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## THE SELF BETWEEN POLITICAL CHAOS AND THE NEW POLITICAL “ORDER” IN TAJIKISTAN

Most people who were involved with investigating events in Tajikistan – and the new Tajiki identity – after the collapse of the USSR sought answers to the question “What went wrong?”<sup>1</sup> However, the post-USSR period in Tajikistan is also a time for questioning the values, ideas, ideals and principles which shape our perception of our selves and our reality in order to find answers to the question “What are we in our actuality?”<sup>2</sup>

Based on interviews and analyses of some of the key events that took place after the collapse of communism in Tajikistan, I argue in this paper that the main reasons for the existential crisis which brought about the civil war, and today’s state of “truththerapy” and schizoid existence where the Self no longer constitutes subjects, are: (a) the Tajiks’ loss of their link with the traditional ways of the constitution of the Self (subject, individual); (b) their exploitation during the Soviet era as *instruments*; in Heideggerian language Tajik men were “presence at hand” not “readiness to hand,” or *mankurt*<sup>3</sup> as Aitmatov named this phenomenon; and (c) their isolation from main stream of the *world changes* during which Tajiks, as another Soviet people, experienced a different kind of modernity and “humanism.”

During the last three years of teaching and living in Tajikistan I realized the importance of the process (mechanism) of self-knowledge and self-consciousness (Hegel calls it the *terra firma* of modern philosophy<sup>4</sup>), or, as

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1. It is nothing to do with Bernard Lewis’s famous book *What Went Wrong?*

2. It is a question raised by Foucault. See Michel Foucault, “The Political Technology of Individuals,” in L. M. Martin, Huck Gutman and Patrick H. Hutton, eds., *The Technology of the Self: a Seminar with Michel Foucault* (London: Tavistock Publications, 1988), pp. 145-62.

3. Chingiz Aitmatov, *The Day Lasts More Than a Hundred Years*, John French, trans. (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1983), pp. 124-35, 136-46. In his novel *The Day Lasts More Than a Hundred Years* Aitmatov recalled an ancient Kyrgyz legend about the *mankurt*. According to Aitmatov, “a *mankurt* did not know where he was from. He did not know his name, did not remember his childhood, his father, his mother – to say it more simply, a *mankurt* did not realize that he is a human being.”

4. Peters John Durham, “The Root of Humanity: Hegel on Communication and Language,” in *Figuring the Self: Subject, Absolute and Others in Classical German Philosophy*,

Foucault calls it, “*the technologies of the Self*,”<sup>5</sup> for shaping individuals, their identity, their world-view, and their relations with others, and also for bringing change within their societies as well.

These processes of self-cultivation consist of four or more features or components, which are interwoven in this process. The first component is the theory of knowledge (the fundamental topic of philosophy), through which someone will begin their understanding (interpretation), or will enter the game of truth; in other words, in which they will examine the relation between the Self and the surrounding world, which is non-self. The second component of this process is the idea of freedom. This faculty will grow together with the identity of the Self (person, subject), which is significant for the cultivation of the faculties such as will, intellect, sensibility and imagination, where these faculties in this process will remain under pressure, challenge and change. The third feature is that the Self itself creates a dynamic process, or the process of the self-cultivation is dynamic, and based on its experience and knowledge the Self will change and will take on a new shape. The fourth feature is the creating of communication with others, as it was indicated by Hegel that the Self only exists in its relation to another self.<sup>6</sup> Through these four components the Self constitutes the subject, shapes the individual, and if this mechanism is not working it is difficult to claim about the person’s humanity, interpretation, freedom, culture and creativity.

