



**The Silencing and Ostracization of Rohingyas: A Study of
Habiburahman's Memoir *First, They Erased Our Name: A Rohingya Speaks***

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Abstract

A minority group refers to a racially, culturally, or ethnically distinct group that is secondary or subordinate to a dominant group. Nearly every state consists of various communities whose traditions, religion, language, and historical experiences differ from one another and through socio-political powerplay. People treat others based on what they perceive as essential characteristics of those individuals or groups, which are often based purely, on their position in the stratification hierarchy. Though in several states the ethnoculturally diverse communities co-exist in harmony, resulting in 'Pluralism', however, in others the minority groups are subjected to discrimination and violence.

Establishing the cultural hegemony of the dominant group has been an effective tool in subjugating the minority communities. However, Repressive State Apparatuses are also employed by the state, in extreme conditions, which result in expulsion and genocide. One such instance of ethnic cleansing is the ostracisation of the Rohingya community. Rohingyas are a Muslim minority group in Myanmar, erstwhile Burma, which is predominantly, a Buddhist country. They have been the target of institutionalised discrimination. They were denied citizenship by the government and were rendered stateless. The discriminatory policies of the government of Myanmar have compelled a huge number of Rohingya Muslims to flee their homeland. Many took refuge in the neighbouring countries. The paper aims to examine the racial and ethnic discrimination of the Rohingya community and their systematic oppression and ostracisation which lead to the exodus of the Rohingyas, as documented in Habiburahman's memoir *First, They Erased Our Name: A Rohingya Speaks*.

Keywords: Rohingyas, Minority, Biopolitics, Memoir.

Introduction

In every society people are hierarchically ranked based on some element of inequality, be it power, income, wealth, ethnicity, or some other feature. Those positioned at the bottom of the societal hierarchy are referred to as minorities. According to Louis Wirth, a minority group is "a group of people who, because of their physical or cultural characteristics, are singled out from the others in the society in which they live for differential and unequal treatment, and who therefore regard themselves as objects of collective discrimination" (Wirth, 1945, p.347). Rohingyas are a minority community hailing from Myanmar who have faced extreme torture, expulsion and annihilation and still face discrimination and exploitation. Since the late 1970s, this particular ethnic minority group has been the target of institutionalized discrimination and

genocide and their condition remains unchanged till date. They have been classified “as the most persecuted ethnic group in the world” by the United Nations (Khin, 2017, p.43).

Arakan, a state with a concentration of Buddhist and Islamic ethnic groups, was first colonized by the Burmese and this was followed by British colonization:

Arakan was a land of Buddhists and Muslims, with many pagodas and mosques, and was independent before it was colonised by the Burmese, then the British. Today, Burma, now Myanmar, has annexed Arakan and made it one of the country’s main regions. The nation profits from its natural resources, but rejects its original people: us. (Habiburahman & Ansel, 2018/2019, n.p)

During the British colonial regime innumerable Indians had migrated to Burma and they “came to dominate major sectors of the economy, which caused tension between Burmese Buddhists and Indian immigrants” (Anwary 91). After decolonization, the establishment of a unitary state by the military government in 1962 had led to the imposition of the rule of the Burmese Buddhist majority over the ethnic minorities and later, the Citizenship Law of 1982, implemented by the military government, refused to acknowledge the Rohingya community as a native ethnic group of Burma and denied them citizenship on this ground, thereby, rendering the whole Rohingya community stateless. The ethnic cleansing that had been carried out by the Myanmar government for decades, effectuated large-scale displacement of the Rohingya community. The massive exodus of the Rohingyas in 2017 following the massacre that the army had initiated, forced the international community to recognize the deliberate persecution of the Rohingya in Myanmar as genocide. The effective silencing of this community and the racial and political discrimination that they faced equate them with the Criminal Tribes of India, in addition to the Jews and Africans.

The atrocities endured by the Rohingya community have been recorded in literature, in texts such as *Life of Rohingya* by Firoz Khan, *Rohingya – The Newage Exodus* by Usman Aman and so on. The present chapter deals with the memoir of Habiburahman, *First, They Erased Our Name: A Rohingya Speaks*, which is a first-hand account of the anguish and the precarious condition of the Rohingya community in Myanmar and the perils they endure as refugees in the rest of the world. The chapter is focused on the process of systematic oppression and ostracization of the aforementioned minority group and establishes them as a counterpart of the Indian Criminal Tribes.

