not given a "respectful burial in a respectable cemetery."[148] Even after his death, the Sasakawa network has never rebuked or criticized his unrepentant nationalism.

The Sasakawa network's revisionism to obscure Sasakawa Ryōichi's past and Japanese war crimes during the Second World War puts a continued partnership with the Sasakawa Peace Foundation in moral conflict with the principles of academia. The historian Itō Takashi, the editor of the latest authorized biography of Sasakawa Ryōichi, commissioned by his son Sasakawa Yōhei, is also a founding member of *Tsukurukai*, known as the Japanese Society for History Textbook Reform, which aims to produce textbooks conveying a "non-masochistic" view of Japan's history.[149] The "masochism" here refers to the acknowledgment of some of the darkest records of Japan's past, such as the Nanjing Massacre. Another prominent figure in the Sasakawa network is philologist Watanabe Shōichi, who also serves on the board of trustees for the Nippon Foundation.[150] Watanabe is similarly committed to fighting against a "masochistic view of history," claiming that there were only a few civilians killed at Nanjing and contends that rather than the supposed massacre, the Japanese Army provided the local population with food assistance.[151]

Similarly, the Tokyo Foundation for Policy Research, a public policy think tank founded in 1997 with the support of the Japan Shipbuilding Industry Foundation, launched a two-year program in 2005 to sort out "issues surrounding the Nanjing Incident." The centerpiece of this effort was the promotion of a historical revisionist book, *The Nanking Massacre: Facts Versus Fiction, A Historian's Quest for Truth* by Higashinakano Shūdō, distributing several thousand copies to individuals and

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[147] Letter from Ryoichi Sasakawa to Office Sasakawa in Tokyo, 18 November 1946. National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.: Record Group 331, Sasakawa, Ryoichi Biographical File, M-1683, Fiche 38.
[148] Satoshi Nakano, "The Politics of Mourning," in *Philippines-Japan Relations*, eds. Setsuho Ikehata and Lydia N. Yu Jose (Manila, Philippines: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2003), 357.
[149] Postel-Vinay and Selden, "History on Trial," 8.
[150] Ibid.
[151] Ibid.

institutions worldwide, including major public and university libraries.[152] The Tokyo Foundation also published a twelve-page synopsis of Higashinakano's work as an unbound booklet, which was also widely distributed in this initiative. Among its contents is a statement that "confirmed" its conclusions were "reached via the painstaking examination and reexamination of primary sources, which yielded information that resolves most of the issues currently under debate, and show that the 'Nanking Massacre' is a product of wartime and postwar propaganda."[153] It is nothing short of reprehensible that a significant financial supporter of Japanese and East Asian studies in Western universities propagates denial of the Nanjing Massacre.

Receiving funding from the Sasakawa network in light of these many outstanding controversies has been a consistent cause for debate among academic institutions. In many cases, institutions accept gifts from the Sasakawa network, including Columbia University, which continues to receive Sasakawa Peace Foundation support beyond the Hiroshima University Peace Study Tour 2023, including active sponsorships for events with the Weatherhead East Asian Institute at Columbia University.[154] Some institutions, such as the University of Chicago, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the University of California San Diego, the University of Kansas, the University of Hawaii, McGill University, and the Australian National University, among others, rejected funding from the Sasakawa network after intense debate.[155]

Postel-Vinay and Selden make an excellent point by using the example of the president of York University in Canada accepting Sasakawa funding over faculty objections. In justification, the president compared Sasakawa Ryōichi and his philanthropy to Cecil Rhodes. However, as Postel-Vinay and Selden rightly point out, the Rhodes Trust openly introduces readers to book references on Cecil Rhodes, including his lengthy institutional legacy, that are highly critical of Rhodes and his impact. In a similar vein, unlike the Sasakawa network, there is no evidence that the Rhodes Trust has been promoting a thesis denying the crimes resulting from the British colonization of Southern Africa, including Apartheid.[156] With its strong connections to institutions and academia, the revisionisms perpetrated by the Sasakawa network must make us acutely aware of the ethical expectations associated with academic sponsorship and must be actively confronted by those informed at every opportunity.

Columbia University's association with the Sasakawa Peace Foundation also contributes to perpetuating the banalization of the violence that *hibakusha* suffered during the war. Miyamoto, synthesizing from Arendt, Butler, and Adorno, argues that the banalization of violence has two key

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[152] "About," Tokyo Foundation for Policy Research, accessed October 20, 2024, https://www.tokyofoundation.org/about/; Postel-Vinay and Selden, "History on Trial," 8-9; Tadamasa Fukiura, "Closing the Japan-China Perception Gap," in *An overview of the Nanjing Debate: Reprints of Articles from Japan Echo, 1998 to 2007 with New Commentaries* (Tokyo, Japan: Japan Echo, 2008), 76-87.

[153] Higashinakano Shūdō, *Synopsis for the Nanking Massacre: Fact Versus Fiction, A Historian's Quest for the Truth* (Tokyo, Japan: Tokyo Foundation, 2007), 1-3.

[154] "From 'Friend' to Partner: US-Japan Coordination Lessons from Operation TOMODACHI Applied to New Bilateral Missions in Asia," Columbia University Weatherhead East Asian Institute, Accessed September 10, 2024, https://weai.columbia.edu/events/friend-partner-us-japan-coordination-lessons-operation-tomodachi-applied-new-bilateral.

[155] Postel-Vinay and Selden, "History on Trial," 10.

[156] Ibid. I highly recommend reading the Postel-Vinay and Selden article cited in full for those interested in learning more about the Sasakawa network.

components. Firstly, the banalization of violence occurs when an act of violence itself is normalized, and secondly, such normalization takes place through representations of that violence, including their failure to reveal the horror of violence, whether intentional or not; therefore, such representation allows violence to appear banal and normal.[157] In regard to *hibakusha* who suffered disfigurement and discrimination and desired to lead normal lives, Miyamoto contends that the normalization of violence in the atomic bomb discourse utilized women's injured bodies, namely through the Hiroshima Maidens or *genbaku otome*, to reconstruct post-war national identities, either to divert attention from the damage inflicted on the human body or to reconcile its war crimes for further militarization.[158] Continued partnership with the Sasakawa Peace Foundation without confronting its historical revisionism and the legacy of class-A war criminal Sasakawa Ryōichi normalizes these horrific acts of violence.

The experience of male *hibakusha* Kikkawa Kiyoshi best highlights the early connection between Japanese imprisoned war criminals, the banalization of the violence *hibakusha* experienced, and the normalization of war crimes. Kikkawa participated as an observer in a visit arranged by his friend Tanimoto Kiyoshi in 1952 of female *hibakusha* or *otome* to the Sugamo Prison, holding Japanese war criminals. When the group arrived at Sugamo, Kikkawa, expecting to see pitiful and regretful men, witnessed inmates chatting, smoking, and snacking among themselves, far from his expectations. The meeting began with greetings to the *otome* by two inmates, Hiroshima-born politician Kaya Okinori, who served as Minister of Finance during the war, and former Army General Hata Shunroku, who was stationed in Hiroshima during the time of the bombing. According to Kikkawa, during the meeting, neither of them had uttered a single word of repentance or remorse for having caused the *hibakusha* such tragedy.[159] Then, the two *otome* delegates of the group replied that they had at one point held a grudge against military and political leaders for their disfigurement, but now that seven years had passed, they had begun to realize that their plight was the same as theirs. For Kikkawa, such a visit and statement were absolutely preposterous and insulting to those who had perished in Hiroshima.[160] The fact that the *otome* delegates, who went through indescribable hardships because of the war, did not reprimand the war criminals but expressed sympathy for those who had been complicit in the reckless war that resulted in the atomic attacks, was completely reprehensible to Kikkawa.

While the response of the *otome* delegates deeply disturbed Kikkawa, he was not alone in sharing this concern. Later that night, Kikkawa contacted Ōta Yoko, herself a *hibakusha* and the author of *Shikabane no machi,* a memoir about surviving the atomic bombing of Hiroshima, to discuss the visit. During their conversation, Ōta first disclosed her discontent and concern over journalism that was preying upon the *otome* and their disfigurement in pursuit of their own goals. Her complaint confirmed Kikkawa's suspicion, fearing that the *otome* were being used as poster girls to present an image of Japan's resilience and hope for the future.[161] Therefore, the Sugamo prison visit was intended not only

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[157] Yuki Miyamoto, "In the Light of Hiroshima: Banalizing Violence and Normalizing Experiences of the Atomic Bombing," in *Reimagining Hiroshima and Nagasaki Nuclear Humanities in the Post-Cold War*, eds. N.A.J. Taylor and Robert Jacobs (London, UK: Routledge, 2017), 125.
[158] Ibid.
[159] Kiyoshi Kikkawa, "'*Genbaku ichigō' to iwarete*" [Named as the "Atomic Bombed No. 1"] (Tokyo, Japan: Chikuma Shobō, 1981), 84-85; Miyamoto, "In the Light of Hiroshima," 130-131.
[160] Miyamoto, "In the Light of Hiroshima," 131.
[161] Kikkawa, "'*Genbaku ichigō' to iwarete*," 88; Miyamoto, "In the Light of Hiroshima," 131.

as a symbol of reconciliation between the war criminals and the *hibakusha* but also, consequentially, of a way to deny Japan's war responsibility.[162]

It was not only *hibakusha* who found this meeting troublesome but some inmates as well. Kawabe Ryōji learned about the *otome* visit at the breakfast table on the day it was planned. At first, it made no sense to him that the victims would be paying a visit to the victimizer at a prison unless the *otome* would reproach the war criminals for their misconduct. Similar to Kikkawa, Kawabe thought that the *otome* were among those who suffered the most from the war, while the Sugamo inmates, mostly war criminals, were either directly accountable for the war or were accomplices. Later, Kawabe heard from his fellow inmates how the meeting had gone, and his anger surged: "I hate even more the military leaders who are responsible for the disfigurement of those women, yet show no regret."[163] The responses of Kawabe and Kikkawa, among others, highlight both the early efforts to normalize Japanese imprisoned war criminals and the banalization of the violence *hibakusha* suffered and shows how association with war criminals is antithetical to the message of *hibakusha*.

Looking Ahead: A Case of Latent Strength, Inaction, and Opportunity

Continuing to evaluate the existing structures at Columbia University which have actively confronted the legacy of the Manhattan Project, this section will highlight the valuable contributions of Columbia University's K=1 Project, draw attention to its recent inactivity, and share the story of former Professor Ivan Ira Esme Morris and his connection to the Hiroshima House of Rest. The K=1 Project, Center for Nuclear Studies at Columbia University, headquartered in Pupin Hall, where the Manhattan Project first began, is a dedicated organization that promotes informed debate on nuclear technology, energy, disarmament, and proliferation issues intending to confront the legacy of the Manhattan Project. Founded in 2011 by Columbia University Professor of Physics Emlyn Hughes. While teaching Frontiers of Science, a required freshman science course, Hughes was inspired to organize a group of interested students to investigate the connection between the dangers of nuclear proliferation and the scientific foundation of nuclear energy; he felt they could approach the topic in fresh and thoughtful perspectives.[164]

Reflecting on the legacy of the Manhattan Project, Hughes states that "this is an inheritance I feel in a very literal sense." Hughes' father, Vernon Hughes, was one of the young leaders involved in the development of radar at MIT during the Second World War and was an editor of the MIT series documenting this war effort. Hughes says that, growing up in this environment, his interest in the legacy of the Manhattan Project began "at a young age, interactions with my father and other notable physicists of his generation motivated me to pursue projects aimed at confronting one of WWII's

[162] Miyamoto, "In the Light of Hiroshima," 131.
[163] Ryōji Kawabe, "Genbaku otome no imon" [The Atomic Bomb Maidens' Sympathetic Visits] in *Kabe atsuki heya: Sugamo BC kyū senpan no jinseiki* [A Room with Thick Walls: Life Stories of BC Class War Criminals in Sugamo], ed. Riron Henshūbu (Tokyo, Japan: Nihon Tosho Sentā, 1992), 229.
[164] "History," Columbia K=1 Project Center for Nuclear Studies, accessed September 7, 2024, https://k1project.columbia.edu/about/history.

lingering products, the atomic bomb."[165] Later in his life, after becoming a scientist and professor of physics at Columbia University, working on the very grounds from which the Manhattan Project began in Pupin Hall, he acted on his lifelong interest, creating the K=1 Project to address the pressing issues surrounding nuclear technologies and to engage the younger generation in these important topics.[166]

Since it began in 2011, the K=1 Project, powered by the efforts of bright and promising students and supported by a large network of faculty, has grown to include collaborations with other universities and institutions and to address an ever-widening set of nuclear issues. To promote informed, scientifically guided public discussion on nuclear technologies, the K=1 Project has offered unique and innovative programs and resources that provide future leaders, policy experts, and scientists with the tools to address the challenging nuclear issues faced by the world.[167] Members of the K=1 Project have traveled to the Marshall Islands more than a dozen times since 2014 and engaged in several research expeditions in the region. These research trips were to learn about the Marshallese nuclear legacy and assess radiological conditions resulting from the U.S. nuclear weapon testing program there, which took place between 1946 and 1958.[168]

The first research trip to the Marshall Islands in 2014 focused on developing social and legal understanding and culminated in producing the documentary *Marshalling Peace*. The documentary describes the legal battle the Marshall Islands undertook against nuclear-weapon states for their failure to comply with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and engage in meaningful disarmament efforts; it includes testimonies from Marshallese people, Marshall Island government representatives, and American nuclear experts, including former Secretary of Defense Bill Perry.[169] The K=1 Project returned in the summer of 2015 to measure external gamma radiation levels on northern Marshall islands, including Enewetak, Medren, Runit, Bikini, Nam, and Rongelap, all exposed to high levels of radioactive fallout during the testing era. The results suggested that external gamma radiation levels on the island of Bikini are above the maximum total radiation exposure agreed upon by the government of the United States and the Republic of the Marshall Islands of 100 mrem/y or 1 mSv/y. For the other islands, where measured external gamma radiation fell below the agreed-upon maximum for total exposure, the study highlighted the critical need for more independent measurements, particularly of exposure through contaminated food.[170]

In 2016, Professor Emlyn Hughes led a trip along with Glenn Alcalay, Inge Hughes, and Jenni Hill to conduct further studies and meet with Marshallese leaders. Inge and Jenni also created a short film featuring Marshallese youth and their experiences growing up in the Republic of the Marshall Islands called *Our Nukes, Their Kids*.[171] The K=1 Project's summer 2017 trip shifted attention to addressing questions related to the issue of northern atoll resettlement. Focusing on soil

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[165] Emlyn Hughes, "Letter from Founding Director," Columbia K=1 Project Center for Nuclear Studies, accessed September 7, 2024, https://k1project.columbia.edu/about/letter-from-director.
[166] Ibid.
[167] "Mission," Columbia K=1 Project Center for Nuclear Studies, Accessed September 7, 2024, https://k1project.columbia.edu/about/mission.
[168] "K=1 Project Research in the Marshall Islands," Columbia K=1 Project Center for Nuclear Studies, accessed September 7, 2024, https://k1project.columbia.edu/content/k1-project-research-marshall-islands.
[169] Ibid.
[170] Ibid.
[171] Ibid.

contamination, the team conducted measurements of radiation levels in staple foods for local Marshallese diets and the soil on the islands of Bikini Atoll, Utirik Atoll, Rongelap Atoll, and Enewetak Atoll. At the same time, background gamma radiation level measurements were taken in new areas of interest not tested during the 2015 trip, such as Enyu and new locations on the Bikini, Ekuren, Japtan, Naen, Utirik, Aon, and Elluk islands. In addition, the K=1 Project team was trained in scuba diving to facilitate the collection of ocean sediments for radiation measurements, seeking to uncover the levels of radiation that benthic species are exposed. Given that radiation found in the top layers of the sediment may travel through the food chain, thus causing ongoing effects on both the native ecosystem and the diet of the Marshallese people, the deep-sea radiation measurements marked an important contribution to the radiological picture.[172] For its final research trips, the K=1 team went to the Bikini, Enewetak, and Rongelap atolls in July and August 2018 to make follow-up measurements on external background gamma radiation levels and collect new soil samples and sediment cores. They used the new data from this trip and from the 2017 trip to produce three publications in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS): one on background measurements and soil, one on food, and one on ocean sediment in the Bravo crater on July 15, 2019.[173]

Sadly, the last official update from the K=1 Project was in 2020, announcing that the K=1 Project team had analyzed additional isotopes in sediment cores collected during the 2018 trip for a paper that was under review.[174] The project's final news post on August 6, 2020, commemorated the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, encouraging readers to visit the now defunct website "hiroshimanagasaki75.org," created and supported by a coalition of anti-nuclear activists, including the K=1 Project, which hosted virtual events on the August 6 and August 9 anniversaries of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki respectively.[175] Since then, the K=1 Project Twitter has infrequently retweeted posts on nuclear issues, with the last recorded activity being a retweet on December 6, 2022.[176] Beyond conducting valuable research, the K=1 Project supported and produced many documentaries, articles, creative films, interviews, educational materials, panels, and events on issues relating to nuclear weapons and technologies.[177] As evidenced by their incredible contributions and works bringing awareness to nuclear issues, the K=1 Project represents a significant institution for advocating nuclear non-proliferation and acknowledging the consequences of the Manhattan Project. The K=1 Project's inactivity following the COVID-19 pandemic—like many other institutes and organizations across university campuses—marks a terrible loss for Columbia University. The K=1 Project has provided a vitally important structure for educating students and allowing those interested in nuclear issues to involve themselves on campus actively, and it deserves revitalization if possible. Columbia University has returned to normal functions since the height of the pandemic and should

[172] Ibid.
[173] Ibid.
[174] Ibid.
[175] "Remembering Hiroshima and Nagasaki," Columbia K=1 Project Center for Nuclear Studies, accessed September 7, 2024, https://k1project.columbia.edu/news/remembering-hiroshima-and-nagasaki.
[176] "K=1 Project," X.com, formerly Twitter.com, accessed October 10, 2024, https://x.com/K1Proj.
[177] "History," Columbia K=1 Project Center for Nuclear Studies; "Events," Columbia K=1 Project Center for Nuclear Studies, accessed September 7, 2024, https://k1project.columbia.edu/events.

encourage the reinvigoration of organizations such as the K=1 Project, which provides an invaluable service to this campus and its students.