The ways of shaping subjectivity which were developed within different Tajiki (Islamic) schools of thought played a significant role in preserving the uniqueness and peculiarity of Tajiki selfhood and identity, and above all its lifestyle. In particular, the conceptualization of the Self which was developed by Tajik (Islamic) thinkers in the past is important for understanding the progression of self-consciousness, the essence of subjectivity and individuality within Tajiki (Islamic) thought. The selves, as conceived by Tajik (Islamic) have a consciousness of their very being (subjectivity) and self-limitation of the personality (individuality) and its dependence on higher consciousness. History is our witness that sometimes these ways of shaping the Self (subjectivity), or these ways of living, remain under pressure from political regimes, which have tried to destroy these ways of figuring the Self. Alternatively, these ideas sometimes remain hidden, and be-

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David E. Klemm and Gunter Zoller, eds. (Albany: State Univ. of New York Press, 1997), pp. 227-44.

5. Michel Foucault, *The Politics of Truth*, Sylvere Lotringer and Lysa Hochroth, eds., *Semiotext(e)*, 1997, pp. 178-81.

6. Hegel’s point of view was profoundly discussed in Alexandre Kojeve, *Introduction to The Reading of Hegel: Lectures on the Phenomenology of Spirit*, Allan Bloom, ed., James H. Nichols, Jr., trans. (Ithaca and London: Cornell Univ. Press, 1969), pp. 3-31.

side the religious experience of the mystics, they remained mostly in the domain of the ideas not in *actu*. The history of the Tajiks after the collapse of the Soviet Union is a clear example of the significance of the ways of shaping the selves and how the selves are taking shape under the changing political and ideological circumstances.

This paper will explore the function of the technologies of the Self within Tajiki society today. It seems that people are not facing their reality, and they not interpreting what is happening within their reality, although to some extent we can see the revival of the Tajiki selfhood and identity, as it took shape during *perestroika* and *glasnost* and after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989-1992, which stands against the artificial constructions of identity by those who are in power.

### **Why focus on Self rather than on identity?**

The Self today is one of central notions in many fields of study, notably in philosophy, anthropology, cultural studies and others. I am focusing on the Self rather than on identity because the Self gives a more exact picture of the events and phenomena that go in to shaping the Self, and it shows subjects in their psychological continuity. Moreover, focusing on the Self gives a clear picture of how identities are shaped and how different values, ideas, ideals and principles work in creating meanings within one cultural domain and in the domain of the language as well. Philosophers have different views on understanding of this "most archaic of all objects."<sup>7</sup> Although the Self is not something to be encountered like other things, it provides the very perspective or standpoint from which any such encounter with other things in this world take place.

### **The Self and subjectivity within Tajiki (Islamic) historical thought**

For Tajik (Islamic) intellectuals the theory of self-knowledge was the highest purpose of their philosophical and religious inquiry. In order to discover the truth in both the sensible and intelligible worlds, Tajik intellectuals posited the dependence of the Self on some ultimate, absolute ground, and began their path with striving for self-knowledge. The keystone of this edifice of self-knowledge for them was the saying of the Prophet "*man 'arafa nafsahu faqad 'arafa rabahu*" ("he who knows himself knows his Lord"). For instance, two prominent philosophers, al-Ghazali and Tusi,<sup>8</sup> have, besides their philosophical and theological works, produced autobiographical works in which they describe their process of the self-

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7. Paul Ricoeur, "Existence and Hermeneutics," *The Conflict of Interpretations* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern Univ. Press, 1974), p. 20.

8. The representatives of the Sufi (al-Ghazali) and Isma'ili (Tusi) ways of thought which contemporary Tajiks follow.

consciousness. From al-Ghazali's *al-Munqidh min al-Dalal* (Deliverance from the Error)<sup>9</sup> and Tusi's *Sayr wa suluk* (Contemplation and Action)<sup>10</sup> it appeared that their process of self-consciousness is interwoven with their theory of knowledge (epistemology), which encompasses ontology, cosmology and psychology as well.

