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The Revolt of the Basmachi According to Red Army Journals (1920–1922)

HELENE AYMEN DE LAGEARD

INTRODUCTION

The revolt of the Basmachi spread across Central Asia during a period of nearly ten years, 1918 to 1928. This article will not present a methodical step-by-step account, nor even a particular aspect of this movement, but is an analysis of three journals published by the Red Army in Tashkent in the early 1920s, which were never subjected to any form of study as they were not to be found in the West and were inaccessible in the Soviet Union.

These first-hand documents cover the three years, 1920 to 1922, which correspond with the arrival of Turkkommissiia in Turkestan, putting an end to the power of the Turksovnarkom and of the Red Army commanded by Frunze, as well as the most intense moments of the revolt of the Basmachi. The following journals are concerned:

Voennaia Mysl', "military and scientific" review published by the revolutionary military Soviet of the Turkestan front;
Kommunist, organ of the Turkestan office of the Russian Communist Party's Central Committee and of the Communist Party's Central Committee in Turkestan;
Voennyi Rabotnik Turkestana, published by the military council of editorial staff of the revolutionary military Soviet of the Turkestan front.

Those editions which were consulted were, unfortunately, not complete, and, in all, about sixty of the articles concern the Basmachi to a lesser or greater degree. These "technical" journals do not add new material to our present knowledge of the Basmachi; they do, however, shed light on the Russians' view at the time of the revolt, and draw a vivid and detailed picture of the Red Army's position in Turkestan, of the difficulties it encountered in the struggle against the Basmachi, and, on a more general level, the problems of the Russian forces in the region.

The difficulties of the Red Army and the weakness of the Russian forces is therefore exposed in black and white, and this in itself constitutes the major interest of these journals, whose tone and purpose would never be recovered — for good reason — afterwards.

The first part of this study is devoted to the way in which the Russians regarded the rebels, and the second part to the struggle they had against them, firstly on a military level, then on an ideological level.

THE ORIGIN OF THE BASMACHI MOVEMENT

At the beginning of the 1920s, these journals did not consider the rising of the Basmachi to be a major event. It was thought to be a direct result of the civil war. There is no thorough article devoted solely to the study of its origins and its appearance in 1918 under the guise of a vast resistance movement conducted against the new Russian power.

Two articles would have the origin of the Basmachi go back to the Russian colonisation and to the economic upheavals which thereby resulted, partly because of the extension of the culture of cotton in the second half of the 19th century.[1] P. Baranov estimates that the arrival of the Russian capital in Turkestan corresponds to the transition from a natural economy to a capitalist economy.[2] The extension of the culture of cotton brought about the destruction of traditional agriculture and impoverishment of the peasants deprived of land to benefit large exploitations; whereas the craftsmen were ruined by the importation of goods manufactured in Russia. In 1922, G. Skalov wrote:

> The Basmachi movement is above all the result of the collision between a closed economy and the relatively developed lines of an economy of change.[3]

The ruin of a part of the population generated very great discontent amongst the Muslim clergy when confronted with Russian settlers. These sentiments soon found expression in revolts which were part of the religious war. Now most of these revolts (that is those of 1878, 1882, 1885, 1893 and 1898), as G. Skalov judiciously noted, took place in the region of Margelan and Andijan where the intensive culture of cotton was introduced.[4] Nevertheless, despite the allusion to a religious war, he never emphasised the religious and national aspect of these revolts. For these two authors, whose ideas were permeated with Marxism, the economic argument prevails, and leads us into thinking of the Basmachi more as rebels than as "bandits".

Their appearance in 1918 is associated with the economic ruin of Turkestan after the revolution. Thus Dervish mentions the terrible cattle plague which decimated nearly 60% of the Kirghiz livestock

and which aggravated the poverty of the nomads. However, he does not mention the big revolt of 1916 and the buying up of grazing land for Russian farmers. On the other hand, he does describe the reduction in the cultivated area of cotton plantations in Ferghana, which fell from 60,000 desiatinas (land measure equal to 2.7 acres) before the revolution to 45,000 in 1921, bringing about the bankruptcy of all the owners.[5]

B. Lavrenev[6] and G. Skalov throw a different light on the economic causes of the Basmachi rising. They recall that Turkestan found herself totally isolated from the summer of 1918 to the autum of 1919, because the troops of Ataman Dutov occupied Orenburg, thereby cutting off all communication with Russia. It was therefore impossible to export the cotton, whereas the bringing in of corn from the centre, which was cruelly lacking, was blocked (no doubt there would have been other means to stop it). Famine came on top of economic ruin. Tens of thousands of peasants, ruined and starving, came to swell the ranks of the Basmachi. P. Baranov described the situation:

> In 1917, a lot of cotton was sewn in a large part of the lands of the Transcaspian *Oblast'*, and naturally a terrible famine came because of the lack of corn, resulting in the formation of the front of White Guards. In reality, they had become White during the struggle against the Bolsheviks. When it appeared, it was a popular movement against the Bolsheviks who were in power at that time; but its appearance was solely because the local population had not understood the reasons behind such a situation. Turkestan had undergone a serious economic crisis. A mass of small owners had gone bankrupt, the economic way of life had been totally ruined, and, in 1918, on top of this foundation of economic disintegration appeared the Basmachi movement.[7]

However, if the economic causes were for the most part put forward, they were not the only ones to contribute to the growth of the Basmachi movement. V. Kuvshinov noted three others:

> (a) The difficult living conditions, result of the imperialist war which had augmented the discontent amongst the workers.
> (b) The absence of individual security and the lack of political work, which was indispensible during the first months of the Revolution, and which had led the population into thinking of the Basmachi movement as a natural phenomenon.
> (c) The lack of political tact, and sometimes the abuse of certain representatives of power.[8]

This last point, which was approached in an elliptical way, was taken up again by G. Skalov and Dervish. Both men questioned the "colonialist" politics and abuse of the Tashkent Soviet, which became the Council of Commissars of the People of Turkestan" (Turksovnarkom), as well as the atrocities committed by the militia of the Armenian party, the *Dashnaktsutun*, on encountering the Muslims.[9] G. Skalov did not name the Tashkent Soviet, and used the expression "Russo-Armenian group coloniser". On the other hand, Dervish,

whose real name was Tiurakulov and who was president of the Central Executive Committee of the Republic of Turkestan, denounced these crimes a lot more explicitly since he was more directly concerned:

> The colonisers and the *dashnaks* [the Armenian nationalists] have decided to openly conduct a nationalist policy which has been expressed in the form of acts of pillage and banditry. . . It was a very sad time in the history of the *oblast'*, when the Russian power was represented by an international band of colonisers, of *dashnaks* and of native parasites.[10]

Furthermore, Dervish attributed the causes of the uprising of the Basmachi in Kirghiz to the "Kulak Terror", alluding to all the heinous acts perpetrated by the Russian settlers against the Kirghiz." Dervish was therefore the only person to place the Basmachi in a context of resistance against oppression. As for the others, this aspect was completely left in the shadows whilst purely economic causes were emphasised; and the revolt of the Basmachi would always be assimilated into a counter-revolutionary front.

THE SOCIAL COMPOSITION, THE NATURE AND THE OBJECTIVES OF THE BASMACHI

This question appears to be confusing at best. Four articles present four different points of view; and this tends to prove that, at the beginning of the 1920s, not only was the Russian power not master of the situation, but it was also troubled by this enemy, which was nothing like the troops of Wrangel, Kolchak or Dutov. We shall cite the articles in chronological order to emphasise better the surprising mis-reading of its adversary by the Soviet power.

In 1920, V. Kuvshinov described several *kurbashis* [see glossary].[12] Irgash [see Biographical Notes], who fought in the name of Islam, he wrote, was known for his blinkered views and for his stupidity. The slogans of Madamin Bek [see Biographical Notes] were summed up in the following words: "The struggle against the Russian regime and the autonomy of Ferghana", and had strong pan-Islamic undertones. Finally, "the representative of the true Basmachi movement, the brigand Khal Hodja [see Biographical Notes], is a complete degenerate". Sadly the author does not tell us the source of his information. If the defence of Islam mobilised the Basmachi, on the other hand V. Kuvshinov overestimated the pan-Islamic tendencies. In the same number of *Voennaia mysl'*, an indication of the nature of the revolt was given:

> At the present time, the Basmachi movement is a movement which is deprived of all national spirit. It is in fact a movement which, under a pseudo-national aspect, is based on the religious fanaticism of the masses, and which is politically counter-revolutionary.[13]

The author insisted on the religious aspect, but more than that, and nearly despite himself, on the national character of the revolt. G. Skalov referred again to the economy in order to define the nature and objectives of the Basmachi of Ferghana:

> By its very nature, the Basmachi movement has not only been directed against Russian authority, which is to install a Communist regime, but also against a capitalist economy of exchange. This movement expresses above all an inclination to restore a natural economy, and, which is most interesting, in more developed ways than before the Russian conquest. All the *kurbashi* were more or less powerful feudal men who had established hierarchical relations, more or less anarchical, amongst themselves. The most powerful divided Ferghana amongst themselves, and each one tried to organise the economy of his fief, applying himself to either the irrigation or the sowing of seed in the countryside (to which were sometimes applied orders from the Russian authorities) or to the harvests, paying taxes to the population and providing them, when necessary, with agricultural material and seeds (Israil, Parpi, Ismail Kurbashi, etc...).[14]

Such utterances are surprising from several points of view, and in the first place by the flattering, not to say idyllic portrait, which he gave of the Basmachi leaders. We are a long way away from the fanatical bandit normally presented. Added to which, the author was mistaken in part as to the social composition of the *kurbashi*.[15]

In 1922, that is four years after the beginning of the revolt, one finds a small sentence which summarised the perplexity of the Red Army, in the journal *Voennyi rabotnik Turkestana:*

> Even though the struggle against the Basmachi does not date from yesterday, a lot of the Red commanders do not always know precisely who they are, what the movement is, or what the cause is of this scourge of Ferghana.[16]

Right at the beginning of the 1920s, the Russians were not clear against whom they were fighting. But it did not matter who the enemy was as long as the number of counter-revolutionaries was reduced.