Columbia University has also been home to faculty members who have committed themselves to nuclear peace activism and helping *hibakusha*, such as Professor Ivan Ira Esme Morris, a renowned Japanese Studies professor who, together with his family, founded the Hiroshima House of Rest. Dr. Morris, a specialist in tenth- and eleventh-century Japan, joined the faculty at Columbia University in 1960 and was chairman of the Department of East Asian Languages and Cultures from 1966 to 1969. Born in London on November 29, 1925, to American writer Ira Victor Morris and Swedish writer Edita Morris, Ivan Morris was educated in English and American schools and served in American naval intelligence during the Second World War, receiving training in Japanese at the language school in Boulder, Colorado.[178] As part of his service, in 1945, Ivan Morris was assigned to one of the first American teams to assess damage in Hiroshima following the atomic bombing. His account of his experiences in Hiroshima served as inspiration for the novel *The Flowers of Hiroshima* (1959), published by his mother, Edita Morris, for which she was awarded the Albert Schweitzer Prize in 1961.[179]

Following the war, Ivan Morris graduated *magna cum laude* from Harvard University in 1947, later attending the School of Oriental and African Studies at the University of London, where he received his Ph.D. in 1951. After briefly working in the news department of the British Broadcasting Company, Ivan Morris became a research assistant for the Foreign Office, utilizing a grant by the Royal Institute of International Affairs on contemporary Japanese politics to perform research in Japan from 1955 until 1959 before joining the faculty at Columbia University in 1960.[180] As an outgrowth of this work, Ivan Morris wrote *Nationalism and the Right Wing in Japan* in 1960. Later, he then also translated and edited a collection of essays by Maruyama Masao entitled *Thought and Behaviour in Modern Japanese Politics,* published in 1963.[181] Meanwhile, Ivan Morris joined a group of American scholars, including Donald Keene and Edward Seidensticker, who, together with the support of Harold Strauss at Knopf Publishing, translated contemporary Japanese novels into English for the first time. Knopf published Ivan Morris's translation of Ōoka Shōhei's *Fires on the Plain* in 1957 and, the following year, his rendering of Mishima Yukio's *The Temple of the Golden Pavilion*. Although this was the only book by Mishima that Morris translated, the two men remained friends until Mishima died in 1970. In classical literature, beginning in the late 1950s, Ivan Morris worked on translations of works by Ihara Saikaku, which were published in 1963 as *The Life of an Amorous Woman and Other Writings*.[182]

Once at Columbia University, Ivan Morris completed his most famous work on Heian-era court life and literature, *The World of the Shining Prince*, published in 1964, for which he received the Duff Cooper Award for literature in 1965. Ivan followed up by publishing a complete translation of *The Pillow Book of Sei Shonagon* in 1967, earning the Van Amringe award for a distinguished book by a

[178] Paul H. Varley, "A Remembrance of Ivan Morris," *Journal of Japanese Studies* 3, no. 1 (1977): 136.
[179] Edita Morris, *Sjuttioåriga kriget: självbiografi* [Seventy Years' War: Autobiography] (Stockholm, Sweden: Gidlund, 1983), 102.
[180] Varley, "A Remembrance of Ivan Morris," 136-137.
[181] Ibid., 137.
[182] Ibid.

Columbia faculty member in 1968; translating the text for *The Tale of Genji Scroll*, published in 1971; and translating the *Sarashina Nikki*, published under the title *As I Crossed a Bridge of Dreams* that same year. In his teaching during this period, Morris assumed a dual role as a specialist in both Japanese literature and history. He taught graduate courses in modern and classical Japanese, including one on *Genroku* and another on Heian-era literature, complemented by a history course on the ancient period of Japanese civilization.[183] While Ivan Morris's legacy within Japanese Studies is undeniable, his dedication to humanitarianism and commitment to helping *hibakusha* deserve commemoration.

Outside his work at Columbia University, Ivan Morris contributed to the Hiroshima House of Rest project, founded with his parents, Ira V. Morris and Edita Morris, which sought to provide aid for *hibakusha* in most need of help. In "The Hiroshima House Project," a written piece from 1963 giving an introductory description of the project, Ira V. Morris briefed readers on the background and goals of the Hiroshima House of Rest. Starting with the question of how they came to start the project, Ira remarked that in the six and a half years since the project had begun, that very same question had been asked of him and his wife, Edita, countless times and that their simple response was, "If you find yourself at the scene of disaster, in a city of suffering and death, it is normal to wish to help."[184] For the Hiroshima House of Rest, the idea emerged in 1955 when Ira and Edita accepted an invitation to Hiroshima from the Japanese PEN Club; the material devastation had cleared away with a new metropolis springing up on the site of the old town, yet to the people of Hiroshima, the bombing still seemed very recent. Ira described how residents "looked different from other people: they had thought differently, moved differently, talked in a special way; their eyes had a haunted look. The memory of the holocaust had seared their minds and one felt that if they lived another twenty years, or fifty years (unlikely premises for A-bomb victims die young) they would still be thinking of the *pikadon*."[185] At the time, roughly a third of Hiroshima's pre-atomic bomb population was still alive, but many of the 80,000 survivors led a "half-life only," incapable of taxing or full-time work and with an acute apprehensiveness of a sudden and fatal illness coming at any time.[186]

Even by 1955, post-war Japan was still beset with problems and gave little help to these survivors; free medical treatment for the irradiated had not yet become law, nor did they receive any form of stipend or dole. Instead, these survivors subsisted on the charity of their relatives and neighbors, with the city authorities of Hiroshima reserving jobs for *hibakusha* on municipal projects, including street building and construction work.[187] However, many, particularly the elderly or disabled, could not work these jobs, and those who could nominally perform them often could not sustain tough physical labor for long periods. As Ira recalled while in Hiroshima, "One would come on a group doing road work, men and women who seemed scarcely able to wield their heavy picks and shovels, some seated or lying beside the road to snatch a few moments' rest. It was a heart-rending sight."[188] From

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[183] Ibid., 138.
[184] "The Hiroshima House Project," Ira and Edita Morris papers, box 41, folder 655, University Archives, Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Columbia University Libraries.
[185] Ibid.
[186] Ibid.
[187] Ibid.
[188] Ibid.

then on, Ira and Edita Morris decided that they must do something for these survivors, though at the time, they had no concrete plan of action on how to do so, and their stay was quickly reaching its end.

Before leaving, they visited the mayor of Hiroshima, Hamai Shinzo, who had heroically set up the emergency first-aid system directly after the explosion. Together, they discussed various project ideas on a "private basis to help the survivors." After consulting with Dr. Shigeto Fumio, the head of Hiroshima's Red Cross Hospital, and with Dr. Morito Tatsuo, the head of Hiroshima University, and considering their available resources, the consensus opinion was "that we should not attempt anything so ambitious as the setting up of a free clinic or of a hostel." From that, they decided that the "most useful enterprise to launch with the means at our disposal was a social center open to all survivors who wished to avail themselves of this service."[189] After leaving Hiroshima, Ira and Edita brought Ivan into the project as he was well-connected among academics and able to help coordinate in Japanese; for the next two years, the Morris family set out to put into action a tangible enterprise to help the *hibakusha* and those most in need of help.

In 1957, the House of Rest project became feasible after finding an adequate building, a Japanese-style house located in present-day Ujinanishi, Hiroshima, on the bank of the river Ōta, which had been a teahouse in prewar days and had escaped destruction due to its distance from the epicenter. A sponsoring supervising committee, which included the presidents of the Japanese Red Cross and Japanese PEN Club, was formed as the project neared its opening. Both PEN Club writers themselves, Ira and Edita were already acquainted with their Japanese PEN Club counterparts, including Abe Tomoji and Tanabe Kōichirō, who they first met in 1951 at the 22nd International PEN Congress held in Edinburgh.[190] In discussions on how the Japan PEN club could help during a visit to Hiroshima in 1955, Ira and Edita, along with Kawabata Yasunari, Serizawa Kojiro, and Tanabe Kōichirō, reached an agreement that the Morris family would provide funding while Tanabe Kōichirō would be responsible for managing the project in liaison with the Morris family who lived abroad.[191] The Morris family returned to Hiroshima for the inauguration of the Hiroshima House of Rest, known in Japanese as the *Ikoi no ie*, literally meaning "The House of Solace," in 1957. On May 5, the house formally opened for operation with guests including the governor of Hiroshima Prefecture, Ōhara Hiroo, and former mayor of Hiroshima, Hamai Shinzo, among the crowd.[192]

The large house with a small restful garden proved to be an ideal center for what became tri-weekly meetings of groups of survivors from many of the city's numerous districts welcomed by Tanabe Kōichirō and his wife, Tanabe Shigeko. The guests, including those among the least-favored, most disadvantaged, or oldest of the surviving population, were able to spend the day chatting, viewing television, resting in hot baths, being served free meals, and attending entertainment events ranging from movies, dance recitals, recording concerts, etc., which were normally beyond their means. The house not only critically offered a place of refuge, relaxation, and hospitality but also delivered condolence money, clothing, food, blankets, and other forms of aid to the elderly *hibakusha*.

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[189] Ibid.
[190] Kōichirō Tanabe, "*Sōsetsu ni rei shūnen (Hiroshima ikoi no ie) no ayumi*" (1977), Hiroshima City Archive, Hiroshima House of Rest Collection, C1993-0452.
[191] Ibid.
[192] "The Hiroshima House Project," Ira and Edita Morris papers, box 41, folder 655, University Archives, Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Columbia University Libraries.

Furthermore, the house served as a hostel for out-of-town patients coming to Hiroshima for examination in the various hospitals treating radiation sickness, with facilities for up to fifteen guests; the house hosted over 4,000 visitors in the first seventeen months after its establishment.[193] Founded as an independent humanist project supporting *hibakusha* and seeking the abolition of nuclear weapons, world peace, and the promotion of the humanitarian spirit, the House of Rest distinctly maintained its political neutrality to be available for all who sought its services.

In 1960, the Morris family established the Hiroshima House Foundation, headquartered in New York, to provide international support for the House of Rest and promote world peace and humanitarianism. The Hiroshima House Foundation worked with peace activists and anti-nuclear newsletters to solicit donations and received support from notable figures, including Albert Schweitzer, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, Jean-Paul Sartre, Francois Mauriac, Lord Bertrand Russell, Rev. John Collins, Dr. Gunther Anders, Dr. Linus Pauling, Benjamin Spock, Clarence Pickett, Pearl Buck, John Hersey, and Norman Cousins, to name a few.[194] Starting the next year, in 1961, at the initiative of Kawabata Yasunari, president of the Japan PEN Club, the annual "Exhibition of Paintings and Calligraphy by Writers, Artists, and Celebrities" was created with the support of the Japan PEN Club dedicating all contributions to the House of Rest atomic bomb victim relief fund. Initially held in the Fukuya Department Store in Hiroshima each summer, the exhibitions gradually expanded also to be held in Tokyo at the Tokyu Department Store, then later across Japan, totaling 23 exhibitions by the year 1977.[195] Over time, the Hiroshima exhibit became a flagship annual cultural event thanks to the cooperation of a wide range of artists, scholars, painters, calligraphers, and religious practitioners through a truly international expression of artistic support.

Operating until September 1991, the Hiroshima House of Rest project directly aided *hibakusha*'s social, mental, and physical well-being and left a remarkable impact on the community. By 1977, guest book records kept by Tanabe Kōichirō indicated that 93,000 *hibakusha* had visited the house and that the House of Rest had been home to 1,930 meetings of local *hibakusha*.[196] During one such mass meeting attended by several thousand *hibakusha* on the occasion of the House's sixth anniversary, they drafted and approved a resolution in Japanese, translated into English, which described their gratitude for the House of Rest, describing the project as "one of the most wonderful meetings ever encountered by us who, deprived of all properties—homes burned, wounded or affected by radioactivity, could see no light in our future and were deep in our despair, quite uncertain of the morrow's life."[197] The resolution continued, "Hiroshima House, however, started to shed a beam of light; in it, we began to feel our heart's repose." It inspired hope among those most traumatized by the atomic bombing, helping them break free from their dark despair and rediscover the value of life by

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[193] Kōichirō Tanabe, "*Sōsetsu ni rei shūnen (Hiroshima ikoi no ie) no ayumi*" (1977), Hiroshima City Archive, Hiroshima House of Rest Collection, C1993-0452; "The Hiroshima House Project," Ira and Edita Morris papers, box 41, folder 655, University Archives, Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Columbia University Libraries.
[194] "The Hiroshima House Project," Ira and Edita Morris papers, box 41, folder 655, University Archives, Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Columbia University Libraries.
[195] Kōichirō Tanabe, "*Sōsetsu ni rei shūnen (Hiroshima ikoi no ie) no ayumi*" (1977), Hiroshima City Archive, Hiroshima House of Rest Collection, C1993-0452.
[196] Ibid.
[197] "The Hiroshima House Project," Ira and Edita Morris papers, box 41, folder 655, University Archives, Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Columbia University Libraries.

overcoming their pains and griefs, filled with the hope for a world where there will be peace and happiness for all mankind. The last sentence of the resolution expressed that "It is our wish and desire that the House will enjoy further growth to serve us sufferers as our bulwark," and was signed "Representatives of the Atom-bomb Survivors of all the districts of Hiroshima."[198] The Morris family and the Japan PEN Club, especially Tanabe Kōichirō, who, with their humble actions, dedicated much of their lives and resources to aid the *hibakusha*, deserve remembrance.

Conclusion

The findings of this paper show that as next year's landmark 80th anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki approaches, the acknowledgment of both the legacy of the Manhattan Project at Columbia University and its consequences is in danger of once again becoming "obscured by the mushroom cloud" in our discourse around the atomic bombings and nuclear weapons. While it certainly is a step in the right direction for Columbia University to partner with Hiroshima University and the Sasakawa Peace Foundation to create the Hiroshima University Peace Study Tour, a joint summer program focusing on natural resource management and peacebuilding in confronting the "necessary evil" discourse, it is equally important to draw attention to the record of the Sasakawa network given their involvement in the program.

The Sasakawa network's continuing controversies and funding of institutions have provoked a consistent debate in academia for the past 30 years. On matters relating to *hibakusha*, those most victimized by war criminals, the efforts to normalize violence and war crimes by the Sasakawa network and its Class A war criminal founder, Sasakawa Ryōichi, are diametrically opposed to the wishes and messages of the *hibakusha* and must be separated. Through that analysis, the Hiroshima University Peace Study Tour is a continuation of the normalization of war criminals and the banalization of the violence *hibakusha* suffered. Therefore, Columbia University should also pursue a partnership with the Hiroshima and Peace Summer Program hosted by Hiroshima City University. The program is not only already familiar but specifically specializes in war and peace studies, providing an excellent opportunity for students with broader interests in international politics, history, literature, media studies, and sociology to directly encounter *hibakusha* and confront the consequences of the Manhattan Project without affiliation to the Sasakawa network.