The first problem they raise is that the theory of knowledge (the fundamental topic of philosophy), through which both al-Ghazali, in his *al-Munqidh min al-Dalal*, and Tusi, in his *Sayr wa Suluk*, attempt to establish the truth, which in virtue of it being the knowledge of God, is certain and indubitable. Secondly, it is the problem of the identity of the Self and the changing of its features and status through a series of defined stages, that is *hududs* (stages) in Tusi's thought and *maqams* (steps) in al-Ghazali's. The neophyte crawls up the spiritual steps of self-knowledge in order to gain or to illuminate himself in the final self-knowledge, which is in the knowledge of God as a final destination and completion of every kind of self-knowledge. Thirdly, the problem of the relation between the Self and personal identity, which can be clearly identified in the life and the works of Tusi and al-Ghazali. These ways of self-knowledge has a number of similarities with the "art (*techne*) of making man better" that Socrates taught in early Greece,<sup>11</sup> which Foucault and other contemporary philosophers have recognized as an art of cultivation of the personality, and which Foucault has called a "technology of the self."<sup>12</sup> To my mind this modern Foucauldian interpretation of the Self, which identifies the micro-structure of power in the construction of the Self, does not give a complete picture of the neo-Platonist experience of the Self. It is clear from the commentary of the Proclus on the *First Alcibiades* of Plato that for the self-construction in neo-Platonist thought the religious elements are important,<sup>13</sup> but Foucault reduces the process of the self-knowledge to the hermeneutics of desires, which he calls the "hermeneutic of the subject."<sup>14</sup>

Over centuries, the way of the Sufis and Isma'ili became a more orthodox way of figuring the Self and understanding the world within traditional

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9. Abu Hamid Muhammad al-Ghazali, *Al-Munqidh min al-dalal*, F. Jabre, ed. (Beirut, 1959).

10. Nasir al-Din Muhammad b. Muhammad Tusi, *Sayr wa Suluk. Contemplation and Action, The Spiritual Autobiography of a Muslim Scholar*, S. J. Badakhchani, trans. (London and New York: I. B. Tauris, in association with The Institute of Ismaili Studies, 1999).

11. Plato, "Alcibiades I," *The Essential Plato* (New York, 1999), p. 1145.

12. Foucault, *The Technologies of the Self*. See also Pierre Hadot, "Reflection on the Notion of the 'Cultivation of the Self,'" in *Michel Foucault Philosopher*, Timothy J. Armstrong, trans. (New York: Routledge, 1992), pp. 225-32.

13. Diodochus, Proclus, *Commentary on the First Alcibiades of Plato* (Amsterdam, 1954).

14. Foucault, *The Technologies of the Self*, p. 1.

Tajiki society. It was the Sufis of Central Asia who developed the idea of the *al-Insan al-Kamil* (Perfect Man)<sup>15</sup> and for centuries influenced the politics of the Turkic dynasties. The Tajik Sufis began from the time of the "freethinker Sufi," Abusaid Abulkhair,<sup>16</sup> in the tenth century, in the time of the Khoja Ahrori Vali (Naqshbandi Sufi of the fifteenth century), and up to the present day played significant roles on the cultural, social and political life of the Central Asian peoples. It has to be said that the most influential Sufis of Central Asia were Tajiks. As Jo-Ann Gross puts it, "Ethnic categories may in fact imply and/or incorporate religious identity. It is undeniable fact that Tajik identity presumes Muslim identity."<sup>17</sup>

Yet, while there has always been a close affinity between Tajiki identity and religious values, ideas, ideals and principles, as is recognized by many scholars, it is also important to recognize that Tajiki identity has been shaped by national values as well. For instance, in his remarkable article on the subject of Tajiki identity as a culturally-shaped identity, Oliver Roy failed to recognize that national values also were influential in shaping this identity. Alongside the religious books, one of the most significant books to be found in the libraries of Tajiki intellectuals is *Shah-name* (The Book of Kings) of Firdousi.<sup>18</sup> Tajiks not only developed the different Islamic knowledge and experience but they also preserved Islamic values, ideas and ideals within the cultural domain as well.