1. Erasing the ethnic minority

“An ethnic minority is a group of people who differ in race or colour or in national, religious, or cultural origin from the dominant group- often the majority population- of the country in which they live” (Chaiklin). Rohingyas are an ethnic minority group of Myanmar. The predominant religious affiliation of the Rohingyas is Islam. The mass torture, exclusion and subjugation of this ethnic minority were initiated by the dictator U Ne Win, who attempted to redefine the national identity by listing 135 ethnic groups, which excluded the Rohingyas their right to reside in the state of Burma, rendering them stateless, an outsider in their own homeland where they resided for hundreds of years. The process of their exclusion began with them being stripped of their land and possessions, tortured, raped, killed, arrested and deported. Like the victims of any such exclusion program run by the state authorities, the Rohingyas too had to face genocide. Habiburahman’s memoir narrates several instances of subjugation and torture of the Rohingyas at the hands of the state military. They would often arrive to forcibly confiscate the possessions and land of the Rohingyas, referred to as the ‘kalar’ (a name given to them because of their dark skin). The author narrates one such instance, when the captain arrives at their house and states, “*Kalar*, your house is on the land that is required by the state. It will be demolished to build the extra toilets that we need” (Habiburahman & Ansel, 2018/2019, n.p). Despite lawful possession of the land and property, the author and his family fail to retain what is rightfully theirs. Hence, the Rohingyas had to suffer the forceful encroachment of their land and property and all those who resisted were either imprisoned or mercilessly executed. Not only the forceful acquisition of their possessions but the attack on

the Rohingya existence was also made on the very core of human existence, on their religious faith. The authorities demolished mosques and to further elevate the pain and struggle, they used the Rohingyas as the labor force in the process of demolition of the other religious sites and in the building of the Buddhist Pagodas. The memoir painfully recounts, "Rohingya who have prayed all their lives in this mythical and mystical place are forced to dismantle each stone and each piece of teak and load it onto ox carts to be taken to the monastery in the Buddhist village of Shwe Taung. The mosque no longer exists, the slate is wiped clean, and history begins anew" (Habiburrahman & Ansel, 2018/2019, n.p).

Above all the biggest blow to the Rohingya existence was the complete erasure of the word 'Rohingya' itself. "The word 'Rohingya' is forbidden. We only use it among ourselves in the hut. It is our secret identity. Dad insists that we use the term 'Muslim' when we introduce ourselves. If we say that we are Rohingya, we would be signing the family's death warrant ..." (Habiburrahman & Ansel, 2018/2019, n.p). Along with the people, their biological and political identities were erased as well. Thus, the authorities attempted to completely erase the existence of the Rohingyas with its etymological history. As Habiburrahman writes, "They are orchestrating our disappearance and we can do nothing to stop them."

2. Linguistic Imperialism

An effective strategy of establishing cultural supremacy and silencing a certain section of the society is to deny recognition to their language, thereby, forcing them to adopt a different language, the language of those in positions of power. Linguistic imperialism had been an exceptionally advantageous apparatus of cultural domination during imperialism. The British had declared English as the official language of its colonies. As a result, the natives were compelled to adopt a foreign language and with the language, they also internalized aspects of the dominant culture and their prejudices. Frantz Fanon in his treatise has correctly pointed out that to "speak means to be in a position to use a certain syntax, to grasp the morphology of this or that language, but it means above all to assume a culture, to support the weight of a civilization" (Fanon, 1952/2008, p. 8). The imposition of English on the indigenous population led to the cultivation of the idea of the inherent superiority of the colonizers over the colonized amongst the Oriental subjects. Thus, this was not only a demonstration of their power and superiority, but it was also instrumental in establishing their hegemonic dominance on the colonized. A similar strategy was adopted by the Burmese government to cripple and eradicate the Rohingya community and their culture.