Columbia University's K=1 Project Center for Nuclear Studies is a shining example of an organization dedicated to promoting informed debates on nuclear technologies, energy, disarmament, and proliferation issues that actively confront the "necessary evil" discourse while promoting the message of *hibakusha*. Its achievements and contributions in bringing awareness to nuclear issues through its research, articles, events, interviews, educational materials, films, and countless other works truly make the K=1 Project one of a kind at Columbia University. The inactivity of the K=1 Project since 2020 is most disheartening. It represents the loss of one of the brightest opportunities to educate students and provide motivated students to become directly involved in nuclear non-proliferation. I sincerely hope that, in time, renewed interest in the K=1 Project Center for Nuclear Studies and its

[198] Ibid.

message can lead to the revival of operations for the organization, which Columbia University should enthusiastically support.

Lastly, Columbia University should take inspiration from the examples of humanity and compassion for *hibakusha* highlighted by Ivan Morris, his parents, Ira and Edita, and the Japan PEN Club, especially Tanabe Kōichirō, by commemorating and bringing more awareness to their contributions to the Hiroshima House of Rest project. To this end, the Hiroshima House of Rest represents a meaningful direct contribution to the well-being of *hibakusha* and is distinctly unique among other American activist projects in Hiroshima. Centered around its humanitarian mission until its final days in 1991, the nearly 100,000 guests over the course of its operation are a strong indicator of the enduring service the House of Rest offered. The resources of Columbia University present an opportunity at a critical inflection point to challenge American attitudes toward the atomic bombings and educate future leaders who can make meaningful and timeless contributions toward fulfilling the ultimate wish of the *hibakusha*: to continue their message and voice so that in the future there may be "No More Hiroshimas."

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Strategies and Countermeasures for the Utilization of Berber Language in Tunisia

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Introduction

Tunisia, a North African country known for its rich history, diverse culture, and linguistic diversity, is home to a sizeable Berber-speaking population. Berber, also known as Tamazight, is an Afro-Asiatic language spoken by the Amazigh people, who have lived in the region for thousands of years. Despite its historical and cultural significance, the Berber language has faced marginalization and discrimination in Tunisia, where Arabic is the official language. This paper aims to analyse the challenges faced by the Berber language in Tunisia and propose strategies and countermeasures to promote its utilization and preserve its heritage.

1. The Current Use of Berber Language in Tunisia

Gabsi (2011: 18) believes that the Tunisian Berber language (or Tamazight) currently spoken has maintained the grammatical characteristics of the Berber language group. However, Berber did borrow many words from Tunisian Arabic dialect. Gabsi (2003: 70) found that Berber borrowed 35% of its verbs from Tunisian Arabic dialect. Similarly, he also found that many words in Tunisian Arabic were directly borrowed from Berber, such as "فكرون" (tortoise), "لحم علوش" (mutton), etc. A large number of studies on the vocabulary issues shared by Tunisian Arabic dialect and Berber have proved that many Arabic vocabulary currently in use are borrowed from Berber, and some still maintain their original state, some are Arabized. It can be seen that the complementary relationship between Arabic and Berber has played a role in increasing the vitality of the languages for both. Table 1 shows some words borrowed from Berber language by Tunisian and Moroccan Arabic dialect.

Tablet 1

Origin	Vocabulary	Meaning	Countries of use
Berber, Arabic, Latin	بركوكش(barkoukech)	A kind of grain	Tunisia
Berber	تبروري(tabrouri)	hail	Morocco, Tunisia
Berber	حلوف(halouf)	Wild boar	Tunisia

Berber	كرموص(karmous)	Barbary fig	Morocco, Tunisia
Berber	غشير(ghichir)	kid	Tunisia
Berber	هرقمة(hargma)	Lablabi, a Tunisian dish	Tunisia

Huang Xing (2012: 3-5) distinguishes between ethnic minorities in monolingual and multilingual environments. Ethnic minorities living in a single language environment have a relatively indifferent sense of mother tongue than those living in a multilingual environment, some even give up their mother tongue. This phenomenon is more common in Tunisian society, mainly in the capital and the northeast area. Through many studies, interviews and some inspections, we found that 100% of the people who still speak Berber language live in the mountains, and the areas that they live use Tamazight only.

Tunisia is an Arab country located in North Africa. Like most Arab countries, the Tunisian government stipulates in the first article of the new and old constitutions (the government prohibits changes to the first article of the constitution) that "Arabic is the official language of Tunisia, and Islam is the religion of Tunisia". This provision obviously denies and ignores the languages and religions of the different ethnic groups in Tunisia. The history of Tunisia tells us that Tunisian society has diverse ethnic cultures (Amazigh ethnic group & Arab ethnic group) and religions (Islam & Judaism).

Later, although the Tunisian government was aware of the existence of the Amazigh ethnic group, in order to avoid bringing new problems to the country, it continued to implement standard Arabic as the official language of Tunisia, only mentioned in Article 39 of the constitution that gives Tunisian people the freedom to choose their identity, language and culture. Two points can be seen from this provision as well as various related language regulations. First, the Tunisian government has been promoting the Arabization policy. While promoting standard Arabic, the Tunisian government has never given up on French. French has always been the language of the scientific field. Standard Arabic is the language of law, administration and some media. Tunisian dialect is the language of society and is the language of most Tunisian radios and televisions. Second, there is the incoordination between social language life and language policy. The Tunisian government's lack of planning for Standard Arabic and dialects has caused Tunisian society to regard Standard Arabic as the language of the government and only use it when it is necessary (such as exams or regulations), but seldom actively use it in daily life. Under these circumstances, the Tunisian dialect slowly became the dominant language in society.

In addition, many Berbers will gradually lose motivation to use Tamazight when they go to the Tunisian capital or the northeast area, or to places where Tamazight is not spoken. The capital of Tunisia used to be in the west-central Tunisia (Kasserine Governorate in Thala Administrative Division), the name of this city is a Tamazight name. It used to be the capital of the Amazigh people and there were many people living in it, but now there are only some Algerians who can speak Tamazight. There are no more Tunisian who speaks Tamazight--which means that most Tunisians slowly lost the ability to use Tamazight as they got along with Arabs, Turks and French. Meanwhile, after starting to use the Tunisian dialect, they slowly gave up Tamazight language. This also explains why many Tunisians, even though they know that their ancestors are Amazigh people, do not have a strong sense of mother tongue and cultural identification with the Amazigh, and also explains why

most Tunisians believe that Amazigh culture and language belong only to Tunisia's historical and cultural heritage.

2. Challenges Faced by the Berber Language in Tunisia

2.1 Historical Background

The Berber language (or Tamazight) has a long and rich history in Tunisia, dating back to ancient times when the Berber people inhabited the region. Despite this deep-rooted connection, the Berber language has been marginalized and suppressed throughout history, particularly during the colonial era when French and Arabic were imposed as the dominant languages. This historical legacy of linguistic oppression has had a lasting impact on the status of the Berber language in Tunisia, relegating it to the margins of society and hindering its recognition as a legitimate language.

The Berber language has long been marginalized and stigmatized in Tunisia, where Arabic is the dominant language of communication, education, and administration. As a result, many Berber-speaking individuals face discrimination and exclusion in various aspects of society, including access to education, employment, and public services. The lack of recognition and support for the Berber language has led to a decline in the number of fluent speakers and a growing sense of cultural alienation among Berber communities in Tunisia.

Furthermore, the lack of standardized educational programs and resources for teaching the Berber language has hindered its development and dissemination among younger generations. Most schools in Tunisia offer limited or no instruction in Berber, which restricts opportunities for Berber-speaking students to learn and use their native language academically. This situation perpetuates the marginalization of the Berber language and contributes to its gradual erosion over time.

2.2 Social Dynamics

In contemporary Tunisia, the Berber language continues to face challenges related to social dynamics and cultural attitudes. The dominance of Arabic as the official language of the country has marginalized Berber speakers, leading to a lack of institutional support and resources for the language. Furthermore, societal perceptions of the Berber language as a "dialect" or "inferior" form of communication have contributed to its stigmatization and devaluation, further alienating Berber speakers and inhibiting the intergenerational transmission of the language.

2.3 Linguistic Factors

Linguistic factors also play a significant role in the challenges faced by the Berber language in Tunisia. The absence of standardized orthography and pedagogical materials for Berber language instruction hinders its formalization and perpetuates its status as a marginalized language. Additionally, the limited use of Berber in public domains, such as education, media, and government, restricts its visibility and

accessibility to speakers, further undermining its viability as a living language.

3. Strategies for Promoting the Utilization of Berber Language in Tunisia

The current situation of Berber language (or Tamazight) is directly related to the Tunisian government's attitude. As Gabsi (2003: 70) points out, although some Tunisians still speak the Berber language, the government's neglect and exclusion make it difficult for the Berber language to have a future in Tunisia, and it also makes the Berber language in Tunisia unpopular. The Berber-speaking community is heading towards an endangered fate. The United Nations Human Rights Council (2012) also holds a similar view. The study summarized the problems existing in Tunisia's Berber language policy:
(1) There are no educational institutions teaching Berber language;
(2) The government does not recognize Berber names;
(3) The media does not have any information about Berber;
(4) There are no symbols of Berber culture;
(5) The Berbers cannot enjoy full language rights and cannot express their opinions in the Berber language.

The United Nations Human Rights Council is very dissatisfied with the status of the Berber language in Tunisia. It believes that the Tunisian government should give the Berbers the language rights they deserve and allow the Berber language to have an appropriate status. It should even consider re-establishing its role in culture, language and culture, restore the identity of the Berber people in terms of history and other aspects, and make Berber one of the languages of education and media. In 2017, the UN Human Rights Council recommended Tunisia officially recognize, protect and promote Amazigh language and culture, as well as adopt legislation for its instruction in schools.[199]

To address the challenges faced by the Berber language in Tunisia, it is essential to implement a set of strategies and countermeasures that aim to promote its utilization and enhance its status within the country. The following are some key strategies that could be adopted at the doctoral level to support the Berber language:

(1) Linguistic Research and Documentation: Conducting comprehensive linguistic research and documentation of the Berber language in Tunisia is crucial for preserving its heritage and promoting its use. Researchers and scholars should undertake fieldwork to collect data on Berber dialects, phonology, grammar, and lexicon, which can contribute to the development of standardized language resources and educational materials.

(2) Curriculum Development and Teacher Training: Developing a standardized curriculum for teaching the Berber language in schools and universities can help integrate it into the education system and ensure its continuity. Teachers should receive training in Berber language pedagogy and methodology to effectively teach and promote the language among students.

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[199] McSheffrey, E., "*'We are still here:' Indigenous Tunisians still fighting for rights 1,300 years after colonisation*"[N]. Global News, 2003-03-21. https://globalnews.ca/news/9506509/indigenous-tunisians-fight-for-rights-after-colonization/#:~:text=In%202017%2C%20the%20UN%20Human,for%20its%20instruction%20in%20schools.

(3) Language Policy and Legislation: Formulating language policies and legislation that recognize and protect the rights of Berber-speaking communities in Tunisia is essential for promoting linguistic diversity and cultural heritage. The government should enact laws that support the use of Berber in public institutions, media, and official documents, and provide funding for language revitalization initiatives.

(4) Community Outreach and Awareness Campaigns: Engaging with Berber-speaking communities through community outreach programs, cultural events, and awareness campaigns can foster pride and appreciation for the Berber language and culture. Collaborating with local organizations, NGOs, and cultural institutions can help raise awareness about the importance of preserving and promoting the Berber language in Tunisia. For example, the ASNAPED (Association de la Sauvegarde de la Nature et Protection de l'Environnement à Douiret) in Tunisia , the AAMTT (L'Association des Amis de la Terre de Tataouine) should try more carefully to change the status of the Berber language and Berber people.

4. Countermeasures for Addressing Linguistic Discrimination and Marginalization

In addition to implementing strategies to promote the utilization of the Berber language (or Tamazight) in Tunisia, it is crucial to address linguistic discrimination and marginalization that Berber-speaking individuals face in society. The following are some countermeasures that could be adopted to combat discrimination and promote linguistic equality:

(1) Anti-Discrimination Laws and Policies: Enforcing anti-discrimination laws and policies that prohibit discrimination based on language and ethnicity is essential for protecting the rights of Berber-speaking individuals in Tunisia. The government should establish mechanisms to address cases of linguistic discrimination and provide legal support for victims.

(2) Cultural Diversity and Inclusion Programs: Promoting cultural diversity and inclusion through programs and initiatives that celebrate the linguistic and cultural heritage of Berber-speaking communities can help combat stereotypes and prejudices. Cultural events, festivals, and exhibitions that showcase Berber language and traditions can foster intercultural dialogue and understanding.

(3) Media Representation and Visibility: Increasing the representation and visibility of Berber language and culture in the media can help challenge stereotypes and misconceptions about the language and its speakers. Media outlets should provide opportunities for Berber-speaking individuals to share their stories, experiences, and perspectives, and raise awareness about the importance of linguistic diversity in Tunisia.

(4) Increase research on the Berber language in Tunisia, such as organizing more domestic academic conferences and forums on the Berber language. At present, most of the language research in Tunisia focuses on the study of Arabic. If more issues such as the vocabulary and historical development of the Berber language can be studied, or scholars can conduct more cooperative project research in the future, then in order to solve people's doubts about the Berber language, Confusion over the relationship between Berber and Arabic will be positively facilitated.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the utilization of the Berber language in Tunisia faces numerous challenges, including marginalization, discrimination, and lack of recognition. To promote the language and preserve its heritage, it is essential to implement strategies and countermeasures that focus on linguistic research, curriculum development, language policy, community outreach, and cultural diversity. By adopting a comprehensive approach at the doctoral level, Tunisia can support the Berber language and enhance its status within the country, ensuring the linguistic rights and cultural heritage of Berber-speaking communities for generations to come.

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War and Genocide: Distinguishing Conflict and Extermination

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14th Annual Consortium of African and Asian Studies' Symposium

September 15, 2024

Abstract:

The recent Israeli military campaign in Gaza remains contested in the language used to describe the conflict: a "war" or "genocide." These terms are increasingly used interchangeably to describe the conflict and have accordingly blurred the difference between them. While war and genocide are often treated as distinct forms of violence, this study argues that the terms themselves are not merely descriptive but actively construct meaning. Drawing from historical case studies and scholarly definitions, the paper investigates how the labels of "war" and "genocide" influence political, social, and legal responses, often carrying significant moral and geopolitical implications. By interrogating the power of language in conflict discourse, this paper contends that the ways in which we define and frame violence directly impact the global response to atrocities. This paper considers how academic institutions navigate their roles within these dynamics. Through this lens, readers are challenged to reflect on how linguistic and institutional framing can either obscure or illuminate the complexities of mass violence and the ethical responses it demands.

Student protestors across American college campuses calling for an end to the genocide in Gaza have ignited a debate on the nature and boundaries of the term "genocide." The memory of the Holocaust – and its centrality to the imagination and origination of "genocide" – complicates the conversation, as Jewish identity is deeply intertwined with both the historical suffering that defines genocide and the current political stakes of the Israel-Hamas conflict. This paper interrogates the concept of genocide within the context of modern warfare that obscures the line between conflict and humanitarian crises. Some scholars argue that the concept has lost its analytical strength due to its overly broad application.[200] Others advocate for a more expansive use of the term to widen the scope and cases of genocide.[201] While genocide and mass casualty war share many of the same qualities and are difficult to distinguish, they are distinct in their individual rhetoric and affective resonances. The lack of scholarly consensus, paired with distinct emotional or social response to these terms, raises critical questions about the implications of labeling violence as "genocide" versus "war." The language used to describe conflicts not only shapes understanding of such events, but also affects international responses, legal accountability, and the broader historical memory of violence. More locally, it affects the mobilization of [student] activism and the associated knowledge production that comes with social movement.