### The process of Mankurtisation

It is an historical fact that the people who lived under the Soviet Empire found themselves under pressure from the narrow ideological language of the Communist Party, which greatly influenced the people's experience of shaping their selves and world-views. For most people (and I myself had such experience), this experience meant to scrutinize one's thoughts, desires, dreams, and feelings according to the world-view dictated to them based on Marxist-Leninist philosophy.

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15. The Central Asian Sufis distinguished *Al- Insan al-Kamil* as an heir of the Prophet and remarked his due in society. For instance Nasafi wrote: "... after recognition of and encounter with God, the [Perfect Man] does not see any task or understand any duty as equal to or better than consoling people. He does not hold any comfort greater than saying and doing something so that the people pass their time in this world in an easy way after listening /to him/ and looking his advice" (M. Mole, ed. [Tehran-Paris, 1962], p. 6).

16. Reynold A. Nicholson, *Studies in Islamic Mysticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1967).

17. Jo-Ann Gross, "Introduction: Approaches to the Problem of Identity Formation," in Jo-Ann Gross, ed., *Muslims in Central Asia, Expression of Identity and Change* (Durham and London: Duke Univ. Press, 1994), p. 13.

18. Oliver Roy, *The New Central Asia: The Creation of Nations* (New York: New York Univ. Press, 2005).

From my childhood I saw anti-religious and atheistic watchwords in every cultural centre. The principal aim of the communist ideologies was to destroy the “essence of holy,”<sup>19</sup> and to cut any relations with the traditional ways of the understanding of the world in order to create new source of inspiration, new metaphysics, new language and new symbolic networks. An army of ideological philosophers and scholars supported this trend. Martin Heidegger speaks about such kinds of personalities who have been cultivated not as individuals, but as a “type.” Heidegger explains that such a phenomenon results from the development of modernity, which promotes “the creation of a mankind that finds the shape of its essence neither in ‘individuality’ nor in the ‘mass’, but in the ‘type’.”<sup>20</sup> That kind of policy brought about the appearance of the “new” man: the so-called “new Soviet citizens” (*новый гражданин Советского Союза*).

In such a society, in which the meaning of things comes only from the “Moscow people” living in capital cities, including in Tajikistan, the symbolic language of classics, the eternal language of the classical music, and symbolic language of religious ceremonies are forgotten, and contact with the source of real creativity is lost. It was in the middle of the 1980s that the notion of “*Manqurtism*” first appeared in Soviet literature. The term “*Manqurt*” was first used by writer Chingis Aitmatov in his novel *The Day Lasts More Than a Hundred Years* to characterize the people who had lost their historical memory and link with their past. He took this term from the early Turkish legends in which *manqurt* was a man whose selfhood and memory had been destroyed as a prisoner of war by the brutal technological innovations of nomadic tribes. Such technology of the destruction of the true human selfhood was in process in Soviet countries.

Nevertheless, alternative symbolic networks (language) existed in Tajiki society during Soviet times through which one’s inner life could find expression and fulfillment in the external world, and which provided deeper roots for the mental being of people and their life, religious belief, and experience. The meanings that were shaped through this alternative symbolic network dealt with the real problems of life and death and were more creative rather than the prescribed “meanings” of such phenomena that came from Moscow. The language of the people, which was culturally constituted by traditional values and religious experience, was more creative and practical. It was in this cultural domain that the selves (subject, personality) of the minority religious and non-religious Tajik intellectuals were constructed.

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19. Martin Heidegger, “Letter on Humanism,” in D. F. Krell, ed., *Basic Writings: Martin Heidegger* (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 254.

20. Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche, Volume III: The Will to Power as Knowledge and as Metaphysics*, David Farrell Krell, ed. (New York: Harper and Row, 1982), p. 99.