THE MILITARY ORGANISATION AND TACTICS OF THE BASMACHI

Those who wrote in these journals were clearly more at ease when describing the organisation and tactics, simple compared with those of other enemies, of the Basmachi of Ferghana.[17] The Basmachi regrouped themselves in "bands" which depended on the authority of a military leader called a *kurbashi*.[18] No writer asked about the social composition of these bands, nor about the family ties, tribal or otherwise, which might govern the relations between Basmachi leaders and their men. Even less was there a question about the true internal organisation, which seems to be totally unknown. On the other hand, the rivalry between the Basmachi leaders was very well known:

> Each band only obeyed its own *kurbashi*, and these very *kurbashi* did not cease quarrelling and did not hesitate to betray each other for a large sum of money.[19]

The Russians therefore had to deal with a divided resistance, which was a positive element for them. In 1918 and 1919, several *kurbashi* tried in vain to co-ordinate and unify the movement:

> At the beginning of 1919, Madamin Bek, who was trying to centralise power into his own hands, came up against Irgash, who was conducting operations in the *uezd* of Kokand. A skirmish followed and it was only chance that saved Irgash from defeat.[20]

Thus, the Red Army was informed of what was happening in the enemy camp. In Ferghana, the Red Army never had to fight big battles as it was dealing with what we would call today a band of guerillas. The actions of the Basmachi consisted for the most part of quick raids where surprise was used to effect and which were carried out in groups numbering twenty to two or three hundred extremely mobile horsemen, who, as soon as the attack had been made, escaped.[21]

> The Basmachi tactics are the customary tactics of all oriental people. They consist of rapid and violent raids and they show themselves to be audacious and impertinent when they are great in number, and when the opposite is the case, they flee in panic like animals.[22]

The Basmachi targets were the unity of the Red Army, and the secondary railway lines (the main lines being well protected as they connected the towns, the one place where Soviet power was really effective).[23] They applied themselves also to "the destruction of the economic bases of the *oblast*'",[24] particularly by "burning the tools of production".[25] The activity of the Basmachi was particularly intense in the summer, whereas operations were far more rare in the winter.[26] Between 1918 and 1921, certain groups went over to the Soviet side, not by conviction but in order to:

> (a) rest, increase their military strength and repair their equipment;
> (b) arm themselves and take munitions from us, infiltrate spies into our general staff and our organisations.[27]

In Ferghana, at Bukhara and in the Turkmen country, the rebels were effectively using espionage.[28]

> Without anything to distinguish them on the outside, clothed in the same way as the peaceful population, they were all round our units, not hesitating to infiltrate, and unrecognisable and elusive, they devoted themselves to espionage that has no equal, whose network extends from the Afghan frontier to Tashkent. The knowledge they have of our activity is sometimes amazing.[29]

Of course, the Red Army had the Cheka at its disposition. However, the rebels had a disadvantage of major importance: their arma-

ments could not bear any comparison with those of the Red Army. The carbine was the weapon most available to them,[30] and B. Lavrenev stressed that they were excellent marksmen.[31] The use of the grenade is also mentioned.[32] As soon as the fight went to their advantage, they captured machine-guns from the Red Army, but they did not actually own any themselves. Before the arrival of the Red Army, this weapon was unknown in Central Asia. It was so frightening to the Basmachi that they called it *sheitan mashinka*.[33] Always, there were certain rebels who did not possess any weapons at all.[34] Most of the time they procured their weapons by buying them.

> Many of their agents, furnished with considerable financial means, tried to buy as many weapons as possible. The sale of arms is an evil in Turkestan which goes back a long way; and which is not about to end as was recently proved by a certain Vidmar, who was shot for having sold arms to the Basmachi.[35]

In 1920, the Soviet authorities took measures to regulate the traffic of arms, and this obstructed the rebels:

> In the spring of 1920, the conduct of the business of buying and selling arms, as well as their protection, was transferred from the revolutionary military Soviet to the revolutionary military tribunal. This step was dictated by reality, as it was at this time that there was an increase in the sale of arms to Persia, Afghanistan, Bukhara and the Basmachi.[36]

Unfortunately, there is no article to be found which would allow us to judge the efficacy of these measures.

At Bukhara, the Basmachi were partisans of the last Emir, Said Alim Khan, who fled to the eastern part of the emirate when the Bukharan "revolution" took place in August 1920.

> Our second adversary, the survivors of the bands of the Emir of Bukhara, has an identical character except that it has the rudiments of order, tactics, discipline and better armaments.[37]

The author concluded on the subject of Basmachi tactics generally with the following words:

> These adversaries are not to be despised. Where their Asian tactics are concerned, they are courageous and are a serious adversary, particularly if they are successful in the first moments of battle.[38].

Meanwhile, these "Asian" tactics undermined the powerful Red Army to the point where the Basmachi, less numerous and badly armed, held them at bay for nearly ten years, another illustration of the difficulties encountered by a classical army up against a band of guerillas.

HELP FROM ABROAD

The revolt of the Basmachi reached a magnitude never to be equalled

in 1922, stimulated by the arrival of Enver Pasha at Bukhara in November 1921; he had been sent by Moscow to the rebels on a mission of peace, but joined their side. Seconded by Turkish officers who were under his orders at Constantinople, he hoped to found a large Turkish Muslim state in Central Asia, and counted on using the uprising of the Basmachi for his own ends. He undertook, without great success, to unite under his direction all the rebel leaders, in order to co-ordinate the action under one single command. In the spring of 1922, the forces of Enver Pasha (nearly 20,000 men) controlled the whole of the eastern part of Bukhara, as well as a large part of the ex-emirate. Throughout, he did not manage to obtain the support of the Muslim masses towards his pan-Islamic and pan-Turkic plan. On 4 August 1922, he fell under the fire of the Red Army, while the survivors of his general staff and several Basmachi leaders flew into Afghanistan. This new menace, coming from a man enjoying great prestige in the Muslim world, worried the Soviet authorities, who tried in vain to negotiate in April 1922. An article which appeared a month later in the review *Kommunist* gives its view of the situation:

> What will be the outcome of this enterprise? From a military point of view, there can only be one opinion, that the large Soviet Federation which knew how to contain the English and French attack when fighting Denikin, Kolchak and Wrangel, is strong enough to destroy the enterprise of Enver Pasha. It can be seen that his forces are not large enough, nor would be so after the holding at bay of his attempt to mobilise a part of the Basmachi in Ferghana to augment his side. . . . It is not the military aspect of this affair which makes us worry, it is more the political aspect. . . In effect, the past glory of Enver as man of the Muslim State, can still attract crowds of ignorant *dehqans* [see glossary] in some remote regions today.[39]

Another article gives the impression that in the *oblast'* of Sarmarkand the revolt took place because of the influence of Enver.[40] Thus, in 1922, the Soviets perceived a very clear aggravation of the situation.

> Moreover, the present political situation in Turkestan, where the interminable civil war has resulted in famine in Ferghana, the reinforcement of the Basmachi movement and its extension into the Samarkand and other regions, has become particularly tense due to the appearance of Enver Pasha in the eastern part of Bukhara.[41]

More than a potential danger to the Soviet authorities, Enver Pasha seemed especially like an agent of French imperialism and more particularly British, as the following extract witnessed:

> The socialist republics of Central Asia are facing a new venture from the Imperial English, connected this time with the name of Enver Pasha . . . Enver has the insolence to address the Soviet Federation with propositions which are visibly dictated by Lloyd George and Barthou.[42]

Further on the author confirmed that the British used Enver Pasha to open a new front in Central Asia. The provenance of Enver's military material was given as tangible proof of the British hope:

> In fact, the military authorities have discovered amongst the bands of Enver Pasha's men carbines and English equipment which has obviously been brought in via Afghanistan.[43]

Afghanistan is the second country accused of supplying aid to the Basmachi, and her role was not restricted to being merely a transmission belt for the British.