1.1 Changing Understandings of War

The idea and understanding of war has shifted and changed form since Prussian military theorist Carl Von Clausewitz's initial understanding of absolute war. For Clausewitz, war is shaped by the interaction of violence, chance, and rational strategy, with the ultimate goal of compelling the enemy to

[200] Ronald Suny, "Debating Famine and Genocide," *Contemporary European History* 27, no. 3 (2008): 476–81.
[201] Norman M. Naimark, *Genocide : A World History*, The New Oxford World History (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017).

submit to one's [political] will.[202] His work remains foundational for understanding the strategic and political dimensions of warfare, influencing both military theory and historical interpretations of war. Clausewitz's focus is primarily on the nature of war as a continuation of political aims through violence. His analysis of war involves the people, the government, and the military – he does not single out ethnicity as a key factor in warfare, setting the first distinction between war and genocide.

Mary Kaldor understands these wars as "old wars" in her book *New and Old Wars*. Kaldor explores a paradigm in which modern conflicts are characterized not merely by traditional military engagements but by a complex interplay of political, economic, and identity-based factors. Kaldor's "new wars" often involve a breakdown of legitimacy and create widespread destabilization – which can include or resemble genocide. What is crucial in these modern conflicts is that they are less about territorial conquest and more about identity politics. In this way, "new wars" are conditioned to have a persecuted "other." Violence is not just about defeating an enemy but about undermining the social and political fabric of affected regions.

Deliberate campaigns against ethnic groups can fracture communities and erode bonds that hold societies together, leading to long-term destabilization by fostering mistrust, fear, and division among once-interconnected populations – as seen in classic divide and rule cases in colonial wars.[203]

Similarly, scholars Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye Jr. have examined how globalization and interdependence, particularly after World War II, have reshaped conflict. Their analysis of economic and military globalism during the Cold War highlights the balance of terror and the technological advances that changed the stakes of war.[204] Globalization blurs the lines between local conflicts and global interests, making it harder to distinguish internal power struggles from broader international

[202] Carl Von Clausewitz, *On War (*1832), trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008), 75–83.
[203] Richard Morrock, "Heritage of Strife: The Effects of Colonialism 'Divide and Rule' Strategy upon the Colonized Peoples," *Science & Society* 37, no. 2 (1973).
[204] Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye, "Globalization: What's New? What's Not? (And So What?)," *Foreign Policy*, no. 118 (2000): 106.

dynamics. This too, makes it increasingly difficult to decipher dynamics of large-scale warfare from humanitarian crises or genocidal violence.

Keohane and Nye highlight Bosnia and Kosovo as examples where heightened global awareness from the information revolution and media coverage, contributed to pressure for humanitarian intervention.[205] In the case of Bosnia and Kosovo, global audiences became exposed to the disturbing images of ethnic cleansing and civil massacres, prompting a moral outcry that pressured governments and institutions to act. With these examples the importance of the "audience" of war is discerned. The increased visibility of atrocities through global media raises the question of whether heightened awareness can lead to a broader application of the term "genocide." As the public becomes more aware of mass suffering in conflicts, there may be a tendency to conflate mass casualties with genocide, driven by the emotional impact of witnessing violence in real time rather than by precise legal definitions.

These shifting understandings of war are crucial for distinguishing between war and genocide in the contemporary era. As warfare moves beyond traditional state-driven conflicts to include identity-based violence and civilian targeting, it becomes important to critically assess where war ends and genocide begins, and how the two can be addressed in both theory and practice.

1.2 Instability of "Genocide"

Understanding the etymology and development of the term is essential for recognizing how it emerged as a distinct concept, separate from the broader category of war. When Raphaël Lemkin coined "genocide" in the early 1940s, he understood it as mass violence perpetrated against a group (racial, social, religious) in a short period of time.[206] Andrea Graziosi and Frank Synsyn explored the

[205] Keohane and Nye, 116.
[206] Andrea Graziosi and Frank E. Synsyn, *Genocide: The Power and Problems of a Concept* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2022), 5.

idea of genocide and its' scholarly and political development since Lemkin's World War II classification in their book *Genocide: The Power and Problems of a Concept*. Graziosi and Synsyn emphasize the importance of Lemkin formalizing and defining genocide as a distinct concept, recognizing and naming a practice of systematic extermination that had long existed but lacked precise terminology.[207] Being composed of the Greek word *genos*, used to describe a people of the same descent, and *-cide* from the Latin word for killing, creates a specific distinction from war: the victimization or intended extermination of a specific group. The nature and objective of this type of conflict is not merely imperial conquest, or to defeat an enemy, but to eradicate a group perceived as inferior. Graziosi and Synsyn further argue that this distinction has shaped both historical analysis and policy-making, but they caution against the creation of an oversimplified "genocide or not" binary, which risks narrowing our understanding of mass violence and its complexities.[208]

The official institutionalization of genocide through the 1948 United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide resulted in genocide being codified as a distinct international and punishable crime, separate from war. Lemkin's efforts to define and criminalize genocide laid the groundwork for this convention, which created a legal framework for identifying and prosecuting genocidal acts. The convention's definition, which focused on the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial, or religious group, not only provided legal clarity but also elevated genocide as an exceptional crime in the realm of international law and crimes against humanity.[209]

However, the legal codification reinforces the binary framework of "genocide or not," shaping how mass violence is perceived and addressed on the global stage. It encourages scholars and policymakers alike to view genocide as a separate, exceptional occurrence that is distinct from broader

[207] Graziosi and Synsyn, 9.
[208] Graziosi and Synsyn.
[209] Graziosi and Synsyn, 23.

warfare. The international community can limit recognition of atrocities that do not meet these precise conditions, yet still involve mass suffering or ethnic cleansing. This can have significant implications for international intervention and justice, as conflicts that fall short of the legal definition of genocide may be overlooked or miscategorized as "mere" war crimes or civil conflict.

The current conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is a case in which genocidal elements may be present but have not been legally classified as genocide by the International Criminal Courts (ICC) or UN. Since the First (1996-97) and Second (1998-2003) Congo Wars, political crises have continued, exacerbated by the fragmentation of power-sharing arrangements within the government. Ongoing violence, particularly in the eastern provinces like North Kivu and Ituri, stems from the armed conflicts between militias, ethnic groups, and state forces. [210] These conflicts are deeply rooted in the aftermath of the Rwandan Genocide, where ethnic tensions between Hutu and Tutsi populations spilled into Congo, fueling cycles of mass violence.[211] Despite approximately 6 million conflict-related deaths since the outbreak of violence, the international community classified mass atrocities, ethnic cleansing, and human rights violations in the DRC as crimes against humanity.[212] Without the label of "genocide," the mass suffering and death in the DRC does not receive the same outcry and backlash from the international community. What is even more essential than moral outcry are the norms that such outrage establishes at the institutional level. While activism, protests, and grassroots anger arise from the bottom, institutions at the top have the capacity to absorb these sentiments and implement effective humanitarian responses.

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[210]United Nations, "Escalating Violence in Democratic Republic of Congo Exacerbating Humanitarian Crisis, Special Representative Warns Security Council, Urging Durable Political Solution," Meetings Coverage and Press Releases, February 20, 2024, https://press.un.org/en/2024/sc15596.doc.htm, and Jean Migabo Kalere, *Génocide au Congo: analyse des massacres de populations civiles* (Broederlijk Delen: Bruxelles, 2002).

[211] Gérard Prunier, *Africa's World War: Congo, the Rwandan Genocide, and the Making of a Continental Catastrophe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

[212] "Conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo," Global Conflict Tracker, accessed September 5, 2024, https://cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/violence-democratic-republic-congo.

On the other hand, the broad application of genocide can lead to the mislabeling of conflicts that, while involving significant violence and atrocities, do not meet the strict legal definition. In such cases, the emotional and political power of the term may be invoked to garner international attention or intervention, even when the intent to destroy a specific group is not present. Overuse of the term can also complicate international responses by conflating distinct forms of conflict, leading to misguided policies or interventions that fail to address the true nature of the violence. Pushing this binary framework is critical for understanding contemporary conflicts where mass atrocities, ethnic cleansing, and civilian targeting are entangled with military strategy. In such cases, applying a rigid label of either war or genocide may limit our ability to grasp the full scope of violence and, more importantly, the motivations behind it.

The 118th Congressional Resolution that recognizes genocide in Darfur against non-Arab ethnic minorities, introduced in June of this year, serves as a reminder of the long and tumultuous history of genocidal violence in Sudan.[213] The peak of the conflict in Darfur (2003-2010) is widely recognized as a genocide due to the scale of atrocities, including systematic killings, sexual violence, and the mass displacement of targeted ethnic groups. However, this genocide label has not gone without controversy and contestation in academic and legal circles. Beginning in 2004, The Save Darfur movement garnered mass media attention and public participation in the United States, being described as the most successful social movement since Vietnam.[214] In 2004, the U.S. government passed a resolution in Congress recognizing and labeling the situation in Darfur as genocide.[215] The resolution reflected a political judgment designed to pressure international actors and justify potential intervention. However, just one year later, in 2005, the UN ruled the Darfur conflict was *not* a genocide in Security Council

[213] Rep. John James, "H.Res.1328 – 118th Congress (2023-2024): Recognizing the Actions of the Rapid Support Forces and Allied Militias in the Darfur Region of Sudan against Non-Arab Ethnic Communities as Acts of Genocide." November 7, 2024, https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/house-resolution/1328.
[214] Iavor Rangelov, "The Role of Transnational Society," in *Responding to Genocide, The Politics of International Action*, eds. Adam Lupel and Ernesto Verdeja (Boulder, London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2013).
[215] Scott Straus, "Darfur and the Genocide Debate," *Foreign Affairs* 84 (2005): 123.

Resolution 1564, opting instead to describe the atrocities as war crimes and crimes against humanity.[216] The divergence between U.S. Congress and the UN reveals how the term "genocide" is not only a legal category but a political tool subject to strategic deployment. Following Resolution 1564 the UNSC referred the situation to the ICC, which ruled it *was* a in fact, a genocide.[217] In 2009, the ICC issued an arrest warrant for former Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir, marking the first time the court charged an individual with genocide. Yet even this legal codification proved slow to materialize in political action, as al-Bashir remained in government until 2019, raising questions about the real-world impact of labeling an atrocity as "genocide." In this case, the ICC's use of the term carried legal weight, but lacked immediate enforcement, demonstrating the legal declarations alone do not guarantee swift international responses. While the Save Darfur movement did not succeed in mobilizing the international community effectively, it proved remarkably successful in energizing activism and raising awareness. The case of Darfur illustrates how the label of genocide is often contested, revealing the fluidity and complexity of its application depending on evolving political, legal, and academic contexts. The contestation itself shapes international responses, as it can either galvanize or impede efforts to intervene, depending on how the term is invoked.

2.0 The Politics of Language: Framing Genocide in Academia

As discussed in the previous section, the term "genocide" is not only fraught with instability but is also a subject of intense debate, holding substantial significance in both legal and moral realms. Its meaning has been shaped by evolving political, social, and academic debates, making it a powerful yet slippery concept. This instability arises from its origins as a legal definition, yet its application has often expanded beyond these boundaries, becoming both an analytical tool and a moral charge. The

[216] "Report of the International Commission of Inquiry on Darfur to the United Nations Secretary-General" (Geneva, January 25, 2005).
[217] "Darfur, Sudan," International Criminal Court, accessed September 5, 2024, https://www.icc-cpi.int/darfur.

term's fluidity means that it is frequently invoked in ways that can diverge from the original legal intent, especially in academic institutions where critical inquiry into conflicts and atrocities is paramount.

Universities, as hubs of intellectual discourse, grapple with this conceptual instability in their examination of global conflicts. When scholars debate whether the atrocities in Darfur, for example, or Israel's military actions in Gaza constitute genocide, they are engaging with a term whose meaning shifts depending on the context, the evidence presented, and the political stakes involved. Academia often serves as a site for these debates, where the framing of an event as genocide – or not – can influence policy recommendations, historical memory, and international legal responses.

In this way, the language of genocide in academia is not just a reflection of scholarly rigor but also a reflection of power dynamics. The decision to label – or withhold the label of genocide is not merely an academic exercise; it shapes how history is written, how nations are held accountable, and how future interventions are justified. Thus, the contested and evolving nature of the term genocide is central to the academic enterprise, influencing everything from research agendas to the political stances of universities themselves.

2.1 Student Activism and the Power of Genocide Rhetoric

In on-campus activism, language plays a critical role in mobilizing movements and shaping socio-political responses. While the term "genocide" can carry significant emotional weight, galvanizing students and serving as a powerful rhetorical device, its use also highlights a deeper issue: we need to think beyond just labeling conflicts – especially in the context of “new war” blurriness and legal contestation. Campaigns like Boycott, Divest, Sanction (BDS) have increasingly invoked the term

"genocide" to describe the Israeli-Hamas conflict, but this focus can inadvertently stifle nuanced discussions and limit our understanding of complex realities.[218]

The power of genocide rhetoric in student activism lies not only in its ability to mobilize but also in its capacity to shape how conflicts are understood and responded to. Activism and social movements – especially those on college campuses – result in powerful knowledge production. With widespread mobilization and participation, this knowledge can become mainstream, accepted as empirical. Thus leading to a stifling of nuanced discussion, where accusations of genocide become rhetorical weapons with high morality – rather than opportunities for meaningful dialogue. But more important than labeling conflicts is the need for innovation. Genocide determination has its limits; while it can catalyze immediate outrage and social mobilization, conflicts are persistent and often mutate rather than resolve, needing complex solutions and rapid responses.

As a student at Columbia during the spring 2024 protests surrounding Israel's actions in Gaza, I witnessed firsthand how this dynamic unfolded. Dialogue often felt constrained, as the university was put in a difficult position where it could not openly disagree with protestors without being condemned. Yet in its silence, the institution struggled to maintain a semblance of neutrality. This created a climate in which complex, critical discussions about the conflict were sidelined, while the invocation of genocide left little room for deeper intellectual engagement. Instead of campus debates foregrounding innovative solutions and historical arguments, the need for harmony between administration, student activists, and the different student groups consumed the air.

This pursuit of a false parity – where disagreement is viewed as divisive – fails to recognize that genuine discourse thrives on diverse perspectives. Rather than seeking agreement, robust debate and engagement with differing viewpoints should be encouraged. This approach can foster a more fertile

[218] Lydia Polgreen, "Opinion: The Student-Led Protests Aren't Perfect. That Doesn't Mean They're Not Right," *The New York Times*, April 26, 2024. https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/26/opinion/columbia-student-protests-israel.html.

ground for innovative humanitarian solutions, ultimately leading to a richer understanding of the complexities involved and more effective responses to pressing global issues.

3. Conclusion

Distinguishing between war and genocide remains an essential yet complex endeavor, deeply influenced by evolving scholarly, legal, contextual, and political interpretations. The term "genocide" carries a heavy moral and legal weight, impacting everything from historical memory to legal accountability and humanitarian intervention. However, its application can also be contentious, shaped by political agendas, media portrayals, and academic debates. This fluidity underscores the necessity for precise language and careful analysis when addressing mass violence. Educational institutions, as centers of critical inquiry, play a crucial role in navigating these distinctions. The tension between the emotional and moral weight of "genocide" and the academic rigor required for its accurate application illustrates the broader challenges faced in both scholarly and public discourse.

The deeper issue lies in how language itself constructs our understanding of these concepts. The words we use – whether labeling a conflict as "war" or "genocide" or “genocide or not” – carry immense power, shaping not only academic discourse but also the political, social, and legal responses to violence. Language does not merely describe reality; it creates it. By framing events in specific ways, we influence the reactions of governments, international organizations, and civil society. This is evident in how the term "genocide" is employed in different contexts. Its invocation can rally international intervention or silence nuanced debate, as seen in both historical case studies and contemporary activism. The decision to call something genocide – or not – is never a neutral act. It is a process of meaning-making that can elevate certain atrocities in the global consciousness while diminishing others. It is imperative to remain critically aware of the power of language, recognizing its capacity to not only inform but also constrain the ways we address suffering and injustice.

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An Analysis of Black Identity in Mark Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*

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Abstract

This paper will critically examine Mark Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1885) from three temporal perspectives: the antebellum period in which the narrative is developed, the period in which the Reconstruction collapsed, and the latter period to the present. In this approach, I will examine the contradictions created by the articulation of racial differences within the white community to maintain the white people's identity in the American South at that time.

It is natural to assume that the repeated descriptions of the deliberately delayed release of Jim, the book's main Black character, despite the fact that he had already been freed according to the will of his former owner, reflect the social conditions of the time when Twain was writing the work. It is significant to examine the fact that the period when the failure of Reconstruction became apparent and the upheaval of discrimination against Black Americans occurred corresponds precisely with the period when Twain wrote the work. In the final section of the book, Jim's humanity is stripped away to preserve the identity of white people. This is just one example of many sections in the work in which Jim's identity is denied that will be examined in this paper.