The Soviet regime created censorship and a strong apparatus to control the mind of the people. There are numerous examples of the dogmatism and blind faith of communists in their own "righteousness." The case of the writer Jum'a Odinaev, philosopher Mirbob Mirrahimov, or the poet Bozor Sobir and others serve as reminders to Tajiks of that censorship. For instance Odinaev's novel *Guzashti Aiyom* (The Passing of the Days) was banned from publication and Odinaev himself suffered because his novel contains a moment which contradicted communist logic and ideals. As the former ideological secretary of the Communist Party of Tajikistan, Gulchehra Bobosodiqova, said, there was several unpleasant moments in the novel, including: firstly, Odinaev describes the situation in which the secretary of the communist party of one district (*raicom*) was drunk, and having fallen to the ground, a dog comes to lick his hands and face; secondly, Odinaev addressed the problem of the state of the Tajiki language in Uzbekistan, and the politics of Uzbek communists towards the Tajiks of Uzbekistan; and thirdly, Odinaev tells a story of how a Russian woman was raped in a cemetery. As Bobosodiqova mentioned in an interview, "I was personally against such policy but I cannot do anything, and I am feeling sorry for what happened with Odinaev."<sup>21</sup> Bozor Sobir came close to being punished for his poem *Zaboni Modari* (Mother Language), as did Mirrahimov for his article "Ob to kai az tagi yach meguzarad?" ("How long water will run under the ice?")

In Soviet Tajikistan a strong censorship regime was exercised over any Islamic thought that contradicted with Marxist-Leninist ideas.

During the last two decades of the twentieth century the thought of Muhammad Iqbal (1877-1938), an Indian philosopher and poet influenced Tajik intellectuals and played a significant role in the ideological and political movements of Tajikistan through his philosophical notions such as *khudi* (Self), *mard-e tamam* (perfect man), *naib al haqq* (God's deputy), *mard-e khudagah* (aware man), and so on. It was Sir Muhammad Iqbal who analyzed and developed the concept of the Self "khudi" as a principal element for the constitution of human subjectivity and individuality, especially in his works *Asrar-i Khudi* (The Secrets of the Self) and *Rumuz-i Bekhudi* (The Mysteries of Selflessness). In Iqbal's discussion on the concept of the Self in his *The Reconstruction of the Religious Thought in Islam*, it is evident that his philosophy of the Self is rooted in the Qur'an and the medieval Islamic philosophy.<sup>22</sup>

The work of Iqbal during the Soviet period was kept a secret from the public, especially from the Muslim and Persian-speaking population of Ta-

21. *Haftganj*, May 1992. This daily newspaper was published from 1991 to 1992.

22. Muhammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1934); Muhammad Iqbal, *Divan-e Farsi-i Iqbal* (Lahore, 1973).

jikistan. In Iqbal's books that were published during the Soviet times, all key ideas and words that referred to the Allah, Qur'an, Prophets, Right Caliphs, Islamic Culture and civilization were censored.

During the ideological and political confrontation in post-Soviet Tajikistan, each group or party created its own "Iqbal." In 1992 Iqbal's famous poem *Az Khobi Garon Khez!* (Wake up from heavy dream!), became a hymn for the demonstrators who were in opposition to the government.<sup>23</sup> Iqbal's focus on the Self as a foundation of the personality (*fard*), which is constituted by Islamic values, ideas, ideals and also very close to the modern idea of the cultivation of personality, was suitable for Tajik intellectuals. The representatives of the Islamic movement in Tajikistan, for instance, did not understand Iqbal's philosophy properly and they confused Iqbal's thought with the thought of religious thinkers like H. Banna, S. Qutb and Mawdudi. Despite their misunderstanding of Iqbal's philosophy, the religious leaders of Tajikistan, in comparison with Tajik philosophers and intellectuals, boasted about their understanding of his philosophy and tried to incorporate his thought into their political aims.

### **The Selves during rapid social political change: 1991-1992**

The historical scene of the political confrontations of 1991-1992 reveals three types of the Selves.