> Here is some concrete evidence of the participation of Afghanistan: during the fighting in the eastern part of Bukhara, we made some Afghan prisoners. Amongst the remains of the dead left on the battle fields there were also many Afghans to be found. Enver's troops were always revitalised with British munitions. The dead have Afghan passports in the eastern part of Bukhara. Enver's letters which we intercepted complain of the inefficacy of the aid, and ask to be able to hide in Afghanistan should there be failure. We discovered an organisation in the eastern part of Bukhara which is supporting the Basmachi and which is closely connected with the Afghan Embassy: the Afghan ambassador was summoned by the Bukhara government and asked to leave this territory.[44]

Further on, moreover, we learn that the Afghan ambassador was involved in a plot against the Bukhara government. Some Afghans were definitely fighting there on the side of the Basmachi, in order to make holy war against the Russians; and for what better reason as the Soviet-Afghan treaty of 1921 stipulated the complete independence of the Popular Socialist Republic of Bukhara. But the reason for Afghan support of the rebels was explained with the following:

> In 1918, Afghanistan waged an unsuccessful war against England, in order to consolidate its position. This unfortunate war deprived Afghanistan of the hope of augmenting her territory on the southern frontier, and it is why her attention is now turned towards Bukhara and Turkestan. However, the Afghan army is incapable of fighting against a regular army, and her defeats on the Indian front prove it. On the other hand, the present political situation in Bukhara favours successful operations. Thus, we have the following picture: Afghanistan concentrates troops at the frontier, without knowing what they are going to do, and helps the insurrectional movement as much as possible.[45]

This same article also pointed out that Abdul-Hamid Arifov commissioner for the defence of Bukhara, who went over to the side of the rebels, "is on his way to Paris to lead a campaign against Russian power in the East".[46]

Contrary to Russian views help from abroad appeared to be very minimal, and these journals took this into account up until the event of the defection of Enver Pasha. It should also be noted that these journals kept silent on the arrival at Bukhara in June 1920 of a person just as influential as Enver Pasha, the Bashkir Nationalist leader Zeki Validov, who joined the Basmachi.

THE SUPPORT OF THE POPULATION

The early 1920s was an extremely troubled period for Turkestan and the attitude of the Muslim population towards the Basmachi is witness to this confusion. Russian authority was really only present in the towns, while in the villages where the old life went on it was often not known who the Bolsheviks were.[47] The population was, on the one hand, a victim of the atrocities committed by the Red Army (especially that of the Turksovnarkom), and, on the other hand, suffered the acts of brigandage of certain bands of Basmachi, and did not hesitate to ally itself momentarily with the Red Army in order to fight them. But as a general rule it adopted a "benevolent neutrality",[48] which made the task of the Red Army difficult. Thus, in 1920:

> Some extremely mobile bands made some surprise raids and departed again to hide themselves without fighting. The sympathy shown by the native population towards the Basmachi complicates the struggles to an extreme.[49]

> Two years later the situation was exactly the same: The superiority of the Basmachi over us is due to their incomparable knowledge of the terrain, to their elusive quality and the complicity of one part of the population.[50]

Although it was a question of "sympathy" and "complicity" towards the rebels for some writers, other articles evoke the hostility of the population towards the Bolsheviks and the Red Army.

> We are not dealing with an enemy which is organised for fighting, but with the population itself which is hostile towards Russian authority; as a result of its politics, it sees the ruin of its economic life, and is not able to understanding the causes which have led Ferghana to her ruin. . . The whole of Ferghana is in a similar situation, each *Kishlak* [see Glossary], each *izba* is a certain refuge for the Basmachi because the population is completely hostile to Russian authority.[51]

The population in Bukhara was also manifesting the same sentiment, quoted here at the time of the expedition of Hissar in February 1921 against the Emir's troops:

> The attitude of the population regarding the Red Army, thought to be a strange army with another faith and another nationality, was hostile enough. The decomposition of our units only served to reinforce this hostility.[52]

Often peasants by day and rebels by night, the Basmachi were the expression of a spontaneous revolt by the population against the atrocities committed against it and the violence perpetrated against Islam. The hostility manifested by the population was the same as that which was entertained against the Russian settlers before the Revolution.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE REVOLT

As with its origin, the consequences of the Basmachi movement were interpreted from a strict economic point of view and which ended in the ruin of the economy and the disorganisation of the productive machinery; even if the movement was not the major reason.

> The break for nearly two years in the economic ties with Russia, the Basmachi movement in the *oblast'* of Samarkand and Ferghana, the White fronts which have created an impregnable cordon around the Republic at the time of the Civil War, the catastrophic cattle plague due to the terrible djuta [see Glossary] are the causes of the decline in agriculture in Turkestan.[53]

V. Kuvshinov shared the same analysis, and added that every blow aimed at economic life in Ferghana, large producer of cotton and of agricultural products, had repercussions on the whole of Turkestan.[54] Consequently, the Basmachi were responsible for the downfall of the Turkestan economy, as the revolt first burst out in Ferghana. A third article, however, also insisted on the role played by local causes:

> Apart from a general financial crisis, industry and commerce in Turkestan are victims of purely local causes, which reside in the Basmachi movement, the belated and insufficient application of the NEP. . . and in a lack of funds which is particularly important.[55]

It is altogether remarkable that none of these articles should dwell on the underlying causes of the uprising, or on the eventual consequences. But, the Basmachi were thought to be counter-revolutionaries, who, once crushed, would be destroyed forever. That is why these military reviews, mouthpiece for a strong and enthusiastic Red Army in its mission to bring peace and to sovietise, undertook no serious analysis whatsoever of its adversary, condemned to disappear.

I. THE STRUGGLE AGAINST THE BASMACHI

THE MILITARY STRUGGLE

1920 was the year when a radical change in Soviet power took place in Turkestan. The brutal and colonialist policy of the Turksovnarkom, thus alienating the Muslim allegiances irremediably, was a real threat to the establishing of Soviet power in Central Asia. Once communication had been re-established with the centre, the government in Moscow sent a special commission to Tashkent, which was ordered by Lenin to rally the Muslim masses to the new regime and restore order. The Turkkommissiia, comprising six members, was to exert supreme power over the Communist Party and the government. The commissions arrived in Tashkent in November 1919, followed by the

Red Army led by Frunze, also a member of the Turkkommissiia. The Turksovnarkom only had the Red Army of Turkestan available, which was created on 27 May 1918 and whose soldiers were recruited from amongst the Russian labourers of Tashkent. It also benefited from the services of the militia of the Dashnaktsütün party. The Turkkommissiia, on the other hand, had at its command a powerful, well-trained, well-armed and disciplined army and possessed a considerable trump card: units of Muslim Tatars and Bashkirs. Between 1920 and 1923, the total strength of the Red Army was between 120,000 and 160,000 men, comprising 30,000 Muslim soldiers and 350 officers.[56]

And yet, despite this extremely strong force, the Red Army had many difficulties in defeating the rebels, and was confronted by multiple problems whose echo can be found in these journals.

THE PROBLEMS OF ORGANISATION

The Red Army had to face a completely new type of adversary, and on several occasions the question of adequate organisation came up. In September 1920, a first article questioned the bad general organisation of the Red Army.[57] A second article declared that, in order to fight effectively against the Basmachi, the organisation of the army units had to be reinforced.[58] V. Kuvshinov himself stated, but without going into any detail, that after January 1920, the Ferghana units were reorganised.[59]

When Muslims were conscripted for military service in 1920, the Red Army was confronted with a new problem:

> The government of the Republic of Turkestan has just called up the whole of the country's population to join the Red Army, and from now on it will no longer be only the foreign European population doing its service under the red flags, but also the aborigines of the country — the whole of the indigenous population of the Republic, who, until now, has not served in the ranks of the army.

The author then proposed using in a rational sense the "aborigines" when considering the question of "the natural qualities" of each ethnic group.[61] One year later, this same author brought the Muslim conscripts under consideration again, but this time from a social angle:

> We must also concentrate all our efforts to make it as easy as possible to achieve this obligation, and render a simple and agreeable service capable of bringing together the nationalities in Turkestan, without, however, disturbing the family economy, nor breaking the ties between the soldiers and their family and relations.[62]

> His advice even covered an unexpected aspect: Even the equipment should totally correspond with the customs of the Turkestan population, as it would be very hard for servicemen to have to cope for a relatively short period of time. We are thinking particularly of the clothing called "aurat" which completely covers the body from the middle of the stomach to the knees.[63]

Such solicitude is very surprising, and one could ask oneself in what way the Muslims responded to conscription which probably reminded them of the big revolt in 1916, and its bloody repression. And, the eventual prospect at having to fight against their co-religionist Basmachi must have made this new obligation difficult to accept. The author insisted as well on the racist feelings of the Russian soldier where the Muslim conscripts were concerned.[64] Conscription for the natives must truly have posed quite a few problems; in the same review number, an article talks of the reorganisation of the office of recruitment, in which at least one Muslim had to work.[65]

In 1921, P. Baranov laconically indicated the reorganisation of the officer corps, and the exclusion of the officers of war-time. No doubt he is referring to the officers who served under the old regime.[66]

THE PROBLEMS OF ADAPTATION

In Turkestan, the Red Army was disoriented: its adversary was not a classical army applying conventional strategy, but consisted of "bands" practising guerilla tactics. The geographical conditions were also new, the Red Army had to adapt to the desert and mountains. B. Lavrenev therefore stated that the conditions under which the war took place the soldier who was used to fighting in Russia was at a disadvantage and he was likely to commit involuntary mistakes.[67]

However, if the mountains and desert were irksome for the men, the staging of military convoys proved to be an insurmountable problem. A convoy was mandatory during a campaign for provisions, munitions and forage. When convoys were insufficient, requistions had to be made from the villages, which in turn provoked the hostility of the population, as was the case during the failed expedition of Hissar against the Emir of Bukhara.[68] In mountainous regions the carts had difficulty in negotiating the paths, whereas in the desert the wheels got stuck in the sand, and water for the cart animals to drink was scarce.[69] Generally, the Red Army used the railway for its military convoys; however, in the case of expeditions to far-out places, the train was obviously out of the question. The author suggested, therefore, implicitly to resort, like the natives, to camels, of which he lengthily extolled the merits, or to yaks or donkeys, and to use the traditional *arbas* (see Glossary).