The denial of various freedoms, such as voting and economic activity, by the Jim Crow Laws, which emerged soon after Reconstruction and lasted until the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, deprived people not only of life and safety but also of identity. These acts fit the definition of genocide. The problems they created have yet to be resolved and cast a dark shadow over the present society as a whole.

Introduction

Mark Twain (1835-1910) produced works a variety of works, which are generally sorted into three genres: travel writings in the early period, boyhood adventures in the middle period, and works that express pessimism in the late period. *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1885) is classified as one of the boyhood adventures of the middle period. The main character in the novel is Huckleberry Finn, who played a minor role in *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876). Samuel Langhorne Clemens, who became famous under the pseudonym Mark Twain, spent fourteen years of his life, from age four to eighteen, in Hannibal, Missouri, along the Mississippi River. His works about juvenile adventure are based on his own boyhood experiences there. The collection of nostalgic works are set in a southern town named St. Petersburg, blessed with rivers and forests. They ensured Twain's fame and, in

particular, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* are two of his best works. Many critics have pointed out that these two works cannot be viewed simply as a series of adventure stories, and that *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* cannot be regarded as a mere sequel to *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* with the same characteristics. However, the nature of the "adventures" of Tom, the protagonist of the former, and Huck, the protagonist of the latter, are questions for another time. In this paper, I will discuss another character who experiences adventure in this work, the Black slave Jim.

In *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, it is Huck who has the adventures, and he is also the narrator of the work. However, Jim is an integral part of both the work itself and Huck's adventure. It is significant to examine how this third adventurer, who does not appear in the title but plays a major role in the work, is portrayed in the work to address the hidden essence of the work. This paper will first discuss how Jim is depicted in the work and treated by the other characters, and how the erasure and distortion of his identity occurs in the work, citing specific examples. Second, I will discuss what the author, Mark Twain, intended to satirize by depicting the denial of Jim's humanity in the work, from two perspectives: Jim's minstrelization and the coincidence with the time of Reconstruction. Furthermore, by discussing how the work has been received and interpreted up to the present, we will explore the points in the work that have not been explicitly mentioned in previous reviews and readers' interpretations.

1.Tom's Agonizing Play in the Ending Section

This section highlights the diminishment of Jim's identity in the work by examining how his character is portrayed and how he is treated by other characters in the work.

One typical and telling portrayal of denial of Jim's humanity is in the ridiculous rescue attempt orchestrated by Tom Sawyer (who reappears in Chapter 33 at the end of the work) to free Jim. Jim's owner, Miss Watson, has already passed away, specifying in her will that he be freed. Therefore, Jim is now a free man, and there is no need for him to continue his life as a fugitive. Tom knows that, of course, but he does not tell Huck that Jim has been freed, and he cooperates with Huck's plan to steal and rescue Jim. Tom rejects the simple plan made by Huck and makes a more complicated and elaborate rescue plan. For example, even though the chain on Jim's leg is tied to the foot of his bed and can be easily removed by lifting the bed, Tom insists on sawing off the foot of the bed to let Jim escape. He also insists that he needs a rope ladder to escape and a shirt and pen to keep a journal on, all of which seem to Huck to be completely unnecessary for Jim's rescue. The rescue, which is depicted in this section, certainly has an amusing aspect. It makes sense considering the novel's nature as a juvenile adventure story that it has some "hilarious" episodes. However, it is essential for a more profound understanding of the work to read more deeply than to regard Tom's reappearance in the concluding section and his performance of such a ridiculous rescue as simply amusing.

Chapters 35 through 39 describe Tom and Huck's preparations to get Jim out. Tom's plot has a comical aspect that can make readers laugh, but it should not be overlooked that his plot originates from European culture. It is also important to consider that the emphasis on European traditional values is characteristic of the culture of the gentleman in Southern society. Helping Huck with his plan to steal Jim does not mean that Tom becomes as deviant from the social norm as Huck. David L. Smith points

out that "Tom represents a kind of solid respectability—a younger version of the southern gentleman" (Smith 372). Tom's play reflects the authority-based values of American Southern society of the time, and he is not thinking of rescuing Jim due to a humanitarian conscience; Huck, however, is, and is prepared to be in the outsider position.

In the antebellum society in which the work is set, the act of freeing Jim due to one's conscience, as Huck does, is an act that deviates substantially from the moral code. Huck's actions were synonymous with going to hell, especially in a Southern society that placed the highest value on being respectable. Furthermore, since the pre-Civil War Southern church taught that slavery was God's will, Huck's act was also contrary to church teaching (Smith 372). In short, Huck's narrative suggests that his conscience, based on transracial humanitarian motives, is undermined by the social values and Christian teachings in society at that time. Thus, Huck's narrative in the novel suggests that the strain in society that divides people by race was already deeply rooted in the antebellum period and did not disappear with the end of the Civil War. This social strain gradually grew and became one of the driving forces behind the collapse of Reconstruction and the resurgence of coerced labor in the postbellum era even after the official abolishment of slavery.

As far as Tom duplicates the liberation of Jim, who has already been liberated, he does not deviate from either social norms or moral teachings. His desire to enjoy the game with guaranteed safety, however, is cruel to Jim, who has risked his life to become a fugitive slave in search of freedom. If Tom had revealed that Jim had been freed when Huck told him the details of his fugitive journey with Jim, Jim's release would not have been needlessly deferred. Jim and Huck are forced to play along with what Tom would call "preparations for Jim's escape in the regular manners." The interactions between Tom and Huck during this time, and Mrs. Phelps's reaction when she is at the mercy of their schemes, are certainly amusing in some respects. However, to understand the work, it is important to consider an alternative meaning of the slapstick that delays Jim's emancipation in this section. Behind the narrative told through the humorous and innocent point of view of a child, there are forces at work that dehumanize Jim. By depicting Jim's absurd detainment by Tom when he should have been freed, Twain satirizes the society of the time of his writing.

2.The Representation and Treatment of Jim in Adventure of Huckleberry Finn

This section discusses the way Jim is portrayed in the work, citing specific examples from the novel, and how the portrayal of him suppresses and distorts his personality.

In many sections of the work, Jim is portrayed as an overly idiotic character. For example, in Chapter 2, Huck escapes from the widow Douglas's house and goes with Tom to the cave where a meeting of the bandit group that Tom has formed takes place. On the way there, Tom plays a prank on Jim by putting his hat in a tree while he is sleeping. Jim then exaggerates the event, telling his peers that a witch has cast a spell on him and that she had put his hat in the tree to make him aware of it. As a result, many Black men and women come to hear the story, and Jim becomes more famous and more respected than any other Black man in the area, which Huck, the narrator, describes as "Jim being monstrously proud about" (19). Moreover, Jim does magic with a hair-ball the size of a clenched fist, giving Huck an oracle, and believes that grabbing a snake's husk with his hand will bring disaster. Jim's personality in these scenes, conveyed from Huck's point of view, can be interpreted as a foolish

person who is deluded by superstition, which can make readers laugh. However, a more constitutive interpretation of the work requires us to consider the possibility that such an interpretation is superficial.

Jim's minstrelization here ignores his fatherly care for Huck and the fact that he is the affectionate father of two children of his own. Huck, who fakes his own death to escape his father's abuse and travels on a raft, always faces danger or, in some situations, death. Jim is the only person who takes away Huck's loneliness and fear of death. Nevertheless, the peaceful relationship between Huck and Jim cannot be sustained throughout the work. There is a deep racial divide due to reality of the time, and the racist sentiments depicted there inevitably keep Huck from expressing affection for Jim. Indeed, Jim utters many words in the work that express his affection for Huck, while Huck's deep affection for Jim is restricted by "Twain's calculated use of speechlessness." (Morrison 389). Minstrelizing Jim corroborates disregard for Jim's personality as a father, which is the basis for Huck's "speechlessness."

3.Coincidence with the Historical Background

Through his rafting escapades with Jim, Huck experiences consolation and growth as a person that he has never experienced before. It is crucial to remember that Huck's peace and growth can only be realized through his adventures with Jim. Toni Morrison notes that the "first-rate education in social and individual responsibility" Huck gains is the result of his adventures with Jim (Morrison 391). If they had been able to reach Cairo and Jim were freed from his slave status in the Free State, their escapade would have ended there, giving Huck no time for comfort and no opportunity for growth. It is worth noting that before Jim's release is unnecessarily prolonged by Tom's "agonizing play" at Phelps's farm, it is postponed by the thick fog and the collapse of the raft, which causes the two to miss Cairo (Morrison 389).

The plot of the work and Tom's delay of Jim's liberation take place in the antebellum period in which the narrative takes place but are closely related to the social conditions of the later period in which the novel was composed. In a letter announcing the completion of his previous novel, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, Twain wrote in 1876 to William Dean Howells, "I shall take a boy of twelve & run him on through life (in the first person) but not Tom Sawyer…" (Twain 299). This means that *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* was begun during Reconstruction. In Reconstruction, after the Civil War ended, slavery and involuntary servitude were abolished and Black Americans were given the right to vote. But they were soon required to sign contracts which restricted almost every aspect of their lives (Horwitz 127). Moreover, a series of state laws legalizing discrimination were enacted. These laws, known in the aggregate as Jim Crow, became nationally recognized due to the 1896 Plessy v. Ferguson decision. As Morrison notes, "The 1880s saw the collapse of civil rights for blacks as well as the publication of Huckleberry Finn"; the period during which Twain completed writing *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and published it coincides with the collapse of Reconstruction (Morrison 389). It is natural to assume that the description of the deliberate delay of Jim's release in the concluding chapters of the work reflect Twain's awareness of these social conditions. The work suggests that discrimination against Black Americans and the social structures that legitimized it did not originate

during the post-Civil War period, but had deep roots going back well before the 1830s and 1840s, the period depicted in *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*.

4.The Way *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* Has Been Interpreted

As discussed in the previous sections, Jim's identity is sacrificed and distorted for the preservation of white identity. This is done through the attitudes of other characters toward Jim, the way Jim is portrayed, and the plot itself. In addition, by unjustly prolonging Jim's emancipation from slavery and by minstrelizing him, the work cleverly satirizes historical events by connecting them to the post-Civil War Reconstruction period and its collapse, and the establishment and continuation of Jim Crow. However, this interpretation of the work has not always been mainstream in the criticism of the work. For example, Lionel Trilling's review in the Rinehart edition of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1948) and T.S. Eliot's review of the same work in The Cresset Press Edition, "Mark Twain's Masterpiece" (1950) are far more sentimental. It is precisely a reading free from sentimental interpretations such as the "fundamental innocence of Americanness" that is needed (*Playing in the Dark* 54). If, as Morrison points out, a "contestatory" and "combative" critique of the pre-Civil War period is incorporated into the reading of the work, it sheds much light on the question of "the implications of Africanist presence at its center" that traditional interpretations ignore (*Playing in the Dark* 54).

Conclusion

In interpretations and critiques of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, certain aspects of the work have not been clearly discussed for more than 140 years and have yet to be adequately addressed. Some interpretations have lacked substantive discussion of what lies behind the humor, adventure, and innocence of the child's point of view, for example. There was also a movement to ban the work from the American educational scene because of its more than 200 uses of the word "nigger." Both cases were the result of superficial and one-dimensional interpretations of the work. The work's narrator, Huck, represents one form of the so-called unreliable narrator. The credibility of Huck's narrative, as a boy in his early teens in the ante-bellum American South, is deliberately lowered by Twain's textual strategies. It would be significant to examine the author's intention in using such strategies from a further contemporary perspective.

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Infrastructure as an Annihilator of Difference: Exploring the Karakoram Highway as a Site of Sectarian Violence in Gilgit Baltistan, Pakistan

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Abstract:
This paper examines how infrastructural development in Gilgit Baltistan has been employed as a tool to territorialize the region, reinforcing state governance and control. Focusing on the social impact of infrastructure, particularly roads, this paper highlights how these infrastructural spaces have become sites of ethno-sectarian violence against the Shia community in a Sunni-majority Pakistan. By exploring these dynamics, this paper explains ongoing governance structures and the role of infrastructure in Gilgit Baltistan within the context of post-colonial rule amid constitutional liminality.

Introduction: A Brief Historical Account and Colonial Governance
Gilgit Baltistan (hereafter GB) comprises a demographic of over 1.5 million people living in more than 800 villages (Government of Gilgit Baltistan, 2023). Located at the confluence of the Karakoram, Hindu Kush, and Himalayan Mountain ranges, the region is home to diverse ethno-linguistic traditions. Historically, the region was predominantly inhabited by animists and later Buddhists; however, current major religious affiliations include Shia, Sunni, Ismaili, and Noorbakshi interpretations of Islam (Kreutzmann, 2005, 2016; Ali, 2019).

A brief historical overview of the site is essential to contextualize the primary argument of this paper. During the period of the "Great Game" from the mid-19th century onwards, the political rulers of this region had to strategically align themselves amid increasing external influence from the British, Russians, and, to a lesser extent, the Chinese. Notably, the Chinese already had a longstanding tributary relationship with the rulers of princely states in the area (Lin, 2009; Fairbank, 1978; Millward, 1992). As part of colonial India, yet on the periphery of what became known as the "frontier," there was a growing need for the British to enhance what was referred to as the territorial integrity of the region. Consequently, borders were established with the demarcation of the Durand Line towards the northwest bordering Afghanistan, and infrastructural development, including roads, postal services, and barracks, was constructed in the northeast too (Durand, 1899). Additionally, semi-nomadic and pastoral villages were encouraged, if not forced, to settle and the construction of canal irrigation was accelerated (Sidky, 1997; Allan, 1990). These developments laid the foundations for the full-scale invasion of Gilgit by the British in 1891. The British faced minimal opposition as they had deprived the locals of their prior

strategic advantages which entailed using passes and smaller routes to stage ambushes. Consequently, infrastructural development has often been met with ambivalence by the people of GB.

For the purposes of this paper, I will focus on the formation and subsequent use of the Karakoram Highway (KKH), a road constructed between 1962 and 1978 and opened to the public in 1984 (Kreutzmann, 2022). It is important to clarify that my argument is not that the KKH itself is a primary site of ethno-sectarian violence, as the cases I will present are not the only sites where sectarian tensions exist. Instead, my argument is that the Karakoram Highway has become a primary site entangled with sectarian tensions, enabling a particular form of sectarian violence due to its role as the major thoroughfare to and from the region.

Post-Colonial Transitions

The precise details of the political events leading to Gilgit's accession to Pakistan are debated. For the purposes of this paper, however, it is important to note that Gilgit became part of Pakistan in November 1947, which is distinct from Pakistan's official independence on 14 August 1947. The event known as the "Gilgit Rebellion" led to Gilgit's integration into Pakistan, and many people in the region continue to celebrate two independence days (Brown, 2014; Sökefeld, 2017). The ongoing Kashmir dispute, however, has prevented the region from becoming an official part of Pakistan. Consequently, GB has been described as existing in a state of constitutional liminality (Holden, 2018). The Pakistani government's official stance on not recognising the region as a formal province is that such a step would undermine the state's overarching claim to Kashmir. Martin Sökefeld (2017) poetically concluded through historical analysis that Gilgit is "not part of Kashmir, but of the Kashmir dispute" (Ibid).

After independence, there was a gradual alignment of Chinese and Pakistani interests in the region. Although the British had failed to resolve some border ambiguities, independent Pakistan signed a border agreement with China in Beijing on 2 March 1963, following around four years of negotiations (Lamb, 1963). Around the same time China fought a war with India in 1962 over the Aksai Chin Plateau, shortly after which Pakistan and India fought their second war over Kashmir in 1965. The increased geostrategic importance of the region led to a need for greater control, a phenomenon Hassan Karrar (2022) refers to as the inward turning of regional anxieties. Nonetheless, governance by regional princes continued in GB, albeit with decreasing levels of autonomy, until 1974, when Pakistan's Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto formally annexed the region into Pakistan (Holden, 2018). Colonial modes of governance have persisted, and infrastructure development driven by Sino-Pakistani geostrategic, security, and economic interests led to the construction of the Karakoram Highway.

The Karakoram Highway as a Site of Sectarian Tensions

Although the Karakoram Highway was deemed "complete" in 1978, the road was not opened to civilian traffic until 1984 (Kreutzmann, 2022). Anecdotal evidence from my conversations with locals

over the years has highlighted that it was mostly military convoys and official government vehicles that had consistent access to the road before 1984. Nonetheless, I disagree with mainstream discourse that tends to portray the region as isolated until modernisation "opened it up" to the world. The sheer number of passes across the mountains and historical records of trade in the area suggest otherwise. However, a single road that became the jugular vein, rather than one of many smaller arteries, played a significant role in making the space "legible" for governance, to echo the late anarchist anthropologist James C. Scott (2009).

