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THE STEPPE IN  
HISTORY

Essays on a Eurasian Fringe

Suchandana Chatterjee

The Steppe deserves to be treated as a special category in Eurasian history not because of its Russianized environment but because of its Asiatic image. The spatiality of the Steppe has also received fair treatment in recent times. The present study deals with varied impressions about the Steppe domain. It takes into account interconnected aspects of Steppe history, highlighting features of Kazakh and Siberian domains that have relevance outside the Russian mould. The purpose has been to integrate intertwined histories of the two domains and indicate continuities and discontinuities of two overlapping strands of history-writing, Soviet and post-Soviet.

The study is concerned with both Soviet and post-Soviet approaches, the former expressing a predictable set of opinions and the latter questioning them. The stereotypical idea of the Steppe as a region that was the citadel of nomadic conquerors and barbaric raiders and distanced from the locus of imperial power tends to get replaced by positive images of the Steppe as an interactive space that lies on the south of Russia and overlaps with Mongolian and Chinese borderlands.

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