Under the unjust Citizenship Law of 1982, apart from the provision that for applying for citizenship Rohingyas were "required to provide evidence that their families had lived in Myanmar before the independence of Myanmar in 1948", they also had to speak "one of Myanmar's official languages" (Anwary, 2018, p. 93). The dialect the Rohingyas used was denied recognition as one of the official languages of Burma, present-day Myanmar, by the government. The history of this ethnic group was rooted in oral traditions and lacked official written documentation: "Your memory is all you will have to keep our history alive, Habib. So listen to me carefully, because your grandmother won't be here forever" (Habiburrahman & Ansel, 2018/2019, n.p). Therefore, the imposition of the state recognized languages, especially Burmese, was a political move to absolve the history of the Rohingyas and to obliterate their culture. This also played a major role in the decapacitation of their articulation and expression due to the difficulties and hindrances that are usually encountered in adopting a new language. Since language is a major signifier of the religious and cultural affiliations of an individual or a community, it was strategically used as a means of segregating and distinguishing the Rohingyas from the other ethnic communities, even from the other Islamic groups residing in Myanmar. The atrocities and genocide committed against the community compelled them to hide their identities in order to safeguard their existence. Since the Rohingya dialect was a demarcation of their ethnic identity as well as a banned language, it was used only in secret amongst the members of the community to keep their history and culture alive and also to dodge being marked as a Rohingya by the government. As the narrator of the memoir

describes that they generally communicate in Arakanese, at school he learns Burmese and English and he learns the Rohingya dialect in secret:

At home, we speak Arakanese, the language of the region where our family comes from, and at school our lessons are in Burmese. It wasn't until Grandma arrived that I learnt to converse in the Rohingya dialect, which she often uses to speak privately with Dad. A few months ago, my parents decided that it was time for me to learn the family language. So at weekends, I attend a clandestine class for Rohingya given by Mr. Hafiz, a skinny old man with a neat white beard and an affable manner. (Habiburahman & Ansel, 2018/2019, n.p)

Thus, through linguistic imperialism, the Myanmar government virtually stripped the Rohingyas of their power of articulation and ensured the eradication of their culture.

3. Apartheid

Racial discrimination and segregation were tools used by the Occidental forces to establish their cultural supremacy over the Orient and to justify colonialism. Walia has stated that colonialism "is accompanied by exploitation, annexation and conquest. Its hegemonic power rests on creating the binary opposition of self/other, white/black, good/evil, superior/inferior, and so on" (77). The West believed and propagated that evil is endemic to those of Oriental origins and this was seen as a foundation of their racial inferiority. In South Africa, the White settlers had fashioned separate policies and social norms for themselves and the natives. This system of legislation that had introduced segregationist policies against the indigenous communities of South Africa was continued by the South African government and this came to be termed as apartheid. Under this rule, the native South Africans were pushed to the periphery by being forced to reside in separate areas from the Whites. The contact between the two races was limited; the relation between them was based on the master/slave dialectics and the natives were prohibited from marrying the Whites. In 1994, the formation of the coalition government, in which the non-Whites were in majority, marked the official end of this oppressive and discriminatory system. In Myanmar, after the country's independence from colonial rule, discriminatory policies similar to that of the South African apartheid system were issued by the country's government against its minorities, especially the Rohingyas. Apart from refusing to acknowledge them as the country's natural citizens, they were made victims of racial hatred as well. As the racist term Nigger was used by the colonial rulers to dehumanize the Blacks, similarly, the Rohingyas were addressed as "*kalars*" a derogatory term used to express "scorn and disgust for dark-skinned ethnic groups" (Habiburahman & Ansel, 2018/2019, n.p). Also, the grotesqueness and bestial characteristics, ascribed to the Africans by the White masters, were attributed to the Rohingyas as well by the Buddhist community, the ruling ethnic group of Myanmar:

... because of our physical appearance we are evil ogres from a faraway land, more animal than human. This image persists, haunting the thoughts of adults and the nightmares of children....

Look who it is! Look at the dirty kalar who believes in his kalar God! Is he on his way to wash off his filth?

With his big nose, big eyebrows, and big ears, he's more hideous than an ogre.

Forget the thanaka, nigger. You can't hide your pongy *kalar* skin. (Habiburahman & Ansel, 2018/2019, n.p)

They too, like the South African aborigines, were contained into small villages separate from the majority ethnic communities of Myanmar and were denied basic civil and human rights by the government:

... the Burmese regime find your lovely ebony skin, your thick head of hair, and your beautiful dark eyebrows offensive. They see you as too black. Too Muslim. Too Negro. Too different. A parasite, like the rest of us. They prefer to confine us to tiny spaces, ghettos where they can control and trample us underfoot, reduce us to slavery, humiliate

us, and spill our blood. They are orchestrating our disappearance and we can do nothing to stop them. (Habiburrahman)

The government's endorsement of racial and cultural discrimination and segregation validated and fueled the ideological biases against the Rohingya community. In addition, the exclusionary policies that were implemented by the government further jeopardized the already vulnerable position of this community in the Burmese society.