Before this development, it is worth noting that spaces in Gilgit Baltistan were already segregated along various lines. To echo Caroline Humphrey's (2022) concept of "intuitive districts" the region was already cognitively dividedperceived spatially by its inhabitants. One of these spatial divisions was along sectarian lines. There were Noorbakshi, Shia, Sunni, and Ismaili villages that existed prior to the construction of the Karakoram Highway (Grieser & Sökefeld, 2015). Additionally, villages and other sites were segregated by class; for instance, Ganesh was a village primarily inhabited by minstrels and blacksmiths, while Hispar and Shimshal were penal colonies of the Mir of Nagar and Hunza, as stated in one of my interviews with a prince of Nagar (Pir, 2019).respectively (Interview with Saeed Anwar Khan, 2019).

The construction of the KKH reinforced and strengthened the sectarian divides between settlements. With the construction of the KKH, settlements, primarily divided along religious sects, were reinforced. Prior spatial mobility patterns were mainly dictated by the nodes of villages to which people travelled. The creation of the KKH diminished this mobility, leading to increased interactions within a shared space where existing tensions were magnified. For the Pakistani government, this played a role in forming nation-state imagery for a state that from its inception was labelled as lacking "territorial integrity" (Jaffrelot, 2002:7). Nazir Kamal (1979) stated that the construction of the Karakoram Highway was a nation-building effort. However, while the road through the previously relatively inaccessible area contributed to the shift in state and public discourse towards creating an imagined community (Anderson, 1991), it had a different impact on the people of GB.

The practical response to spatial segregation led to an understanding among locals to be cautious when travelling to certain areas where "tensions" existed (Grieser & Sökefeld, 2015:85). However, with the construction of the KKH it became the major thoroughfare to the region. The risk of encountering sectarian violence along the KKH was a risk worth taking because the road provided much easier all-weather access to different parts of the region. Therefore, there was a gradual increase in spaces where sectarian contact intensified. This point has been made by Grieser and Sökefeld (Ibid: 90), who noted that "violence often occurs at locations where Shia and Sunni movements still overlap or intersect." To date, there have been at least seven major incidents of sectarian conflict on the KKH.

The first major incident of sectarian violence related to the road is referred to as the Jalalabad massacre. Sunni militias converged on the city of Gilgit in 1988 and attacked the town of Jalalabad following a reported dispute over the dates for the sighting of the moon for Eid – a Muslim holy festival (Karrar,

2024). This occurred during the regime of military dictator General Zia-ul-Haq, who had pursued an Islamisation policy based on Sunni principles.

According to a local writer:

> "80,000 Sunni extremists was [sic] sent by General Zia's Government to annihilate the Shias. Villages inhabited by the Shias – Jalalabad, Bonji, Darot, Jaglot, Pari, and Manawar – were completely destroyed. Even their animals were slaughtered. The lashkar had travelled a long distance from Mansehra to Gilgit, and the Government did not intervene. Instead, it blamed RAW (an Indian intelligence agency) and the CIA (the US external intelligence agency)" (Shehzad, 2003).

To this day, the locals of these villages and the region in general either display a sense of disappointment at the state's inability to protect them or hold the state complicit in employing mercenaries, including those returning from the Afghan jihad, to teach the Shias of the region a lesson while curbing increasing Iranian-backed Shia influence. Around 35 years later, the perpetrators of this massacre have not been prosecuted. This massacre led to an essentialistzsed conception of the region along sectarian lines—what Nosheen Ali (2010) has referred to as a pervasive "sectarian imaginary," meaning it became impossible to conceive of life in the region without considering sectarian divisions. Although there have been other smaller incidents of sectarian violence along the KKH, I will provide examples of a few that illustrate an emerging pattern:

Violence on the KKH: The Kohistan Ambush and Subsequent Events

In February 2012, early in the morning, men dressed in military uniforms stopped one bus and three coastersmini buses near Harbas Das village, which connects the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province with GB. These men killed fifteen Shia and one Ismaili man. Identification was carried out by checking people's identity cards for Shia signifiers in their names, places of birth, and marks of self-flagellation, a ritual performed by Shias to commemorate the martyrdom of the Prophet Muhammad's nephews. IIn response to the shooting of a Sunni in retaliation and fears of further sectarian violencen response to fears of retaliation and the shooting of a Sunni person, the government imposed Section 144 (banning public assembly) and instructed the Pakistan Rangers and the Gilgit Scouts to shoot on sight in case of any disruption (Grieser and Sökefeld, 2015).

Approximately four weeks later, the Shia community organised a "Shia Suzuki-line"—a transport service catering to Shias and travelling in convoys to avoid further attacks. However, this initiative was banned by the government upon its announcement. In April, two Sunni individuals were killed and forty-five more were injured in the explosion of a hand grenade in Gilgit city. On the same day, Sunnis from Chilas (a town in the Kohistan district that must be crossed on the KKH on the way to Gilgit) converged on the KKH and stopped five buses. With approximately 500 passengers in total, it is reported that at least seventeen people were shot at gunpoint, some ran and drowned in the Indus River, and one woman died of a heart attack.

With tensions remaining high, another incident in August 2012 involved passengers travelling from Gilgit to Rawalpindi being stopped by individuals in army uniforms who had set up a roadblock of stones. Shia passengers were forced to disembark and were shot, while two protesting Sunni passengers were also killed. Responsibility for this attack was claimed by the Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (Sadaqat, 2012).

Most recently, in December 2023, there was another attack on a bus, resulting in nine deaths, including two army soldiers, and over twenty people injured (Hussain, 2023). While earlier attacks were attributed predominantly to sectarian motivations, more recent attacks have been framed as attempts to create national instability. Gilgit Baltistan forms the gateway into Pakistan for the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), and numerous disputes have arisen from pre-existing land and resource management issues. Increased Chinese involvement in the region has generated resentment within various communities, culminating in a suicide bomber targeting a Chinese convoy carrying engineers working on a large dam site near Dasu in the Kohistan area (The Guardian, 2024). No specific group has claimed responsibility for these attacks.

While sectarianism is not solely attributable to roads, nor are roads the only sites of violence, they do enable a particular type of violence when entwined with existing social circumstances. This paper will further explore the agency of roads and infrastructure in facilitating such violence.

Infrastructure, Roads, and Entangled Violence

Bruno Latour's Actor-Network Theory (ANT) (1987, 1988, 2005) has been foundational in exploring the interconnectedness of between technological practices by conceptualising both human and non-human actors as integral components of networks that shape social outcomes. However, ANT has faced criticism for maintaining an ontological separation between humans and non-humans, treating them as distinct entities that must come together within networks to exert influence. One of Latour's most prominent admirers and critics, Tim Ingold, contrasts this with his own concept of the "meshwork"' (Ingold, 2011). Unlike ANT, defined by connections between fixed points or nodes, the meshwork, as Ingold describes it, emphasizes the continuous unfolding of life along lines where both human and non-human actors emerge through ongoing movement and growth. In the context of this paper, Ingold's argument is pertinent, as there would be no KKH without people, and the KKH, in turn, also influences future generations. Furthermore, it helps create an understanding of why violence may not occur at static nodes such as Shia or Sunni villages, but along the paths and trajectories where human and non-human actors continuously interact.

Building on Ingold's meshwork, Alessandro Rippa (Rest and& Rippa,(2019) applied this understanding specifically to the KKH, highlighting the entangled nature of infrastructure, mobility, and social life in this region. TheyRippa argues that the KKH is not merely a static network of roads and nodes but a dynamic meshwork where different actors—from vehicles and traders, to state authorities and religious communities—continuously negotiate their relationships. Infrastructure and roads must contend with prevailing tensions, and abstract notions of progress and "'sameness"' have to

contend with existing differences (Akhter, 2012). This is why similar infrastructural projects elicit a wide range of reactions worldwide.

In his renowned work on necropolitics, Achille Mbembe (2003) built upon Michel Foucault's (2003) notion of biopower. Foucault (2003, pp. 242) famously used the phrase *"Make live and to let die"* to characterizse the modern state's relationship with its citizens. Mbembe's work is relevant here because the people of GB have experienced violent exclusion and marginalisation. This is supported by Karrar and Mostowlansky (2018), who claim that infrastructural development has played a role in creating marginalization assembling marginality in the region. Selective forms of exclusion have led to mobility and access for some, while for others, it has resulted in continuous displacement, disputes over land rights and natural resources, increased anxiety and fear of travel, and, in some cases, brutal forms of death.

While the role of the state has been explored by Rodger and O'Neil (2012), who highlight how infrastructure may reinforce inequalities, facilitate control, territorializsation, surveillance, and policing, roads in GB have also exacerbated sectarian tensions, particularly following the Jalalabad massacre. However, I will also point to the agency of both human and non-human actors and the many participants in this meshwork of entangled realities. It is not solely the state that bears responsibility; once built, as Anna Tsing (2015) describes, infrastructure has many unintended or *feral* impacts. While the road may have been constructed with the aim of stabilising the region and fostering state-sponsored growth, in some cases it has had the opposite effect.

Conclusion

The Karakoram Highway (KKH), often celebrated as the eighth wonder of the modern world and a monumental feat of engineering, indeed commands awe and admiration. The sheer scale of its construction through one of the most rugged terrains on the planet is nothing short of remarkable. Yet, beyond its celebrated status, the KKH has embodied and magnified complex socio-political dynamics, revealing the darker side of its legacy.

Promoters of the KKH have frequently portrayed the project as a symbol of progress, purportedly bringing "civilisation" to a previously "barbaric" region—a narrative that reflects colonial tropes of the "civilising mission." This framing overlooks the nuanced realities of the region's socio-cultural fabric. The assertion that the KKH brought modernity to a people deemed primitive is a potent reminder of the power dynamics and prejudices inherent in such narratives. The enduring colonial echoes in this portrayal necessitate a critical stance to avoid the pitfalls of salvage ethnography.

What I aim to question are firstly the ways in which the KKH has claimed to bridge "gaps," and secondly the value of those gaps themselves. The KKH has become a site of intensified sectarian violence and conflict. The road's impact extends far beyond its physical structure, acting as a catalyst that has exacerbated pre-existing tensions. Incidents such as the Jalalabad massacre, the Kohistan ambush, and more recent attacks along the KKH illustrate how infrastructure can become entangled in

and exacerbate sectarian strife. The KKH's role in these events highlights the dual nature of infrastructure as both a symbol of connectivity and a conduit for conflict.

The annihilation of difference alluded to in this paper reflects the broader implications of infrastructural development in conflict-ridden regions. While infrastructure has the potential to address inequalities and foster unity, it can simultaneously erase valued differences and disrupt ways of life that have sustained communities for generations. The KKH, thus, serves as a poignant example of how development projects, while aiming to unify and modernize, can inadvertently have many "feral" impacts.

The KKH case underscores the importance of understanding infrastructure not merely as a technical achievement but as a socio-political construct embedded within a complex web of historical and cultural contexts. The road's role in facilitating and exacerbating sectarian violence calls for a more nuanced approach to development—one that acknowledges and addresses the potential for infrastructure to both connect and divide.

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Murder by Design: Colonial Crimes in British South Asia

Mohammed Shahrukh

1. Introduction

Just nine weeks in 1947 determined the future of the two nations. What followed was colonial bloodletting in a state of panic among formerly subject populations: 15 million people were forcefully displaced from their roots and up to 2 million people were murdered in a communal carnage of families trudging their way into their promised independence across a newly drawn, alien border – the Radcliffe Line. Memories of this human disaster —- an amputation of histories, cultures, traditions, and geographical memory – live on among the citizens of India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh.[219] This tragedy was a product of the British colonial maxim of *divide et impera* (divide and rule).

The tragedy of colonization in India has earlier and more macabre chapters. Ones that required more engineering to disenfranchise and annihilate colonial subjects. The Bengal Famine of 1943 offers one such man-made catastrophe with well-understood consequences. British economic machinations drove up prices of essential grain by 300 percent in a bid to make the local economy contribute to Britain's war effort against the Japanese. What transpired was the starvation-driven extermination of 3 million residents in the state of Bengal. The price of subhumanization. The mortal tax of being a subject.

What drove colonial mindsets to trivialize and overlook the interaction between subject communities' shifting political and economic landscapes is nothing short of dehumanization. I believe

[219] Tharoor, "The Partition: The British Game of Divide and Rule," 2017.

this dehumanization has coded itself into the memory of South Asia as forgotten mass death. In this paper, I look at the Bengal Famine of 1943 and the Partition of 1947 as acts of mass violence perpetrated by the British Empire in India. I argue that colonial practices inherently motivated the extermination of subject populations and transferred these practices to decolonized successor states that are now dealing with the aftermath. Institutional convenience was routinely prioritized over genuine governance of the subject population, driving them to disaster. I use archival evidence from both these human tragedies in British South Asia to assess the level of awareness among leaders in Britain, their attitudes towards mass killings, their reactions, and the threat perceptions of the human tragedies.

I posit that the British Empire's conscious decision-making unravels its subhuman envisioning of the Indian subject. To this extent, actions that jeopardized the lives of communities were met with colonial indifference**.** I believe that, at least in the two cases studied, the British are accountable for egregious acts of violating the human rights of South Asian subjects amounting to crimes against humanity, ethnic cleansing, and genocide.

I begin with the Bengal Famine and explore the level of culpability between different levels of British authority. I study this tragedy through the lens of the "subalternization" of Bengal and its people. Subalternization as studied by Gramsci[220] defines the "dominant/dominated" relationship historically in terms of class, caste, race, gender, language, and culture. I also look at how the British colonial authorities received the outcomes. Second, I look at the Partition of 1947, primarily, the understanding of the task by several members of the British Empire's higher-ups. I look at available archives that describe the dilemmas and confusions as the Radcliffe Line was drawn and focus on precursors that destined the outbreak of violence.

As a young school student in New Delhi, India, I was never taught about the Bengal Famine. It is important to take issue with our history in the matter of this tragedy because there is nothing else it

[220] Prakash, "Subaltern Studies as Postcolonial Criticism." 1994.

can be called except a crime against humanity. It constitutes a missing rage for all of South Asia's collective memory, not just my own. As for the Partition, throughout my schooling, we were taught about it as a "migratory" movement. As if somehow it made up a voluntary movement. In my time collecting oral histories of Partition survivors as a young intern in New Delhi, I encountered the confusion, the trauma, and the unprocessed and unfinished memories that people held from the Partition. All pointing towards a moment of shock surrounding the "migration." The first time I read relevant human rights laws, the Partition began unraveling as an instance of ethnic cleansing.

2. Mass Murder in the Colonies: Bengal 1943

2.1. Overview

I examine the policymaking of the British in the lead-up to the "Famine" of 1943 through the Foucaldian concept of "biopolitics."[221] The concept of "biopower" entrenches itself in the "enslavement of bodies and control over populations". A form of dehumanization of the native subject that views their lives as dispensable statistics. During the Second World War, 3 million (cited as the maximum) South Asian natives in Bengal perished as a result of colonial policymaking through a dehumanized lens.[222] Bengal in this era consisted of the modern-day Indian state of West Bengal and the nation-state of Bangladesh.

Years before the famine, Bengal saw crop failures, droughts, and failed monsoons. The loss of Burma to Japan meant that critical rice stock could no longer be obtained from the region, and 15% of India's imports of rice were dependent on Burma. In the face of such a shortage, Bengal fell back on its reserves of rice. The state was also lacking in legumes, wheat, salt, and mustard. As a result, the price

[221] Mallik, "Colonial Biopolitics and the Great Bengal Famine of 1943." 2022.
[222] Ibid.

of rice rose sharply from Rs. 14 per *maund* [223] on December 11, 1942,[224] to Rs. 37 per *maund* on August 20, 1943. The shortages were exacerbated by the British Imperial Army's fear of Japanese expansion into Bengal. This pushed them to enforce a "denial policy," confiscating and hoarding any surplus food supplies from the region, as well as a "scorched earth" policy to prevent any grain stock from falling into the hands of the Japanese. The British government in Bengal also impounded 66,653 boats, effectively breaking the back of local fishing businesses. This halted the movement of rice grains from surplus districts to deficit districts in East Bengal. In August 1942, Fazlul Haq, the Chief Minister of Bengal, warned the British government that these policies could induce a famine. His warnings were rejected and he was deposed, and this information was concealed using wartime press regulations.[225] When the government of India "begged" London for food stock, Henry Braund from the Bengal Department of Civil Supplies relayed his answer as a "thing of [their] own imagination" and that they had to "get it out of [their] head that Bengal was deficit."