#### *The selves constructed by Marxist-Leninist values, ideas and principles*

These were the individuals who took the Soviet reality for granted and unquestionably accepted it. They were not aware about other ways of transforming their own thoughts and actions. The voice of the communist system spoke through them. It has to be said that after the collapse of the USSR, these pro-communist selves were more confused with social changes than others. Most of these people are descendants of the generation Mikhail Bulgakov called "dog heat people."<sup>24</sup> This kind of Self was not prepared for change and did not have ability and capacity to recognize and acknowledge the new values, ideas and ideals which germinate within the minds and life of Tajiks. If they were ever to come to power they would create a dictatorship, because they will rely on power and will hide their real face under the mask of borrowed ideas and ideals.

#### *The "partridge complex," or, the selves of nostalgia*

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23. People telling real anecdotes which, during his visit to the tomb of Iqbal in Lahore, the former President of Tajikistan Rahmon Nabiev said has awakened "my people from heavy dream and himself sleeping here peacefully."

24. Mikhail Bulgakov, *Heart of Dog*, Michael Glenny, trans. (London: Collins and Harvill Press, 1968).

Our people in mountain areas like this beautiful bird, especially when it sings in the morning. They realized that if this bird falls with its cage it will almost certainly die. During the civil war the people of the mountain areas of Tajikistan called the cases of the death of young men as a "partridge complex." The young men died because they did not find solutions for their problems; they collapsed with the world that shaped them.

The collapse of the USSR was itself a hard experience for most people in Tajikistan. It is clear that many of our self-representations are formed in early childhood and remain with us through our lifetime. They may become more or less silent over time, and they may change. All this baggage will come out during the dangers of a conflict situation, such as during 1992 and up to 1997. The collapse of the USSR was dramatic for many people because their Self (personality) had been shaped mostly by the Soviet reality. The moral struggle and self-confrontation brought them to the state of hysteria, which Freud describes as the "most enigmatic of all nervous diseases."<sup>25</sup> During such psycho-ideological conflicts, people find it difficult, as witnesses to how their world destroyed most people, to handle new ideologies and experiences that they perceive to be incompatible with their conscious experience of Self. For instance, young men, who, based on their experience, reached high position in their professional career in the ministry of Internal affairs, found themselves replaced in the wake of Tajiki independence by former criminals. As a result of this conflict, many people died or were left paralyzed, and this process still continues and people still suffer, still living with strong nostalgia for the Soviet times, especially to end of the 1970s and 1980s in the Soviet Union.

#### *Traditional religious and new – liberal selves*

Those who had already experienced ideological conflict with the communist regime, who were opposed to the regime, even if their opposition was hidden, and who already cultivated themselves on values, ideas, and ideals different from the Soviet ones – the religious leaders of Tajikistan, for instance – demonstrated strength during the period of conflict and collapse of the socialist system. They were first of all religious people of Tajikistan who, despite the pressure and control from Moscow, kept their traditional ways of self-constitution and education. Many of them played significant roles in the renaissance of religious consciousness of the Central Asian people, and especially in Tajikistan. It was religious intellectuals who took initiative to make a new beginning. Notable amongst them were Hoji Muhhammaddjon Rustamov, who was famous as Mawlavi Qori-I

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25. Sigmund Freud, "On the Psychological Mechanism of Hysterical Phenomena," in *Collected Papers* (London: The Hogarth Press and The Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1950), V: p. 18.

Hindustani (died in Dushanbe in 1989), Rahmatullo Alloma-I Andijoni (was killed in Andijon in 1979), and Said Abdullo Nuri (1947-2006, who, according to some versions, was poisoned), the former leader of the Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan.

I think the important aspect of the Tajiki Self is managing these different identities, especially national and religious. This was evident from the first roundtable discussions between Tajik secular and religious intellectuals, who have met on several occasions, facilitated by the magazine “*Farhang*” (Culture).

Here we can name a category of the intellectuals who were changed under nationalistic ideas promoted by writer S. Ayni, the “father of modern Tajik literature,” the scholar and politician B.Gafurov, and young poets of the seventies and eighties Bozor Sobir, Loiqli Sherahali, Gulrukhsor and others. From the first days of the confrontations with power the intellectuals of Tajikistan were joined by religious leaders. From that time on they were in opposition to the remainder of the communist regime in Tajikistan.