The second constraint geographically was in the ignorance of the terrain. B. Lavrenev showed that the Red Army did not have enough precise maps available, nor sufficient mountain guides.[70] M. Shkliar deplored, on top of this, the incompetence of the interpreters.[71] Thus, there was a whole period when the Red Army, in touch with a new reality, had to adapt to it.

THE SEARCH FOR TACTICS AND THE GOOD USE OF ARMS

Until 1920, the Turksovnarkom, having burnt its fingers with its failures, attempted to scotch the Basmachi revolt by way of negotiation. The success of this venture would have been doubly beneficial for the Soviet authorities: the rallying of the rebels would have given a certain prestige, both regional and international, and it would have avoided economic disorder. The Russians, therefore, went into parleys with the kurbashi, even with those who did not have much experience of actual command.[72] A few Basmachi leaders went over to the Russian side, and were incorporated into the first brigade of the Cavaleri Uzbek.

> On 31 January, Majkham Hodja, Akbar Ali and their band came over to our side, thus making a total of six hundred armed Basmachi and two thousand unarmed. On 2 February, Parpi and his men, about three hundred Basmachi, did the same.[73]

Dervish also says that Djani Bek (see Bibliographical Notes) changed sides.[74]

These rallyings of men were based on a total misunderstanding, because the rebels were acting in terms of a temporary and tactical compromise.[75] Some of the *kurbashi*, such as Djunaid Khan, even profited from the negotiations by setting traps for the Russians,[76] whereas others were constrained by circumstances:

> At the beginning of 1919, Madamin Bek, who wanted to centralise power into his own hands, ran up against Irgash, who was leading operations in the *uezd* of Kokand. A skirmish followed, and only luck saved Irgash from defeat. At this time, a Turktsik commission had been set up in Ferghana in order to liquidate the Basmachi movement in a peaceful manner. Irgash could do no more unless he submitted to Madamin, or else treated with the commission, which he did.[77]

He went back to the resistance not long afterwards. In 1920, his rival Madamin also signed a peace treaty with the Russians, only to return to the side of the rebels a few months later.

In 1921, the Turkkomissiia put a stop to these aberrant alliances and betrayals:

> . . . one of the previous means used, the admission of the *kurbashi* and their followers into the Russian army, even into the militia, is now definitely out of the question; and partial retreats are only allowed in exceptional circumstances, and solely with the agreement of the centre.[78]

It did not seem very clear what was meant by the term "partial retreats". Could these defections be thus qualified?

The Red Army, determined under the orders of Frunze to fight a merciless battle against the rebels, tried to put appropriate tactics into practice. Between 1920 and 1922, an impression of tentativeness came from these journals, which translated into the search for pinpoint tactics, as for example the said tactic of "filtering", or placing an advantageous line of battle in order to push the Basmachi back against a mountain when the passes were closed.[79] This tactic, based on the big lines of battle, never brought any success; and it was decided to use smaller units which were much more mobile, and therefore, adapted better to the enemy and the terrain. After this hiccup, Frunze managed to find a tactic which proved to be effective, and in which the Muslim units played an important role.[80]

In addition to the crushing superiority in numbers, the Red Army had another advantage over the Basmachi. It possessed better performing and more modern weapons than the carbines and grenades of the rebels: machine-guns and aviation. Moreover, the machine-gun was particularly respected by these latter:

> The *Sheitan-mashinka*[81] has become a veritable bogey-man to our Turkestan enemy, who have an aversion to it. When the enemy is ten times more numerous than us, the skilful and opportune use of the machine-gun makes the result of the fight come out in our favour.[82]

> The shooting techniques are thus appreciated:
> They are frightened of well-aimed and sustained shooting. . . a nervous and unregulated fire, a shot in the air does not frighten the Basmachi; it even reinforces their audacity. Shooting by salvo has no effect whatsoever, as they are excellent shots themselves; they replied to questions concerning our shooting that they were indifferent to our salvos.[83]

When the army had to fight in Muslim villages, instructions were given to minimise the damage and losses:

> When attacking a village, it is hoped that first of all they will be frightened by artillery fire. Broken down walls and *saklias* [see Glossary] must not be attacked, but the flank and back the *kishlak* may be by a cross-fire. Only occupy the *kishlak* if it is indispensable to its defence.[84]

Aviation had a very reduced role. Moreover, there were few aeroplanes and even fewer airports. The Muslim population nick-named the aeroplanes, which they had not seen before, *sheitan arba*.[85] In 1920, the number of flying hours for the whole of Turkestan rose to 493.[86] The role of aviation was divided between two axes, the Trans-

caspian region and the Ferghana.

> Krasnovodsk has fallen. The merits of aviation have rightfully been noticed by the commanders. But the aircraft did not remain inactive for long, and soon had new tasks: the struggle against the Basmachi in the mountainous part of Ferghana, and the liaison with the farthest parts of Turkestan.[87]

In Ferghana, aircraft were particularly used in reconnaissance missions, often inconclusive, or again as demonstrations of force:

> The enemy operations, customarily led by small groups of horsemen having the facility to melt in with the population, make these reconnaissance missions extremely difficult. . . The throwing of bombs and machine-gun fire are only used rarely, and are essentially a visual means of demonstration to exert pressure on the morale of the enemy. The targets envisaged in both cases are the groups of twenty to thirty horsemen and small convoys.[88]

Meanwhile, the reconnaissance missions had a technical difficulty:

> Given the partisan character of the Basmachi action, it is extremely difficult to make reconnaissance missions and fight against them, as the aircraft have to descend to a low altitude in order to sustain brisk fire.[89]

Added to which, the Basmachi understood very quickly which altitude they should adopt:

> As soon as an aeroplane appeared, the Basmachi bands dispersed instantly right up to the moment of opening fire.[90]

Thus, aviation, which should have been a major trump card, proved to be useless. It seems that the Russians might have been able to bombard enemy positions; but, on the contrary, At Tasin says that in 1920, nearly 410 kilos of propaganda were dropped. Unfortunately, no additional detail is furnished as to the content of the brochures (they must have been tracts) or the frequency of this type of operation; this could not have had great importance due to the shortage of paper in Central Asia at this time.

THE MATERIAL PROBLEM AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

Since 1920, the most frequently evoked problem was that of provisions. During the second meeting of the military commissions of the Turkestan front, it was noted that there was little ordinary meat, and that tobacco was of very bad quality.[91] The Red Army could not supply itself with fresh provisions from Russia, which was too far away and also a victim of famine, and so had to requisition its necessities from the peasants.

> The revolution had a pressing need for foodstuffs. Bread and meat could only be had from the indigenous peasants.[92]

The government of the Republic of Turkestan was therefore forced to "set aside" the agricultural produce which it could not afford to buy.

> Due to lack of money, the livestock were taken from the populace by making out a very succinct inventory, for example: "one black cow was taken on behalf of the third company, from Mahmudjanov. Signed, artillaryman Ivanov," on bits of paper which the populace later showed in order to be reimbursed.[93]

Already in 1919, the Turksovnarkom had instigated the State's monopoly on wheat, thereby beginning the cooperation between the Basmachi of Madamin Bek and the peasant army of the Russian settlers to attempt its abolition. In March 1921, as in Russia, a "tax in nature" was established, a modest term evoking the requisitions the peasants were obliged to provide.

> Absolutely indispensable, this system of setting aside started a discontent amongst the peasantry, and prevented the Russian power from organising the large masses of working *dehqans* and served as a pretext for all sorts of provocations against the Russian power. Added to which, the system of setting aside of agricultural produce brought a big disadvantage to the development of agriculture, pushing the *dehqan* to reduce the seeded area of land simply because of lack of interest on his part.[94]

The presence of the Red Army in Turkestan represented an additional heavy load for the peasantry, in conditions which were already bordering on famine,[95] and the requisitions only served to reinforce the hostility felt towards the Russians.