4. On being Stateless

Mikhail Bakunin the Russian anarchist theorist and revolutionary defines the state as that abstract machine that bears its own logic of domination (Newman, 2007, p.27). Anarchism or anarchist political philosophy has always defined the state as being that hegemonic entity that constantly subjugates and surveys an individual and tries to safeguard its own interest above the interest of the individual. It creates a notion of a good citizen, an obedient statesman and punishes the ones who try to violate the interest of the state. The state then uses various punitive sub-machineries like the military to correct, train or punish the individual subject. Bakunin writes,

The modern state, in its essence and objectives is necessarily a military state, and a military state necessarily becomes an aggressive state. If it does not conquer others it will itself be conquered, for the simple reason that whatever force exists, it absolutely must be displayed or put into action. From this again it follows that the modern state must without fail be huge and powerful; that is the indispensable condition for its preservation (Bakunin, 2002, p.13).

Despite such modes of subjugation, the identity of an individual that is so basic to one's existence is thoroughly linked to the state. In the era of global capitalism, an individual's identity is characterized by his or her affiliation with a particular state. The state holds a pivotal position in determining the identity of the individual along with other factors like religion, ethnicity, sexuality etc. Therefore, this leaves an individual or a particular group exposed to another risk, that is being declared 'stateless'. With the rise of right-wing politics and a strong sense of nationalism across the world, incidents of exclusion of minority communities have become a frequent phenomenon in global politics. The exclusion and genocide of the Rohingyas in Burma is one such incident.

Habiburrahman's memoir is a testimony to this method of coercion and subjugation applied on an individual or a community by the state. The memoir starts with a dedication, bearing the lines, "To all the weary stateless people who have fled and still roam the oceans, jungles, and highways of the world, hoping to survive" (Habiburrahman & Ansel, 2018/2019, n.p). The state being an entity that controls and directs all the individuals also, provides an identity to each individual belonging to it. But on being declared stateless a person or a community loses their identity and their very existence falls into jeopardy. They have no protection and cannot exercise any right or claim to life. The dictator of Burma, U Ne Win, during his reign, suddenly took up a project to define the national identity of Burma, as a result, 135 ethnic groups were listed, which were supposed to be further grouped into eight national races and anyone not belonging to any of those ethnic groups immediately lost their right to citizenship and residence at the state of Burma and the Rohingyas were one of them (Habiburrahman & Ansel, 2018/2019, n.p). As a result, the Rohingyas living in Burma, suddenly became outsiders in their own homeland: "Our history has become both a lie and a crime in the eyes of the dictatorship. Their hatred and racism have turned us into foreigners who must be crushed" (Habiburrahman & Ansel, 2018/2019, n.p). There were no laws to protect their life, no rights to livelihood, their lives were suddenly laid bare to be finally devoured by the collective violence of the state machinery. To fellow citizens, they became the unwanted mass unlawfully occupying the geographical space which rightfully belonged to them and not to the outsiders 'others', declared by the state, and sanctioned by the very law of the state. "I become a foreigner to my neighbours: they believe that we are Bengali invaders who have entered their country illegally and now threaten to overrun it" (Habiburrahman &

Ansel, 2018/2019, n.p). The state thus, ideologically sponsored the methodical ostracization of the community from within the people and by the authoritative powers at large.

5. The Biopolitics of Life and Death

The target of the state and the zone into which the state applies its coercive, as well as punitive measures, is the body of the individual. The target of the state is either to inflict pain or to exterminate the body. By declaring a community stateless, the bodies of all those belonging to that community become exposed to all the punitive and torturous schemes of the state power. Devoid of any right or any means of self-preservation, the victim group finds it difficult to survive. The helpless victims of state oppression can thus, be called 'Homo Sacer'. A Homo Sacer is a person whose "existence is reduced to a bare life stripped of every right by the virtue of the fact that anyone can kill him committing homicide; he can save himself only in perpetual flight or a foreign land" (Agamben, 1998, p.103). This is found in the memoir of Habiburrahman too, they are extremely tortured, brutally beaten, raped and killed. As the grandmother of the author narrates:

We have been plundered of all our wealth. I was young, the same age as your mother, when they came and attacked our village, a few miles from here. They wanted to kill the Muslim Kalars, they said. They stormed our homes, and invaded neighbouring villages. They overran the whole state. Swords swished through the air. Heads rolled. Women experienced torture that only they can know. Caught in a trap, some preferred to jump into the water and drown themselves rather than fall into the repulsive criminal hands of these men (Habiburrahman & Ansel, 2018/2019, n.p).