A prevailing Malthusian belief among the British blamed existing shortages on overpopulation. Colonial austerity measures were at work. John Maynard Keynes, who was a special adviser on financial and monetary policy to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and Winston Churchill, looked to fund the impending Japanese campaign in Asia through the native society. Starting in the 1940s, the British government began printing exorbitant amounts of money, raising demands in the region that created artificial inflation. These inflated prices were not met with rising wages, effectively stripping the native population of purchasing power. This tragic constellation of external causes was deprived of existing institutional contingencies. Rather, strategic disenfranchisement from food, and biopolitical envisaging of a native population amounted to a man-made tragedy of unprecedented levels.

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[223] A single *maund* is a unit of measure used historically in parts of South Asia. It would make up the equivalent of 37 kilograms roughly.
[224] Sen, "Starvation and Exchange Entitlements: A General Approach and Its Application to the Great Bengal Famine." 1977.
[225] Mallik, "Colonial Biopolitics and the Great Bengal Famine of 1943." 2022.

The famine "appeared" around the regional capital, Calcutta, with rural populations displaced in hopes of finding food and livelihoods. Soup kitchens faced shortages themselves and created conditions of "famine diarrhea." "The famine swept across 60% of Bengal's net cultivable area, affecting more than 58% of the rural households and reducing over 486,000 families to a state of beggary," says Mallik.[226] Impoverished families were forced into distress sales of their lands to buy stocks of rice. Families sold girls and women for the same.

2.2.. Was the famine preventable?

Nobel laureate and renowned economist Amartya Sen argues that the region had sufficient supplies to feed itself.[227] Environmental Mukerjee examines the Nanavati Papers, archived by one of the members of the Famine Commission constituted in 1944 to investigate the matter.[228] The Commission's public conclusion was that three weeks' worth of rice shortage was insufficient to indicate a famine. In the Nanavati Papers, Mukerjee finds that the Commission's "best efforts were directed not towards explaining the famine, but towards obscuring the role played by His Majesty's government in precipitating and aggravating the famine."[229] It explained the famine as a routine phenomenon in India. However, Sen concluded in 1981 that "high inflation rates caused a fatal decline in real wages of landless agricultural workers," who were pushed to extermination.

Decades earlier during a famine in the state of Bihar (1873-74), Sir Richard Temple of the British Government responded with food programs that assisted the poor using supplies from the region.[230] Mallik notes that "90% of the regular rice supply was available in 1943," with neighboring states of Bihar, Orissa, and Assam having regular yields, which could have assuaged the suffering had

[226] Mallik, "Colonial Biopolitics and the Great Bengal Famine of 1943." 2022.
[227] Safi. "Churchill's Policies Contributed to 1943 Bengal Famine - Study." 2019.
[228] Mukerjee, "Bengal Famine of 1943: An Appraisal of the Famine Commission." 2014.
[229] Ibid.
[230] Safi. "Churchill's Policies Contributed to 1943 Bengal Famine - study." 2019.

resources been circulated equitably. A recent study of six major famines in India between 1870 and 2016 by Mishra et al (2019)[231] concluded that the famine was not caused by drought. Finally, the total amount of wheat produced in the British Empire during the year was 29 million tonnes, with most of it reserved for the war. Slow mechanisms of procurement set up in India by the British meant that Bengal received only 25,000 tonnes of rice between April 1943 and March 1944, as opposed to the promised 350,000 tonnes.

2.3. Intended annihilation?

In the wake of occidental policymaking and confiscation of essential food stock, warning signs were neglected and censured from the public eye. The aftermath of the devastation was met with denial and members of the Famine Commission were even required to destroy the documentation of their secret meetings. The numbers reported were about one-third of the real mortalities, which were submitted accurately by P.C. Mahalnobis, Indian statistician who conducted a study of the Famine between 1944-1945.[232] Discrepancies arose in the testimonies provided to the Commission. Denial has been studied as symptomatic of a colonial failure to recognize the rights of the "Indigenous." As Elazar Barkan notes, the rejection of the use of the term genocide for Indigenous peoples is "exclusion, about segregating the suffering of Indigenous peoples as somewhat different than other 'more terrible' genocides."[233] When Delhi informed the cabinet in London of the toll of the famine, Churchill famously quipped "Then why hasn't Gandhi died yet?"[234] As would be discovered, the biopolitical prioritization of resources created this annihilation. Racism was inherent to British colonial biopower. Foucault notes that it provides the "indispensable precondition that allows someone to be killed."[235]

[231] Mishra et al. "Drought and Famie in India, 1870-2016."
[232] Mallik, "Colonial Biopolitics and the Great Bengal Famine of 1943." 2022.
[233] Watenpaugh, "Kill the Armenian/Indian; Save the Turk/Man: Carceral Humanitarianism, the Transfer of Children and a Comparative History of Indigenous Genocide." 2022.
[234]Mallik, "Colonial Biopolitics and the Great Bengal Famine of 1943." 2022.
[235] Ibid.

By exposing them to death, via rejection, exclusion, and political maneuvering, the colonizer corrals an entire native population to doom. "Biopolitics is thus the power to make live and let die."[236] In terms of understanding the famine as an act of genocide: mass murder must be dealt with the same scrutiny as dealing with perpetrators of murder who are neither guilty nor complicit but culpable. In the case of Bengal, the British succeeded in dealing with an entire population as an abstract, reducing them to a unitary variable within a greater power struggle. The native's value in that struggle was decreased by viewing them as a "subaltern body." As per Mallik, subjects were not treated as humans, but as objects and items that may be "discarded any time in this 'extended laboratory of urban modernity.'" Thus, in the case of the Bengal Starvation, genocide prevailed in the form of prejudicial, racist, and "dispossessive" mass killing.

3. Displacement as Democide: The Partition of 1947

3.1. Overview

In July 1947, Lord Ismay, Chief of Staff to the Governor-General of India, Lord Mountbatten, wrote the following as a part of his notes: "All possible precautions have been taken by the despatch to the areas of potential trouble of a joint India-Pakistan force under a single command, but even so, it may be a very unpleasant business." He was referring to the plans of a partition of the British Indian Empire into two states, India and Pakistan. As the plan saw the light of day, more than a million people were murdered in communal violence and 17 million were displaced across the Radcliffe Line. What unfolded in the wake of the partition declaration remains unclear – freedom or Partition? The memory of colonial departure was succeeded by a rupture in civilization, with "families ruined, geography

[236] Ibid.

hacked, history misread, tradition denied and hearts torn apart," as Indian parliamentarian and author Shashi Tharoor puts it.[237]

Tharoor traces the communal animosity between Sikhs, Hindus, and Muslims back to the colonial stratagem to "divide and rule" their subjects in the erstwhile Indian colony. "*Divide et impera* was an old Roman maxim, and it shall be ours," said Lord Monstuart Elphinstone, Governor-General of Bombay (1819-1827). When Indians were granted restricted enfranchisement, the British created separate electorates along communal lines, to ensure natives voted on a religious basis. When a majority of members of the Indian National Congress quit the Parliament in protest of the British declaring war on Nazi Germany on their behalf, the Muslim League, led by Muhammad Ali Jinnah, filled their void and emerged as an effective counterweight to the Congress.[238] These animosities compounded over the years, strengthening the League's demand for a separate Muslim dominion, lest the Muslims find themselves in a Hindu majoritarian state. The area proposed by the League as Pakistan included a large number of non-Muslim minorities and was unacceptable for the same reason.

The breaking point arrived with the Cabinet Mission plan in May 1946, when a British proposal for a consociational federal setup was accepted by the Muslim League but rejected by the Congress.[239] Divide and rule had conquered. Moreover, with the decimation of the British during the Second World War, an empire leagues away became untenable and loans from the U.S. were mounting.[240] Cyril Radcliffe was given months to prepare the final borders that would birth the two nations, and mark the British departure from South Asia.

The violence began with the League calling for a "Direct Action Day" on August 16, 1946, launching violence against Hindus in Calcutta. Retributive violence against Muslims followed, and

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[237] Tharoor, "The Partition: The British Game of Divide and Rule," 2017.
[238] Talbot, "The Second World War and Local Indian Politics: 1939-1947." 1984
[239] The Constitution of India, *Cabinet Mission Plan (Cabinet Mission, 1946)*.
[240] Tharoor, "The Partition: The British Game of Divide and Rule." 2017.

over the months the violence was co-opted by religious "extra-political entities," the coda of divide and rule. The Muslim League's National Guard consolidated as a Muslim militia. The *Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh* (RSS), a Hindu nationalist militia, and other communal coalitions formed up in the face of partition.[241] The violence experienced a lull for a bit before flaring up again in March 1947, when Punjab became its epicenter. On June 3, 1947, Lord Mountbatten announced the partition, and Cyril Radcliffe was given just 36 days to complete his plans. What was meant to be a surgical distribution of territory became a hacksaw job across a map. Communal convoys formed up to begin their journeys across borders. On their way, over a million were slaughtered, more than 50,000 women were sexually abused, many more were abducted, children and newborns were slaughtered, and properties and entire localities of specific communities were burned and looted.

3.2. Was the violence unexpected?

In February 1947, several U.S. media outlets lauded U.K. Prime Minister Clement Attlee's decision to withdraw from India, congratulating the British bid to end imperialism worldwide. Most of them acknowledged the divided status of South Asia's religious communities but were very quick to call upon the Indian government to form unity among them, the New York Times even went as far as to quip, "an Independence with no ability to control it and no power to maintain it promises only catastrophe."[242] However, this commentary overlooked the British anxiety of the communal fervor that was breaching the surface and presumably accelerated their departure. A series of primary sources point towards prior knowledge of the unprecedented violence that would erupt in the aftermath of a partition. More so, a partition that was hastily delivered.

[241] Tufts University, *Mass Atrocity Endings*. 2017
[242] The National Archives, *Round up of American press reaction to Britain's decision to leave India, 28 February 1947 (FO 371/63529).*

The U.S. Secretary of State in his comments to the British ambassador in D.C. stressed the importance that a settlement be reached before the date of withdrawal for the British to prevent the "communal situation [from deteriorating] seriously."[243] He went on to say that a "partition would be violently resented by a large part of the Indian population including substantial elements in the areas affected."[244] Lord Hastings Ismay, General in British Indian Army, notes from July 1946 in the aftermath of the Cabinet Mission's failure read, "There is much explosive material lying about and it remains to see whether it can be prevented from going off."[245] One of his biggest fears was the reprisal of the Sikhs. The community had been neglected in the negotiations for communal statuses and was at the hotbed of the hastily drawn partition. A map was drawn by the community leaders proposing a Sikh area post-partition. It ran across the Chenab River and included the city of Lahore, which houses the birthplace of the Sikh prophet Guru Nanak Singh. However, Sikhs' grievances were largely ignored. A notable Sikh scholar, Santokh Singh, wrote to Lord Pethwick Lawrence saying "The Mission has recognized the Sikhs as a minority but have not conceded minority privileges to them as they have done to the only other minority, the Muslims."[246] The Radcliffe line divided Punjab through the middle, forcing the Sikhs into a fight-or-flight response on either side of the border. A dispatch from "The Times" also describes entire towns wiped empty of their Muslim residents. A cover note and extract from The Times on 25 August 1947 hinted at an undercounting of the civilian death toll: "If one gang of Sikhs murders "at least 500 people" in 5 villages in one day and 50 villages are seen in flames at one time, the death toll must be very high indeed." [247] The note ended with, "Civil control has quite broken down."

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[243] The National Archives, *Secretary of State's comments on India policy for British Ambassador in Washington, 19th February 1947 (FO 371/63529).*
[244] Ibid.
[245] The National Archives, *"The Indian Situation" – personal notes from Lord Ismay, 1947 Catalogue Ref: DO 121/69.*
[246] The National Archives, *Letter from Santokh Singh, 1 June 1946 Catalogue Ref: CAB 127/106.*
[247] The National Archives, *Report from The Times, 25th August 1947 Catalogue Ref: DO 142/416.* In this source the clipping does not show which newspaper the article is exactly from and is listed just as "The Times".

The British authorities had no reason to be caught unaware. In his personal notes, Lord Islay remarked on the prevailing communal consolidations and the resulting breakdown of law and order producing carnage. He said, "It is therefore a mistake to imagine that the storm which broke out in August, and which is still raging, was unexpected."[248] The above sources confirm that violence, specifically ethnic and religious violence, was in the cards in the wake of the Partition. Its intensity was worsened by a hastily designed border and ineffectively managed transition.

3.3. To call each thing by its right name

A viewing of the build-up to the Partition reads less like a planned migration and more like an episode of forced displacement. The threat of violence underpinned the negotiations from its earliest stages. The aftermath of "Direct Action Day" confirmed that all of the parties would resort to violence. And yet, no measures were provided for safe transfers of populations, whether in terms of establishing corridors or in terms of patiently mapping the safest territorial borders. Cyril Radcliffe, the man who had never visited India before, was tasked with amputating her. After completing his task and burning all his documents, he left the country on the day of her independence, leaving behind his commission of 40,000 Rupees.[249] Armed communal militia reigned supreme, and the border became an axis of indiscriminate bloodshed. The Partition of British India was nothing short of an act of ethnic cleansing. Raphael Lemkin, the Polish lawyer who coined the term "genocide" referred to interreligious violence in India as a genocide. Although it is unclear if he was referring to the Partition or the India-Pakistan war over Kashmir in 1947.[250]

The British role in this violence is undeniable and indefensible. Even on a longer timeline, its policy to divide and fan the flames of animosity can be held accountable. During survey work being

[248] The National Archives, *"The Indian Situation" – personal notes from Lord Ismay, 1947 Catalogue Ref: DO 121/69.*
[249] Ghosh, "The Radcliffe Line Has a Colour: Green." 2015
[250] Lemkin, "Le Crime de Genocide." 1949.

conducted in India building up to planning for a departure, an unknown British official wrote a note saying "'Divide and Rule' principle to maintain the British Raj, not bourne out by those with practical experience of difficulties to which [unclear] exposed by the recurrent disturbances."[251] How can any piece of land be cut apart unacceptably? In rushing their responsibility to craft the borders of the future, they divorced themselves from the sentiment of ethnic geographies. This is a classic colonial trope that insulates the dynamics of cultural habitats through the use of maps. Detailed surveys that drew up the divisions of communities on the map of British India were set aside when Punjab, Rajputana, and Sindh were split. Finally, if the Partition was considered inevitable, its violence could have been mitigated. In begetting their responsibility, as the only historically organized structure of order, the British abdicated their participation in an organic and fair transition of power. Refugees traveled on foot, with makeshift carts and with no clear directions or indications of where to find aid or safety.

4. Conclusion: Breaking Silence

The British colonial memory has benefitted from the silence around recognizing the Famine and the Partition as instances of mass violence. It has been reinforced by a convoluted understanding of its own memories from unanswered questions at the time of freedom. The Punjab question devolved into a secessionist movement quelled violently in the 1980s.[252] The Hindu majority question armored the political vision of the RSS and subsequently the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). By calling colonial human tragedies famines and migrations, we dissolve the accountability for events that have created generational pain. The absence of directionality to the pain has created misdirected resentment. Or resentment in a maze of mirrors. Resentment mirrored creates political anomalies that disturb the imagined reality of a nation-state, in this case, the Indian identity. It is, thus, a historical, archival, and

[251] The National Archives, *A brief survey of the work done in India by the British, October 1945 Catalogue Ref: WO 208/755.*
[252] Jetly, "The Khalistan Movement in India: The Interplay of Politics and State Power." 2008.

political responsibility for the scholar and the professor toinform themselves and those around them of this reality. By divorcing their memory from the prevalent literature of denial, and recasting it in a language of informed intergenerational trauma, we can fully re-envision our present reality.