The soldiers were not only badly fed, but it also seems that their equipment was far from being perfect. For example, boots were theoretically made to be worn for four months, but only lasted two to three months in summer and one to three weeks in winter, as they weres made of local leather.[96] One can easily imagine the adminstrative problems resulting from the bad quality of boots!

In addition to these material difficulties, the Red Army had to cope with the climate: its ranks were ravaged by malaria.[97]

One last point, and not the least important, horses were a source of worry. In 1921, the "workers of the equine section" painted an eloquent picture of the situation:

> The speakers denounced with one voice the difficult conditions in which they worked, in corners which were sometimes a distance of more than eighty-five *versts* from the next village. The lack of forage and absence of co-ordination in provisioning are sources of constant anguish when the fate of State property is concerned. Steps have to be taken which border on heroism that the horses might not die from hunger or illness, and an important part of the day is lost in running to the right and to the left in the hope of finding forage.[98]

It appears that the Basmachi also stole horses that were destined for the Red Army, if one can judge by the quasi ultimatum of

Turkbiuro addressed to the Revolutionary Council of the Turkestan Front demanding the protection of horses against the Basmachi.[99] In attacking the horses, a task which was seemingly easy given the isolation of the centres of horse-breeding, the rebels put a serious obstacle in the way of military operations.

The Red Army lived in miserable conditions. In 1922, the Central Executive Committee of the Republic of Turkestan created a permanent commission made up of responsible men in civil and military organisations, who were ordered to ameliorate the soldiers' lot.[100]

The month of April was declared "the month of the Red Army", in order to accomplish the following tasks:

(1) Ameliorate the material situation of the Red Army.
(2) Ameliorate the daily life of the invalids of the civil war and the imperial war, and to bring real help.
(3) Help the ill or wounded soldier.
(4) Attend to the families of soldiers.[101]

The commission also asked that efforts be made for forage and provisions. This same article states that a system for allotments was established to be made available to all the soldiers. Perhaps this was an attempt to compensate for the deficiency in provisions.

No information is to be had at all on the conditions of accommodation. One can, however, imagine without too much difficulty that they would have been precarious.

THE PROBLEMS OF DISCIPLINE

The Red Army, which was created in 1918 by the Turksovnarkom, committed a great number of atrocities against the Muslims. The sacking of Kokand is one of the bloodiest examples. In 1921, G. Safarov, who was sent as observer by Lenin to Central Asia, denounced the troops of the Turksovnarkom:

> At this time, the Red Army recruited to a large degree from the lower classes, as is shown at Kokand and Bukhara by the pogroms, and elsewhere, by drunkeness, pillage and acts of brigandage.[102]

B. Lavrenev reported on this subject:

> The exploits of Gerzhod[103] and similar men have had the effect that, in the steppes of Kirghizia and in Ferghana, the word "Bolshevik" produces panic amongst the population.[104]

The Red Guard Militia also perpetrated numerous crimes.[105]

The Russian Red Army commanded by Frunze, which was a lot more disciplined and charged with a mission of bringing peace, behaved less wildly, but there were always a few "smudges", severely

reprimanded:

> In the heart of the Red Army, a struggle was also taking place against rapists. . . At the 1920 assizes, an end was put to violations and extortions committed by the Red Army in the *otdel'* [see Glossary] of Amu Darya. Two cases were organised in the place of the ex-Khan of Khiva, at which were present a large number of Turkmen and Uzbeks. The accused, who belonged to the commanding officers of the troops of Amu Darya, were condemned to death.[106]

The presence of numerous Turkmen and Uzbeks during the case makes one think that the victims' parents were there or even Muslims who wanted justice to be done; therefore, the severity of the punishment was exemplary. The Red Army of the Turkkomissiia was expecting to re-establish its respectable image, little altered by the many atrocities committed by the troops of the Turksovnarkom.

The guerilla tactics used by the Basmachi rarely mobilised the soldiers into heavy battles, at least in Ferghana; and they were often left with nothing to do, in unenviable conditions, in a country where there were few distractions for soldiers, who were foreigners in the large majority. The journals reflect a certain amount of boredom amongst the men, as well as a slackening in the general behaviour of the troops.

> When arriving at a unit of men, everyone is playing at heads or tails or cards, and the political militants close their eyes to it for the most part, or else join in themselves with these games. When one says to the soldiers: "This is not good, comrades", they reply with these exact words: "We are bored, there is nothing to do, there are no books, no newspapers, no clubs." One remembers in fact with what pleasure our soldiers of the Red Army invaded the reading room which had been organised in a poor little village — they immediately sat down and played heads and tails or four hundred and twenty-one![107]

Finally, desertions seemed to have been important enough, as commissions existed at all levels charged with studying this phenomenon.[108]

THE RESEARCH INTO THE REASONS FOR FAILURE

Right at the beginning of the 1920s, the powerful Red Army, which had been able to conquer the White Armies, showed itself unable to reduce these "bandits", who were badly armed and ten times fewer in number. The Russian regime in Turkestan applied itself to these difficulties and in 1921 the "Military and Scientific Society of Central Asia" was created, which seemed to be dependent on the military faculty.

> The tasks of the Society are the following: the study of the experience of class war, the study of Turkestan in all aspects, the study of the wars of the XIXth and XXth

> centuries, the research of historical documents concerning the organisation and development of the Red Army. . . The Society achieves its aims by studying the archives, as well as all the documents collected in the Republic of Turkestan. . . Compulsory members were all the students of the General Staff and the Communists of the other sections of the faculty.[109]

In April 1922, an account appeared on the work done during the course of the year:

(1) The principles of historical-military work.

(2) The expedition of Hissar.

(3) The principles of organisation of military convoys in Central Asia.

(4) The war of the mountains.

Other titles were:

(1) The tactics of the Basmachi.

(2) Memories of famous participants in the civil war.

(3) The influence of the climate on military operations.[110]

In September, a second list of subjects appeared, amongst which featured for a second time the tactics of the Basmachi.[111]

The Red Army therefore seriously studied the terrain and its adversary, and this initiative also spread to the civil authorities:

> We are currently in the middle of organising, under the auspices of the Soviet of the People's Commissars, a "scientific commission" charged with studying the way of life of the indigenous population in Turkestan.[112]

Thus, the Red Army commanders were very quick in realising what an obstable the total lack of knowledge of Turkestan proved to be, and were attempting to remedy it in a concrete way:

> . . . it is important to realise that, because of the absence of workers familier with local life and its particularities at the heart of the Red Army. . ., it is often the case that unwished for misunderstandings are produced between the population and the Red Army units; and that is why a sufficient number of workers who know the people and the customs of the country well should be rapidly mobilised, and incorporated into the ranks of the army.[113]

The Red Army therefore undertook to reflect somewhat theoretically on its difficulties in conquering the rebels, as well as on the attitude to adopt towards the indigenous population — this seems to indicate a desire to bring peace to Central Asia without committing great mistakes in consequence.

II. THE IDEOLOGICAL STRUGGLE

Military action was not the only weapon used to batter the rebellion. The Russian regime had also to gain the benevolence of the Muslims, whose loyalty would have ineluctably put an end to the revolt. The

Muslim population and the authorities had to be brought together in order to integrate the former in the struggle against the Basmachi, an undertaking that would equally facilitate the Sovietisation of the society.

THE CONCESSIONS MADE TO ISLAM AND THE NEP

The extreme brutality of the attitude of the Soviet of Tashkent towards Muslim institutions and their representatives (mosques were closed, mullahs shot, and the *waqf* property secularised) provoked very lively indignation amongst the population, of which one part joined the Basmachi. In 1919, the end of War Communism and the taking in hand of the situation by the central powers modified this violently anti-Islamic policy, in order not to alienate the Muslim masses irremediably. From 1921, the *charei* tribunals were re-established, and the Quran schools and mosques were reopened. In 1922, however, these measures were applied from then on in places where the authority of Russian power was really exerted, that is essentially in the town.

> In order to root out the libellous propaganda against the Russian authorities, the plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Turkestan, in complete agreement with the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party has decreed: (1) Measures in Ferghana to adapt the Russian legislation to the conditions of local life, to return the *waqf* property to the Muslim community, to re-establish the tribunals of the *qadis* and the beys, to recruit a number of representatives from the population to fight against the Basmachi. . . All these measures should be heard in the furthest *oblasts* of Turkestan.[114]

These concessions, which deprived the population of their main motive for discontent, indisputably obtained results:

> As soon as the Russian authorities made concessions and recognised the tribunals of the *qadis* and the *waqf* property and allowed the existence of traditional Muslim schools, the Basmachi lost their influence over the population; and at the present time, the *dehqans* are helping the authorities against the Basmachi as best they can.[115]

No doubt the author of this article tends towards too much generalising, but it is always to be remembered that this is not a negligible part of the fight which the Russians were leading against the Basmachi, of which these journals were the echo.