By bringing in the reference of Karl Binding's work, *Authorization for the Annihilation of Life Unworthy of Being Lived*, where Binding tries to establish the validity of euthanasia, by supporting the euthanizing of those living with paralysis and of lives which are "incurably lost", Agamben tries to point out the attempt of Binding to leave the decision of which life is 'unworthy of living' upon the sovereign power. Agamben says, "If it is the sovereign who, insofar as he decides on the state of exception, has the power to decide on which life may be killed without commission of homicide, in the age of bio-politics this power becomes emancipated from the state of exception and transformed into the power to decide the point at which life ceases to be politically relevant" (Agamben, 1998, p.83). With U Ne Win's project of redefining national identity and the exclusion of the Rohingyas from the list of recognized ethnic groups, the state of Burma had taken the decision that the lives of Rohingyas are the lives 'unworthy of living'.

"The Rohingyas that have managed to escape alive remain, for the most part stateless, illegal immigrants prey to human traffickers and vulnerable to torture and arrest" (Habiburrahman & Ansel, 2018/2019, n.p). Even after United Nations acknowledging this event of torture and exclusion of the Rohingyas as a genocide, the state of the Rohingyas has not improved, they still exist as refugees. Their lives still remain vulnerable and prone to further acts of violence. They barely survive at the mercy of chance and in complete uncertainty.

6. Criminal Tribes and Rohingyas

The segregation, oppression and restrictions that the Rohingyas were subject to, elicit comparison with the criminal tribes of India. In 1871, the British government introduced the Criminal Tribes Act and branded several tribes of India as pathological criminals. The reason behind the implementation of this regulation was to crush the revolt of the predominantly forest-dwelling and nomadic tribes, against the commercial exploitation of the forests by the Britishers:

It was keeping in view the propensity of these indigenous tribes to revolt, and that too with weapons, that the Criminal Tribes Act of 1871 was enacted. Just as the zamindari system was imposed on the Indian feudal structure by the British, the indigenous communities were sought to be appended to the caste system at its lowliest bottom. Its main architect and member of the Law and Order Commission, T. V. Stephens propounded the thesis that as the caste system was a special feature of Indian society,

with each trade linked to a caste, crime is also endemic to certain communities. (Abraham, 1999, p.1752-1753)

The imperial government, through this mandate, fundamentally posited that “(i) the so-called Criminal Tribes represented a group of born criminals that (ii) crime was hereditary with their members and that (iii) criminals could be reformed by ruthless punishment and lifelong harassment” (Kapadia, 1952, p.100-101). These tribes were seen as outcasts and untouchable and impure by the Hindu society and in addition to that, they had to bear the stigma of being criminals. They were forced to inhabit special industrial or agricultural settlements fortified with barbed wires that were set up by the government, were prohibited to travel outside their settlements without police authorization and were compelled to report daily to the police station. Among many texts available on the plight of the denotified tribes, Vibhavari Shirurkar's novel *The Victim* is a particularly poignant one. The novel deals with the struggle for survival of the Maang-guradi tribe, an erstwhile untouchable as well as criminal tribe, who inhabit Maharashtra. The novel portrays their living conditions and their systematic exploitation and oppression:

Saheb, those of us suspected of crimes have to live behind the *taar*, the wire fence.” ...

The outside world is ignorant of our plight. We don't have proper houses. They gave us a tiny bit of land, but we have to pay rent. They tell us to build a hut. That house-loan is killing us. A family earns ten or fifteen rupees a month. Who can survive on that? We don't have enough to eat. Our clothes are in tatters. It's like a jail. We ask for work, but they don't give work to people like us. We get work only if we convert. ... “They make all the rules, we have to do what they say. They punish anyone they like. How they like. When they like. Even if someone is not guilty, they put him behind *taar*. Impose *hajeri* on him. ...

Hajeri means reporting. Even without a charge, if you are suspected of a crime, you have to report to the office once or twice a day. Sometimes they call you even in the middle of the night.” (Shirurkar, 2006, p.77-78)

Similarly, Rohingyas were confined to their villages, as revealed in the memoir:

... Arakan may be our home but it's not safe for us here. Whenever we set a foot outside the village, they're on to us. We're penned in like animals.’ ...