Isabel Hull in *Absolute Destruction* lends credence to the definition mentioned earlier of genocide by institutional maneuvres: "Genocide can also happen as the by-product of institutional routines and organizational dynamics as they operate during wartime and generate 'final solutions' to all sorts of perceived problems."[253] The Bengal famine was the result of a prioritization of military objectives. Policies were drawn underpinning the subaltern classification of colonial subjects that resulted in their death. In Hull's quotation, the Famine also meets the mark of "means overwhelming the ends," as the ends were to ensure geopolitical superiority over the advancing Japanese. Silence has cemented the narratives of a peaceful transition of power from the British to India and Pakistan. By all means unadulterated native resentment would have viewed the colonial endeavor as a sanguinary, divisive, and manipulative aberration in their collective imaginations of national unity. But "divide and rule" lived on, and native resentment turned inwards to chart a future of minorities in hostage communities, cross-border friction, and religious fervor sustaining the politics of South Asia.

German historian Jürgen Osterhammel defines colonialism as a "multifaceted phenomenon of colossal vagueness."[254] For British South Asia, it meant sub-humanization for the subjects in a "frontier colonization." This resulted in violence that can be characterized as genocidal with a general intent, which Kühne presents as when "perpetrators may not have wanted to do so but could have known that actions would cause this destruction." The only mistake made by the South Asian subject, it would seem, was experiencing the same space at the same time as the British.

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[253] Hull, "Absolute Destruction Military Culture and the Practices of War in Imperial Germany." 2005.

[254] Kühne, "Colonialism and the Holocaust: Continuities, Causations, and Complexities." 2013.

Recognizing these tragedies as acts of colonial mass violence is not intended to serve the pursuit of reparations from the perpetrators, though that could be a form of acknowledgment. In recognition of the starvation and destruction in Bengal and the ethnic cleansing and democide in the formation of India and Pakistan, South Asia can give voice to decades of latent grief, broken histories, and torn cultures. A regional memory bursting at the seams can be revitalized.

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Literature as Witness: Exploring Genocide in Rwanda and Burundi through the Works of Gaël Faye, Scholastique Mukasonga, Clemantine Wamariya and Beata Umubyeyi Mairesse

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Introduction

This paper discusses the effects of the Rwandan genocide on the literary heritage of both Rwanda and Burundi through the novels *All Your Children, Scattered* (Umubyeyi Mairesse & Anderson, 2023) and *Petit Pays* (Faye, 2017) as well as the autobiographical works *Inyenzi* (Mukasonga, 2021) and *The Girl Who Smiled Beads* (Wamariya & Weil, 2019). This paper will explore these works through the characters of Blanche and her mother, Immaculata, in *All Your Children, Scattered*, and the protagonist, Gaby, in *Petit Pays*, as well as through Scholastique Mukasonga and Clemantine Wamariya as the authors of *Inyenzi* and *The Girl Who Smiled Beads,* respectively. It will discuss the topics of collective forgetting and silencing, the loss of maternal relationships, and the societal pressure that genocide survivors face. This will be explored through Immaculata's mutism (*All Your Children, Scattered*), Scholastique's sense of homelessness and anger at the lack of justice (*Inyenzi*), Gaby's forgotten world (*Petit Pays*), and the falsity and utilitarianism of genocide memorialization (*The Girl Who Smiled Beads*). It discusses the loss of a maternal relationship as a symbol of loss of homeland and belonging through the rift between Blanche and Immaculata (*All Your Children, Scattered*), Scholastique's inability to connect with her parents and homeland through their extermination (*Inyenzi*), Gaby and his mother's mutual lack of recognition (*Petit Pays*), and the rift created through genocide between

Clemantine and her biological family (*The Girl Who Smiled Beads*). This paper will then conclude that these novels show a world (and its inhabitants, memories, and stories) that has been lost to the ravages of genocide, to which its survivors can never return.

All Your Children, Scattered

In *All Your Children, Scattered*, Immaculata, a Tutsi survivor, becomes mute due to the genocide's aftereffects. Her mutism is a psychological blocker created from emotional trauma inflicted upon her by her son's suicide due to his experiences of fighting against the Hutu. She states that "Silence is a defensive weapon, cold and smooth, which a woman can use her whole life long against men, against her progeny, against herself. It's a prison without walls" (Umubyeyi Mairesse & Anderson, 2023). It would initially appear that she uses silence as a means to fight back against a world that has robbed her of her son and of her relationship with her daughter. However, the inclusion of "against herself" demonstrates that she feels that her silence also hurts her, and perhaps may not be voluntary or desired. Furthermore, this is confirmed by the addition of "It's a prison without walls," which demonstrates that she feels trapped in silence. This is representative of the silence that was enforced in Rwanda's post-genocide recovery, as Rwandans were told to forget the atrocities and unite to overcome the destruction of the past through communal rebuilding schemes. As a Tutsi victim, Immaculata is under much societal pressure to keep quiet and to not lament her sufferings. As a mother of a lost son, this would mean not only not seeking justice, but also not being able to bring him up in conversation or grieve him properly, thus creating a rift that grows ever-wider due to weaponized silence.

Furthermore, this silence does little to mend the difficult relationship shared by Immaculata and her daughter, Blanche. Blanche calls her relationship with her mother "dysfunctional" (Umubyeyi Mairesse & Anderson, 2023) and feels that there is a rift between them due to her mother othering her.

In Rwanda, oftentimes children are named after qualities that their parents want them to have upon reaching maturity. Blanche's name denotes her mother's hopes that she would become more white and less African, inheriting more from her unknown French biological father. This creates a rift between the two from birth as Blanche was treated differently throughout her childhood and was not taught to speak Kinyarwanda by her mother, who spoke to her solely in French. This leaves Blanche feeling as though she cannot seek help from her mother about nurturing her own child. "Maybe you would also point out it was because I'd become too white here, that back in Rwanda you'd never heard of a woman who couldn't breastfeed her child, you'd send me back to my foreign body yet again, just like when I was growing up and you did everything you could to remind me of my difference" (Umubyeyi Mairesse & Anderson, 2023). Their relationship was only further soured by the genocide, as her brother argued with her incessantly, using her as a punching bag for France's laissez-faire attitude to the massacres, and her mother blamed her part in these arguments for her brother's subsequent suicide. This enforced othering echoes the experiences of members of the Tutsi exodus, as they were forced to flee their motherland, and are thus othered by the survivors who stayed. This is highlighted when Blanche says, "I'd become too white here," showing how she feels that seeking refuge in France would color her mother's opinion of her ethnicity, as though spending time in France would make her less Rwandan. There is thus a clear link between the creation of a rift between a mother and child in Rwandan genocide literature and the sense of othering that is accompanied by their forced exodus, as though they exist in a world that is no longer the Rwandan reality, and so they feel exiled from a world that no longer exists.

Inyenzi

In *Inyenzi*, ("Cockroaches" in Kinyarwanda), Scholastique talks of returning home to Rwanda for the first time after the genocide, only to find that the world that she used to inhabit had been

exterminated alongside her family. She finds her old home inhabited by strangers who killed and replaced her family, her old farm overrun with weeds, and her old town a land of ghosts and spectres. This extermination effectively exiles her from the land of her upbringing. In fact, during her trip she only ever feels at home in the genocide memorial, where she writes "This is the only place I can feel at home, with the bones. I feel safe in the company of the dead. Here with the skeletons, this is where I belong. It's hard for me to […] go back to the living, to people pretending to be living. So we survivors stick together, in silence" (Mukasonga, 2021). This clearly demonstrates that Scholastique feels that she belongs to a world that no longer exists, that was killed alongside the people that inhabited it. Furthermore, it also demonstrates the forced silence that she, as a survivor of the genocide, is placed under due to the societal taboo created around remembering the past. She clearly highlights this when she writes of her guide's family. "He buried them [his parents] by the front door to the church in Kirarambogo, where his father had been a teacher for twenty-five years. His former students, who are also the killers, pass by his grave when they go to Sunday Mass like good Christians" (Mukasonga, 2021). The heavy juxtaposition of "killers" and "good Christians" is imbued with bitter sarcasm that points out that the massacres of the past must be forgotten so that life can go on in Rwanda, even if it means that killers walk the streets and victims never get justice.

Furthermore, Scholastique also talks of the destruction of her relationship with her parents throughout the text. This is highlighted when she feels unwilling to return to her parents' grave after their burial. "As time went by, I dreaded going to their grave more and more. I came up with excuse after excuse to put off my self-imposed pilgrimage. I didn't like being alone at their grave" (Mukasonga, 2021). This demonstrates the growing rift that she feels between herself and her parents created by their death, and her "excuse after excuse" hints at an underlying sense of guilt that she feels as a survivor of the genocide. Her inability to connect with her parents can be said to stem from them now belonging to a world that once was while her life continues into the present day. This sense of lack

of belonging is highlighted by her sense of feeling "alone at their grave." Furthermore, this idea seems inexorably linked to the state of her old home, as she feels loneliness due to its degradation. "I'd clung to the illusion […] that the ruination of Gitagata had spared something in the place where I once lived, that some sign was awaiting me from beyond death's realm. But of course there was no one and nothing. And suddenly I began to violently hate the untamed vegetation that had so efficiently finished the murderers' 'work,' that had turned my home into this inhospitable patch of brush. […] I am alone in a foreign land, where no one is waiting for me" (Mukasonga, 2021). From this, it becomes clear that Scholastique feels a link between her parents and her idea of "home," and that she feels alone and foreign due to the idea that the world that she called home was exterminated with her parents.

Petit Pays

In *Petit Pays*, ("Small Country" in French), Gaby's experience of returning to the place of his upbringing after the genocide emphasizes forgetting. This is demonstrated when Faye writes "And in my dreams about a country that has disappeared, I can hear the song of the peacocks in the garden, the far-off call of the muezzin" (Faye, 2017). He calls his homeland a country that has disappeared, recalling the erasure that followed the atrocities, which led to a forgetting of the cultures and peoples that existed pre-genocide. One of the ways in which the world that Gaby grew up in was erased was through the massacre of the people that once inhabited it. He writes "I have found that place again, but it is empty of those who populated it, who gave it life and body and flesh" (Faye, 2017). This demonstrates that the genocide has left behind a hollow memory that seems insubstantial. However, Faye ends on an optimistic note. "If you come from a country, if you are born there, as what might be called a native by birthright, well then, that country is in your eyes, your skin, your hands, together with the thick hair of its trees, the flesh of its soil, the bones of its stones, the blood of its rivers, its sky, its flavour, its men and women" (Faye, 2017). Through this, Faye argues that while the genocide was

effective in wiping out hundreds of thousands of people, their cultures and histories, and the world they once lived in, it is through the survivors of the genocide that the old world lives on. Through genocide literature, authors keep their world and the people that once lived in it alive through the permanence of the written word. The survivors of genocide carry these lives and the country they once inhabited with them in their DNA.

Furthermore, Gaby's relationship with his mother is strained by the Rwandan genocide and the accompanying unrest in neighbouring Burundi. This is due to the PTSD that she suffers after having found the bodies of her sister, nieces, and nephews. She becomes distant, launching into violent delusions which, along with the declining state of security, force Gaby's father's hand in sending the children to seek refuge in France. Upon returning twenty years later, Gaby finds the country that he grew up in to be irreparably different. Though in the one place that he finds familiar, the old cabaret, he finds his mother. "Here she is, after twenty years that have taken the toll of fifty on her unrecognisable body" (Faye, 2017). When he calls her "unrecognisable," it becomes clear that their relationship has become so distant that they have become strangers. This is emphasized when he eventually does seek to speak to her. "With great tenderness, Maman puts her hand delicately on my cheek: 'Is that you, Christian?'" (Faye, 2017) Through this it becomes apparent that this lack of recognition is two-sided, thus demonstrating that the genocide has clearly demolished the relationship between Gaby and his mother to the point of becoming strangers. Exodus populations exist in a third place between the host and home countries. This is clearly the case of Gaby, who writes "I sway between two shores, and this is the disease of the soul" (Faye, 2017). In this way, it becomes clear that Gaby feels an estrangement from his motherland, and a strong feeling that he no longer belongs in the place he once called home, as his relationship with that place has been destroyed, as evidenced through the degradation of his relationship with his mother.

The Girl Who Smiled Beads

Clemantine's maternal disconnect becomes apparent only after her travails are complete and she has settled in America. Clemantine's sister, Claire, initially spoke to their mother on the phone, but "Claire and my mother spoke like strangers. No one knew what to say" (Wamariya & Weil, 2019). This demonstrates that the ties between mother and daughter have been severed to the point of estrangement. This is further emphasized with Claire's children not being able to actively communicate with their grandmother. "My mother didn't know English and Claire's children understood very little Kinyarwanda, so she clapped at them to go take showers or to clean up their rooms, and this drove them crazy" (Wamariya & Weil, 2019). It shows such a clear division between Claire's new life and her children and the old world that they had left behind. Their mother, symbolizing the lost motherland here, is an apt embodiment, as she is as estranged from her own flesh and blood as the diaspora communities are from Rwanda, demonstrated by Claire's children's inability to speak Kinyarwanda. Claire, however, is not the only one affected by this rift. Clemantine herself feels that there is a divide between herself and her mother and her "new family." "I sat on Claire's couch, looking at my strange new siblings, the ones who'd replaced me and Claire. They looked so perfect, their skin unblemished, their eyes alight, like an excellent fictional representation of a family that could have been mine. But they didn't know me and I didn't know them, and the gap between us was a billion miles wide" (Wamariya & Weil, 2019). In the novel she highlights the estrangement that can also be seen in Faye's novel, and it becomes clear that just as there is a rift between the mother and her children and grandchildren, there is a rift between Rwanda and her diaspora.

Clemantine argues against communal forgetting. She writes that "A genocide museum had been built in the lush lowland that ran through the center of Kigali. […] The final exhibit in the museum is a film in which traumatized Rwandans talk about forgiving. They say the whole country has to forgive, that they themselves have forgiven" (Wamariya & Weil, 2019). The idea that the country has to forgive

shows the collective forgetting that has taken place, which has infiltrated society and created a taboo about remembering the past and what has been lost. Clemantine argues that this is insufficient. "But people need to know, people need to say to themselves, 'I cannot do this thing because this thing is unforgivable. […] I cannot make others less than human and then kill them. This is unforgivable'" (Wamariya & Weil, 2019). However, Claire also gives voice to the opposite stance, arguing that "There are some people, they had kids and somebody came and killed all their kids and the killer survived. There are children, they lost their parents, everything, and the killers survived. And Rwanda is peaceful right now. Do you think Rwanda could be peaceful right now if no one would forgive?" (Wamariya & Weil, 2019) Clemantine recognizes the use of this collective forgetting, but disputes its authenticity, calling it "utilitarian, […] likely even the missing piece in my life. […] But I can't do it. To me it feels false" (Wamariya & Weil, 2019). In this way, in the novel, Clemantine demonstrates that there is a collective forgetting that followed the genocide that all Rwandans must take part in. There is a superficial sense of forgiveness that permeates the Rwandan people themselves who feel that it is taboo to talk about the past, and so they must smile and forget.

Conclusion

In conclusion, throughout this paper the topics of forgetting and silencing as well as the loss of relationship with one's mother and motherland have been discussed extensively. Beata Umubyeyi Mairesse's *All Your Children, Scattered* explores the topic of silence through Immaculata's mutism, which is a symbol of the psychological trauma that she endured as a genocide survivor, but also a symbol of the societal pressure to never talk of the genocide. The chasm in Blanche's relationship with Immaculata highlights not only the rifts created through the genocide between mothers and daughters, but also the divide created between the exodus communities and their homeland. In Scholastique Mukasonga's *Inyenzi*, Scholastique's return to Rwanda highlights the collective forgetting of past sins

as well as the sense of belonging to a forgotten world. She touches upon the silencing that she feels she must abide by as a genocide survivor. Furthermore, she reveals her survivor's guilt and how this deepens the separation between her and her parents. In Gael Faye's *Petit Pays*, the main character experiences a hollowed-out, forgotten world when he returns home after seeking refuge in France. This lack of recognition of the world of his childhood also extends to his lack of recognition of his mother, hence demonstrating the inexorable link that many exodus survivors feel between the loss of their parents and the loss of their motherland. Finally, in Clemantine Wamariya's *The Girl Who Smiled Beads*, Clemantine feels that the genocide has created a rift between herself and her mother, and by extension, Rwanda. Furthermore, Clemantine also voicesanger at the current system of utilitarian forgetting and silencing of the Tutsi experience in the Rwandan genocide.

In summary, each of these texts delve into the psyche of Tutsi survivors of the Rwandan genocide. These are a people who have lived through some of humanity's worst acts, and yet they are exiled from the world they once knew, the families that they love, and the homes that they grew up in. They are remnants of a world beyond the fade, though it is through their determination and their words on paper that the people, stories, and cultures that the atrocities sought to destroy can live on and be recounted to the next generation.

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