> The new class situation (the accord between the proletariat and the peasantry) did not mean discontinuing these means of fighting, (military action, the Cheka, and propaganda), but it brought another way: the cutting off of the Basmachi movement from the population, and the commitment of this latter to the fight against the Basmachi by creating a militia.[116]

To integrate the Muslim population into the fight against the "bandits" would be from now on one of the objectives of the Russian authorities, who, although the revolt was at its highest point in 1922, succeeded thanks to the Turkkomissiia in taking the situation in hand.

THE INDIGENOUS MILITIA

In 1922, the Russian regime introduced a new element in its struggle against the rebellion by including the native population in an indigenous militia.

> The task which imposed itself on the Red Army and its commanders was the crushing of the large bands of Basmachi, the hunting of the little bands and the engagement of the indigenous population in the armed struggle against the Basmachi.[117]

Besides the ideological aspect which contributed to the creation of the indigenous militia, the Muslims had to be brought over to the side of the Russians against the "counter-revolutionaries" — one could ask oneself to what extent tactical considerations were also determinant? Who better than the natives to know the land and the enemy? The militia was the ideal frame for these future auxilliaries of the army as it meant the peasants could be regrouped.

> By using the experience gained in Ferghana in the struggle against the Basmachi, [we should] continue with the greatest energy to attract large sections of the population by calling on numerous conferences of non-partisan *dehqans*, by attracting the Muslim cultural forces (the jadids) and by organising, under the financial auspices of the population, a militia of volunteers whose political education would be assured.[118]

In this article extract, a certain vision is given of the coming together of the authorities and the population in the fight against the Basmachi: the peasants, already very impoverished, alone supported the financial weight of the militia (the buying of arms and loss of working hours), whereas the Bolsheviks were responsible for their political education. Nevertheless, this project of a militia was only viable where Russian authority had a real hold:

> If in Ferghana, the organisation of a militia was the best way for the population to cooperate with the Red Army's operations, the reverse was true of the situation in the *oblast'* of Samarkand. In Ferghana we are present at the revolt of the population against the Basmachi; whereas, in the *oblast'* of Samarkand, when they can no longer hold off the rebels, we are confronted with the people's passivity due to the terror inspired by the rebels.[119]

Thus, although the Ferghana was the first hearth of insurrection in 1918, four years later the situation was reversed, and the militia was

really participating in operations against the Basmachi.[120]

> Practically, this means that the militia (without class distinction) of *dehqans* which we have set up merits our confidence, which has already been justified by their fighting pitilessly against the Basmachi. But it now behoves us to take steps which will preserve this militia from a counter-revolutionary degeneration of the lower middle-class.[121]

The ideological frame and the political education of the Muslims seemed to be a constant worry for the Russians authorities, that they might not fall into the grasp of the Muslim nationalists. It was also to be avoided that these militiamen should turn against them and join the rebels once again.

PROPAGANDA

Faced with meagre military successes, the Russian authorities decided that from 1920 they would use another weapon in Ferghana, less radical but sometimes as successful, propaganda.[122]

> The result of the military struggle was not in doubt. . . . But victory would not be quick and easy unless a political campaign was developed amongst the peasantry on the subject of the fight against the Basmachi and Enver Pasha.[123]

Set up on entry level, the propaganda had a double objective. Firstly, it was to incite the population to fight against the rebels, but it was also to struggle the nationalist aspirations of the Muslims. Appropriately, the presence of Muslims relieved the problem of political action amongst the Muslim units.[124]

Even at the centre of the Party, propaganda itself to be necessary because "some tendencies tainted with narrow nationalism had appeared amongst the indigenous Communists."[125]

The Communist Party decreed therefore a veritable mobilisation (*partiinaia mobilisatsiia*) devoted to propaganda, and the most important members took part in it.

> The 9th Congress of Soviets had nominated, at the head of all those mobilised in Ferghana, a "troika" made up of comrades Rakhimbaev, Peters and Okuniev. The delegates stayed for one whole month and organised a large political campaign which was combined with the start of the military campaign against the Basmachi brigands. At present only twelve delegates of the congress remain. . . After the return of comrade Rakhimbaev, it was comrade Ryskulov who was sent to Ferghana with the president of the Turkkommissiia, Sokol'nikov.[126]

Propaganda was not only entrusted to the Russian communists — the Muslim "militant founders" were also invited to participate actively no doubt because of their potential influence with their co-believers. However, this initiative did not have great success:

> A special mobilisation was decreed of fifty Muslim Communists of Tashkent and the organisation of the *uezd*. However, the decree was not put to use. Tashkent supplied twenty-eight men and the *uezd* sixteen. But the possibility of such a modest mobilisation would have been previously out of the question in a practical sense. Even though those mobilised comrades revealed themselves to be the most mediocre (the Ferobkom even sent us the following telegram: "If this is all you can send, do not bother; we have the same type here"), the experience of a break between simple Muslim Communists and their families and their natural surroundings is in itself a revolution.[127]

The author of the article, unfortunately, does not give the reasons for the ineffectualness (or unwillingness) of the Muslim Communists, apparently little convinced by the subjects or even the methods of propaganda.

The mass organisations, affiliated with the Communist Party, were also instrumental in diffusing propaganda. Thus, in the *oblast'* of Ferghana:

> All the activity of the Union of Communist Youth in Turkestan is placed under the mark of the fight against the Basmachi. (128)[127]

The Red Army, "the advanced guard of the Revolution beside the masses" was also urged to take action.

Meanwhile, the propaganda was coming up against a major obstacle that of the language of communication, since the natives did not understand Russian. The activists were therefore advised to learn the local languages:

> In order to fulfil this very responsible task, the workers of the Red Army must keep close contact with the indigenous population, which is impossible to do without knowing the language. It is vital that all the responsible workers, all the Communists and all those who have business with the population, learn one of the local dialects (Uzbek, Kirghiz, or Turkmen). [129]

On top of this, it was also recommended that the activists showed their talents in the *chaikhanas* (see Glossary), where they were certain of having an audience (130).

The languages therefore posed a real problem, and a government press existed which wrote in the local languages. In the whole of Central Asia, about eight newspapers could thus educate the native masses. [131] However, this press could not have had many readers if one can judge from the Bolsheviks' own appreciation of the situation.
127

> What immediately leaps from the page is the absence of clarity and the dryness of the language in our newspapers. In the majority of cases, the contents are difficult to understand, and even totally incomprehensible for the *dehqan* and the artisan in the towns.[132]
> 127

Besides the press, which was not an infallible instrument of

propaganda, tracts were produced, although destined mainly for the soldiers as is demonstrated by those distributed in the *oblast'* of Samarkand in 1922:

Subjects of tracts published by the *politotdel'* [political department] in July:

(1) The struggle against the Basmachi at Bukhara and the victory of the Red Army

(2) The history of the Basmachi movement

(3) The popularisation of the directives from military high command and political organs on the struggle against the Basmachi; how to behave under the conditions of Muslim life

(4) The main slogans of the struggle against the Basmachi and our attitude towards the peaceful population

(5) A Muslim tract destined for the peaceful population on communal actions and getting together with the Red Army

(6) The grand ideas of the adventure of Enver Pasha

(7) A Muslim tract destined for the peaceful population concerning the new methods of fighting against the Basmachi. [133]

Now, despite the means put to use and the "mobilisation", certain people deplored the ineffectualness of the propaganda, which was accused of being too far from everyday reality and hampered by poor co-ordination in subject-matter, to which was added total incoherence of choice (one week all the effort would go into the subject of Lenin, whereas the next week would be devoted to the cholera, without any kind of transition). [134] The methods used did not show great finesse either:

> Our activity amongst the peasantry, in the best of cases, often assumed the character of high school propaganda in the guise of raids by illiterate propagandists who often knew nothing about the life of the *auls* and the *kishlaks*. [135]

Here also the efforts made were ruined by ignorang of the country and its customs. F. Dingelstedt, on the other hand, states that, since the beginning of the NEP, propaganda work clearly slowed down [136] because the slackening in tension had made it less urgent. There is not one article which truly gave information on the results of this propaganda on the population.

CONCLUSION

The study of these military journals shows that, right at the beginning of the twenties, the Russians, despite being perfectly informed of the facts and the acts of their adversary, could not clearly define the causes and nature of the uprising by those men they called the "Bas-

machi". To them, this revolt was nothing more than a "counter-revolutionary front" in a different guise from the ones they had until then fought. Nevertheless, even though the authors avoided writing about it too explicitly, it appears that the Russian authorities knew that the majority of the natives for better or worse supported the rebels, while the government was extremely isolated.

These journals also largely take into account the multiple difficulties encountered by the Red Army in Turkestan. The men and equipment had to adapt to mountains and desert. The military command had to give up large battles and submit to a new form of combat, guerilla warfare, which asked for immediate appropriate tactics. However, what does emerge from these reviews is the very obvious willingness to know Turkestan in order better to wage war and facilitate sovietisation of the area.

But the most numerous articles are those devoted to the various material problems, of which the principal one was the provision of food. In a land which was the victim of famine, this point was crucial as the requisitions of foodstuffs engendered anger amongst the native peasantry, who were forced to feed a foreign army.