It's hard to imagine getting out of Maungdaw. The town is surrounded by Burmese army regiments. There is no hospital and very few resources here. The junta's hidden agenda is to concentrate the Rohingya population in towns close to the borders where they are left to die. Every day is a struggle to find enough food and drinking water, a battle to stay alive. Many of our young people are regularly taken away and arrested. We have a few hens and two goats, but the NaSaKa controls everything. If a goat gives birth, we are heavily taxed. If one of us happens to lose his way or is delayed by an incident somewhere and misses the roll call on just one evening, he is struck off the household list and can only return home by paying for the privilege. (Habiburrahman & Ansel, 2018/2019, n.p)

The repressive 1982 Citizenship Law effectively denied many Rohingya citizenship and reinforced legal discrimination against the Rohingyas. It meant that they were denied access to education and employment, and faced unacceptable restrictions on movement, marriage, and reproduction (Khin, 2017, p.46-47). As the text notes:

They are forbidden to marry, leave the town, or obtain any qualifications; they are deprived of an identity, and the number of births is restricted. ... No Rohingya can leave these prison-towns unless they have specific authorisation that can only be bought with huge sums of money. Young people cannot afford the marriage permits, and unmarried couples are imprisoned for years in filthy cells, poor innocent ‘criminals’ incarcerated in the dictator's jails alongside those other innocents, the political prisoners. (Habiburrahman & Ansel, 2018/2019, n.p)

Much like the criminalized tribes, who were “randomly picked up, tortured, maimed or even

killed” by the authorities during the colonial rule, the Rohingyas too existed at the mercy of the military government of Myanmar (Abraham 1751). Arbitrary arrests, imprisonment and torture of those who identified themselves or were designated as Rohingyas were rampant. The memoir prominently documents first, the arrest and abuse of the narrator’s uncle for traveling outside his village and then of his parents for supposedly possessing unauthorized objects and finally the sexual harassment of the narrator’s mother by the authorities:

My Uncle Dim, who lives in another village, is due to arrive today....

He was arrested by the authorities as soon as he set foot on the jetty. The same old story: breaking the law that forbids Muslims to travel outside their village. They’ve taken him away. We have to act quickly.’ ... He has been beaten on his stomach and the back of his neck, and is in such pain that no position is comfortable for him. His swollen eyelids disfigure his face....

The chief of police addresses our parents: ‘You two kalars, you’re coming with us. We’re taking you to be interrogated. You’re under arrest for possession of unauthorised products. ...

Dad enters the house an hour later, his face drawn with exhaustion. His eyebrow is bleeding, and his eye socket is purple; he hasn’t been spared. I think I glimpse traces of cigarette burns on his arm....

It takes a huge effort for Mum to get her words out.... ‘They humiliated me. The president of the SLORC had a baton that he kept thrusting into me.’ (Habiburrahman & Ansel, 2018/2019, n.p)

Therefore, in a similar tone to that of the British government, state machinery was effectively used by the Myanmar government to subjugate and ostracize the Rohingya community.

Conclusion

“If my friends and I do not do this, the world will forget us, because too many walls have been built to isolate us. It is imperative that we speak out” (Habiburrahman, 2018/2019, n.p). It is because of such works as this memoir by Habiburrahman that the words of such heinous crimes on humanity have come to the light of knowledge. After years of torture, killing, displacement, the Rohingyas now stand scattered in different parts of the world, stateless, traumatized and for the major part silenced. Separated from their families, without even the knowledge as to whether they are alive, all these people still live on in uncertainty. Accounts of such incidents add to the shame of entire humanity, that such acts have been carried out even after the entire world had witnessed the Jewish Holocaust by the Nazi party in Germany, or the nuclear attack by the United States of America at Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Japan. Violence and human civilization have an inseparable link, from the crusades to the Jewish Holocaust to the World Wars, to the situation in Syria and this very recent Rohingya persecution, finally recognized as genocide by the United Nations in 2017, all serve as a testimony to this fact.

There are probably many such instances of minorities being targeted for exclusion and successfully exterminated, that remain hidden from the world. But the entire process of this elimination involves many similar policies and the use of similar methods of violence, followed by the exclusion from the state or of complete extermination. This finally results in the culture of the minority being refrigerated to the point of exclusion, from the geographical sphere as well as from the canon of historical knowledge that the state puts forward to be circulated and memorized.

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