### **The revival of the Tajiki Self**

As mentioned above, even during the Soviet times, despite the technologies of destruction of true selfhood which were being used by the communist regime, the selves of Tajik intellectuals were shaped by traditional religious and national values, ideas and ideals. The sources which kept traditional religio-philosophical values and ideals alive were Persian-Tajiki classical literature, traditional ceremonies, and the language. The Tajiki language played significant role in the construction of the selves, and in making connections with the classical religio-philosophical teachings and national ideas and ideals as well. One of the main reason that Tajik intellectuals<sup>26</sup> and religious authority of Tajikistan came together to create opposition to communist rule during the events of 1991-1992 was because they possessed common values, ideas and ideals regarding the constitution of their subjectivity. It was really the triumph of the traditional way of cultivating the Tajiki Self which contains both religious and national values.

### **The process of the deconstruction of the Self**

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26. The Tajik opposition to communist regime on that time (1991-1992) consist of the movements, parties and personalities such as: The Rastokhez (resurrection) Popular Front founded by in September, 1989, by Tajik writers and Intellectuals – Tahir Abdujabborov; The Democratic Party of Tajikistan (DPT) was founded after February 1990, by philosopher Shodmon Yousuf; Islamic Renaissance Party (IRP) in December 1991, declared itself independent – Muhhamad Sharif Himatzoda chairman of IRP; The authority of Qazi Akbar Turajonzoda who was a spiritual leader of the Muslims of Tajikistan; Daulat Khudonazarov chairman of the Union of the Cinematographers of Tajikistan; La’le Badakhshan [The Ruby of Badakhshan] organisation chairman Amirbek Atobekov and others.

The position of Tajiki intellectuals and religious authority remains under pressure from two extreme positions, Islamist and communist. On the one hand, they were attacked by nationalists, a group strongly pushing national-racial and pre-Islamic values in the constitution of Tajik identity. On the other hand, they were attacked by religious groups who were strongly influenced by the ideologists of Islamic political movements of twentieth century, notably by H. Banna, S. A. Maududi, S. Qutb and R. M. Khomeini, and who have connections with "Kalashnikov cultures" (in Afghanistan, for instance). From another side again, in order to save their position communist extremists were in the process of creating dark others and separating one nation between "enemies and friends." The communists again showed that they are experienced and skillful in their use of the ancient rule of "divide and conquer."

Even today's regime in Tajikistan, with the support of many institutions and Tajik intellectuals, who, according to Foucault, "are themselves agents of this system of power,"<sup>27</sup> is continuing the process of the deconstruction of the true selfhood and trying to construct an identity for their people. The people who are in power are not acknowledging that in the domain of consciousness, language and culture the traditional values, ideas and ideals are in work and shaping the sign and symbols of this culture.

### Conclusion

In the attempts by politicians to separate the "religious" and the "national," we are witnessing in Tajikistan today the deconstruction of traditionally experienced ways of the figuring the Self (subjectivity) and creating a crisis of identity, which can lead to the following consequences:

- people are not able to face their own reality, and others will interpret their reality for them and represent them;
- the leaders who claim to be the "Moses of the nation" are the slaves of their desires and never gone through the process of the self-consciousness;
- in this context some groups will begin seeking "the enemies of the nation." They will create the them (dark others) if they do not exist;
- whole institutions and intellectuals seek to preserve power by weaving a myth of the "great nation," though in most civilized countries around the world people are resisting such "grant narratives";
- in this context human values, ideas, and ideals (no traditional and no modern-liberal) will not work. They are just a mask for the real behavior

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27. Michel Foucault, *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice, Selected Essays and Interviews*, Donald F. Bouchard, ed. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell Univ. Press, 1977), pp. 207-08.

of those who are following their passion and desires and creating false selves and false reality;

- people are not getting involved in politics and are not making history. For them, politics is “dirty,” though politics is closer to their existence than they might think.

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