Finally, along with articles on the military struggle against the rebels, these journals mentioned the ideological struggle aimed at the whole population. Several articles reveal the ineffectualness of Soviet propaganda, which was poorly planned and poorly applied to the natives.

Thus, we have unique testimony about the installation of the Red Army in Central Asia (far from being described as a heroic day), and about the Basmachi actions against it. Two years later, the victories gained over the rebels gave more triumphant tone to these journals. It would be particularly interesting now to research these same journals for the period of the last great outburst of the revolt in 1928.

TRANSCRIPTION

We have chosen the English transliteration of the Russian in order to give clarity to non-Russophiles, and we have kept the best known orthography of names. However, where the "Turkish" names are concerned, we have decided to respect the customary transcription adopted by the Arabic alphabet.

NOTES

1. cf P. G. Galuzo, *Turkestan-kolonii* (Turkestan is a Colony), (Moscow, 1929).
2. P. Baranov, "Polozhenie Turkestanskoi respubliki i reorganizatsiia Krasnoi

armii" (The Situation in the Republic of Turkestan and the Red Army), *Voennaia mysl'* (May–July 1921), p. 86.
3. G. Skalov, "Sotsial'naia priroda basmachestva" (The Social Nature of the Basmachi Movement", *Kommunist*, (August–September 1922), p. 21.
4. *ibid.*, p. 24.
5. Dervish (pseudonym of Nazir Tiurakulov), "Ferganskaia problema" (The Problem of Ferghana), *Voennaia mysl'* (May–July 1921), pp. 109–110.
6. B. Lavrenev, "Gornaia voina" (The War of the Mountains), *Voennyi rabotnik Turkestana*, (March 1922), No. 1, p. 23.
7. P. Baranov, *op. cit.* p. 88.
8. V. Kuvshinev, "Ferganskii raion" (The Region of Ferghana), *Voennaia mysl'*, (September 1920), p. 259.
9. On this subject, cf Turar Ryskulov, *Chto delali Dashnaki v Fergane* (What the Dashnaks Did at Ferghana), (Tashkent, 1925), republished in 1985 at Oxford by the Society for Central Asian Studies.
10. Dervish, *op. cit.*, p. 111.
11. cf Nazir Tiurakulov, *Iazy provintsial'noi zhini* (The Scourges of Life in the Provinces), *op. cit.*
12. V. Kuvshinov, *op. cit.*, p. 260.
13. M. Shkliar, "Iz putiovykh vpechatlenii po Fergane" (Travel Impressions of the Ferghana), *Voennaia mysl'*, (September 1920), p. 278.
14. G. Skalov, *op. cit.*, p. 25.
15. For the social composition of the *kurbashi*, cf M. Broxup, "The Basmachi", *Central Asian Survey*, (July 1983), p. 61.
16. B. Lavrenev, *op. cit.*, p. 22.
17. With reference to the different tactics according to the regions of Turkestan, cf M. Broxup, *op. cit.*, p. 23.
18. B. Lavrenev, *op. cit.*, p. 23.
19. *Ibid.*
20. V. Kuvshinov, *op. cit.*, p. 262.
21. B. Lavrenev, *op. cit.*, p. 23.
22. *Ibid.*
23. "In Ferghana, there is no Soviet power except in the towns with Russian population. But in the Muslim countryside, it does not exist." T. Ryskulov, *op. cit.*, p. 40.
24. "Rabota voennogo nauchnogo obshechestvo" (The Work of the Military and Scientific Society), *Voennyi rabotnik Turkestana*, (September 1922), p. 74.
25. M. Shkliar, *op. cit.*, p. 278.
26. V. K., "Voennyi obzor" (The Military Situation), *Voennaia mysl'*, (January–April 1921), p. 222.
27. "Rabota voenno-nauchno go obshchestvo", *op. cit.*, p. 74.
28. No. Berezin, "Basmachestvo v Bukhare" (The Basmachi Movement at Bukhara). *Voennyi rabotnik Turkestana*, (September 1922), p. 44.
29. B. Lavrenev, *op. cit.*, p. 23.
30. V. K. *op. cit.*, p. 222.
31. B. Lavrenev, *op. cit.*, p. 23.
32. *Ibid.*
33. "The Devil's machine".
34. V. K. *op. cit.*, p. 222.
35. B. Lavrenev, *op. cit.*, p. 23.
36. A. Gornyi, "Deiatel 'nost' revoliutsionngo voennogo Tribunala" (The Activity of the Revolutionary Military Tribunal), *Voennaia mysl'* (January–April 1921),

p. 311.
37. B. Lavrenev, *op. cit.*, p. 23.
38. *Ibid.*
39. I. Sol'ts, "Anglo-enverskaia avantiura i osvobozhdenie narodov Vostoka" (The British–Enver Venture and the Liberation of the Peoples of the East), *Kommunist*, (April–May 1922), p. 8.
40. Sredne-aziatskoe biuro Ts.K.R.K.P., *Kommunist*, (June–July 1922), p. 2.
41. Ts. K.K.P.T., "Ko vsem chlenam Kommunisticheskoi Partii Turkestana", (To All Members of the Communist Party in Turkestan), *Kommunist*, (April–May 1922), p. 3.
42. I. Sol'ts, *op. cit.*, p. 8.
43. Sredne-aziatskoe biuro Ts.K.K.P.T., *op. cit.*, p. 2.
44. N. Berezin, *op. cit.*, p. 39.
45. *Ibid.*
46. *Ibid*, p. 40.
47. See Appendix II, No. 1.
48. G. Safarov, *Kolonial'naia revoliutsia-opyt Turkestana* (The Colonial Revolution, the Experience of Turkestan), (Moscow, 1921).
49. V. Kuvshinov, *op. cit.*, p. 260.
50. B. Lavrenev, *op. cit.*, p. 23.
51. P. Baranov, *op. cit.*, pp. 88–89.
52. No. Berezin, *op. cit.*, p. 38.
53. T. Skalov, "Novyi dekret o zemle" (The New Decree on the Land), *Kommunist*, (August–September 1922), p. 47.
54. V. Kuvshinov, *op. cit.*, p. 259.
55. L. Mariasin, "Rezul'taty primeneniia NEPa v promyshlenosti i torgovle i blizhashchie meropriatii" (The Results of the NEP in Industry and Commerce and the Next Steps), *Kommunist*, (April–May 1922), p. 13.
56. M. Broxup, *op. cit.*, p. 68.
57. I., "Neskol'ko slov o snabzhenii v Turkestane" (A Few Words on the Question of Provisions in Turkestan), *Voennaia mysl'*, (September 1920), p. 372.
58. M. Shkliar, *op. cit.*, p. 278.
59. V. Kuvshinov, *op. cit.*, p. 261.
60. N. S. Lykoshin, "Narodnosti Turkestana, kak voennyi material" (The Peoples of Turkestan as Military Material), *Voennaia mysl'*, (September 1920), p. 372.
61. See Appendix II, No. 2.
62. N. S. Lykoshin, "Lokot' k lokt'iu" (Elbow to Elbow), *Voennaia mysl*, (May–July 1921), p. 27.
63. *Ibid*, p. 30.
64. *Ibid*, p. 26.
65. Priezzhii, "Vtoroe sovesnanie oblastnykh voennykh kommissarov Turkestanskogo Fronta" (The Second Conference of the Military Commissions of the *Oblast'* of the Turkestan Front), *Voennaia mysl'*, (May–July 1921), p. 270.
66 P. Baranov, *op. cit.*, p. 90.
67. B. Lavrenev, *op. cit.*, p. 15.
68. D. Z., "Osobennosti oboznogo dela v Turkestane" (The Particularities of Convoys in Turkestan), *Voennyi rabotnik Turkestana* (April 1922), pp. 52–53.
69. *Ibid.*
70. B. Lavrenev, *op. cit.*, p. 17.
M. Shkliar, *op. cit.*, p. 281.
72. V. K., "Voennyi obzor" (The Military Situation), *Voennaia mysl'*, (January–April 1921), p. 220.

73. V. Kuvshinov, *op. cit.*, p. 263.
74. Dervish, *op. cit.*, p. 113.
75. See p. 7.
76. See Appendix II, No. 3.
77. V. Kuvshinov, *op. cit.*, p. 262.
78. S. Gusev, "Blizhashchie perspectivy bor'by s basmachestvom" (The Next Perspectives in the Struggle Against the Basmachi), *Kommunist*, (April–May 1922), p. 10.
79. V. K., *op. cit.*, p. 220.
80. M. Broxup, *op. cit.*, p. 69.
81. "The Devil's machine."
82. B. Lavrenev, *op. cit.*, p. 19.
83. *Ibid*, p. 23.
84. V., Denisev, "Bukhara", *Voennyi rabotnik Turkestana*, (April 1922), p. 5.
85. "The Devil's car."
86. Al Tasin, "Obzor raboty vozdushnogo flota v Turkestane za 1920" (Aircraft Operations in Turkestan During the Year 1920), *Voennaia mysl'*, (May–July 1921), p. 187.
87. P. Seminov, "Krasnyi vozdushnyi flot v Turkestane" (The Red Air Fleet in Turkestan), *Voennaia mysl'*, (January–April 1921), p. 201.
88. Al Tasin, *op. cit.*, p. 191.
89. P. Seminov, *op. cit.*, p. 201.
90. *Ibid.*
91. Priezzhi, *op. cit.*, p. 271.
92. V. Iudovskii, "Markisistoe vospitane chlenov partii" (The Marxist Education of Party members), *Kommunist*, (June–July 1922), p. 11.
93. I., "Neskol'ko slov o snabzhenii v Turkestane" (A Few Words on Provisioning in Turkestan), *Voennaia mysl'*, (September 1920), p. 373.
94. Agitprop Ts.K.K.P.T., "Tezisy po prodnalogu dlia agitatorov" (A Few Ideas for Agitators Concerning the Nature Tax), *Kommunist*, (August–September 1922), p. 59.
95. Cf. requisitions, see Appendix II, No. 4.
96. Priezzhii, *op. cit.*, p. 271.
97. N. Berezin, *op. cit.*, p. 44.
98. A. Dobrynin, "S'ezd rabotnikov po konozavodstvu i konovodstvu" (The Congress of Workers of the Equine Section), *Voennaia mysl'*, (January–April 1921), p. 298.
99. I. S., "O profesional' nom dvizhenii v Turkestane" (The Trade Union Movement in Turkestan), *Kommunist*, (December 1920), p. 16.
100. D. Perkin, "Mesiats pomoshchi" (The Month of Help), *Voennyi rabotnik Turkestana*, (April 1922), p. 2.
101. *Ibid*, p. 3.
102. G. Safarov, *Kolonial'naia revoliutsia-opyt Turkestana*, (The Colonial Revolution, the Experience of Turkestan), (Moscow, 1921), p. 84.
103. A Bolshevik descending from Lithuanian princes, shot (1920?) by the revolutionary tribunal of the Front of Turkestan for his crimes which cost the lives of some thousands of Kirghiz.
104. B. Lavrenev, *op. cit.*, p. 22.
105. See Appendix II, No. 5.
106. A. Gornyi, "Deiatel'nost' revoliutsionnogo voennogo tribunala" (The Activities of the Revolutionary Military Tribunal), *Voennaia mysl'*, (January–April 1921), p. 311.

107. M. Shkliar, *op. cit.*, p. 279.
108. Prizzhii, *op. cit.*, p. 271.
109. Kh., "Sredne-aziatskoe voenno-nauchnoe obshchestvo" (The Military and Scientific Society of Central asia), *Voennaia mysl'*, (May–July 1921), p. 295.
110. "Sredne-azitskoe voenno-nauchnoe obshchestvo" (The Military and Scientific Society of Central Asia), *Voennyi rabotnik Turkestana*, (April 1922), p. 107.
111. "Rabota voenno-nauchnogo obschchestva" (The Work of the Military and Scientific Society of Central Asia), *Voenny rabotnik Turkestana*, (September 1922), p. 74.
112. Z. "Izuchenie byta narodnostei Turkestana" (The Study of the Daily Life of the People's of Turkestan), *Voennaia mysl'*, (January–April 1921), p. 300.
113. Ts.K.K.P.T., "Ko vsem chlenam kommunisticheskoi partii Turkestana", (To All Members of the Communist Party in Turkestan), *Kommunist*, (April–May 1922), p. 3.
114. Ts.K.K.P.T., *op. cit.*, p. 3.
115. G. Markov, "Antireligioznaia propaganda narodov Vostoka" (Anti-Religious Propaganda Amongst the Peoples of the East), *Voennyi rabotnik Turkestana*, (April 1922), p. 40.
116. S. Gusev, *op. cit.*, p. 10.
117. "Pervaia partiinaia frontovaia konferentsiia" (The First Conference of the Front of the Party), *Voennyi rabotnik Turkestana*, (April 1922), p. 104.
118. Ts.K.K.P.T., *op. cit.*, p. 4.
119. Sredne-aziatskoe Biuro Ts.K.K.P., "Ko vsem kommunisticheskim organizatsiam Srednei Azii" (To All the Communist Organisations of Central Asia), *Kommunist*, (June–July 1922), p. 2.
120. K. T., "Na mestakh, Samarkandskaia *oblast'*" (In the Provinces, Samarkand Oblast'), *Kommunist* (August–September 1922), p. 146.
121. S. Gusev, *op. cit.*, p. 12.
122. Ispolbiuro Ts.K.K.P.T., "Otchiot Ispolnitel'nogo Biuro Ts.K.K.P.T" (Report of the Executive Bureau of the C.C. of the Communist Party of Turkestan), *Kommunist*, (December 1920).
123. Sredne-aziatskoe biuro Ts.K.K.P.T., *op. cit.*, p. 2.
124. V.L. Lopukhov, "Iz istorii politicheskoi raboty v krasnoi Armii" (History of Political Work in the Red Army), *Voennaia mysl'* (January–April 1921), p. 98.
125. VI Konferentsiia K.P.T." (The 6th Conference of the P.C.T.), *Voennyi rabotnik Turkestana*, (April 1922), p. 106.
126. Ispolbiuro Ts.K.K.P.T., *op. cit.*, p. 20.
127. *Ibid.*
128. "Itogy raboty Ts.K.K.S.M.T." (Account of the Activity of the C.C. of the Union of the Communist Youth in Turkestan), *Kommunist*, (1922), No. 2, p. 39.
129. S., "K izucheniiu vostochnykh iazikov v voennom vedomstve" (For the Study of Eastern Languages in Military Service), *Voennaia mysl'*, (January–April 1921), p. 307.
130. F. Dingelstedt, *Agitatsiia i propaganda pri NEPe v usloviiakh Turkestana* (Propaganda Under the NEP in the Conditions of Communist Turkestan), *Kommunist*, (August–September 1922), p. 56.
131. Kasym S., "Gazety na mestnykh iazikakh" (Newspapers in Local Languages), *Kommunist*, (June–July 1922), p. 69.
132. *Ibid*, see also Appendix II, No. 6.
133. "Politrabota na mestakh, Samarkandskaia *oblast'*" (Political Work in the Provinces, the Oblast' of Samarkand), *Voennyi rabotnik Turkestana*, (September

1922), p. 67.
134. E. Zel'kina, "Formy i metody agitatsii v Turkestane" (The Forms and Methods of Propaganda in Turkestan), *Kommunist*, p. 44.
135. *Ibid.*
136. F. Dingelstedt, *op. cit.*, p. 56.

APPENDIX I

GLOSSARY

Arba (Uzbek):	cart with two big wheels pulled by a horse.
Basmachi (Uzbek):	brigand or bandit, name given to the rebels by the Russians.
Chaikhana (Tajik):	literally, house of tea; plays the role of cafe.
Dehqan (Tajik):	peasant.
Desiatina (Russian):	unit of measurement equivalent to 2.7 acres.
Djuta:	slick glazed frost.
Izba (Russian):	peasant hut.
Kishlak (Uzbek):	originally winter encampment, today, the Russians use this word to describe all Muslim villages.
Kurbashi (Uzbek):	military leader.
Oblast', Otdel, Uezd:	administrative divisions. Until 1924, Turkestan kept the administrative divisions of the ex-Government General of Turkestan which consisted of five oblasts: the Transcaspian *oblast'*, the *oblast'* of Ferghana, the *oblast'* of Samarkand, the *oblast'* of Semirechie, the *oblast'* of Syr Daria, and one *otdel*, that of Amu Daria, as well as several *uezds* which are sub-divisions.
Saklia (Russian):	word describing the mountain habitations of the Northern Caucasus.
Verst (Russian):	unit of measurement, equal to approximately 2/3 mile.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Djani Bek: Kirghiz Basmachi chief of Pamir.

Djunaid Khan: Chief of the Turkmen tribe of the Yomud, and principal *kurbashi* of the Turkmen steppes. In 1916, he seized power for the first time at Khiva, putting the Khan Isfandiyar at his mercy. The rapid intervention of Russian troops did not allow him to savour victory for long. Declared enemy of the Russians, then of the Soviets, he re-seized Khiva in 1918, then lost it again shortly afterwards. In January 1920, he fled into the desert of Kara-Kum, from whence he led operations against the Soviets. In 1923, measures which directly hit at Islam in the constitution of the new Soviet Republic of

Khorezm, provoked a lively reaction in the population; and in January 1924, Djunaid Khan, strong with the support of the merchants and the clergy, retook the town. One month later, it fell once again into the hands of the Soviets. Djunaid Khan fled once more into the desert, from whence he made periodic raids against the Soviets, until 1927, when he took refuge in Iran. However, in 1928, he crossed the frontier again to organise resistance against collectivisation. There were violent battles until 1931; and it was only in 1933 that the Soviets definitively took the matter in hand. In 1933, Djunaid Khan left for Iran again, where he died in 1936.

Irgash: Bandit condemned to twelve years penal servitude, and freed in 1917 when the amnesty was decreed by the provisional government. In 1918, he became the head of the order to defend itself against the troops of the Turksovnarkom. After the sacking of Kokand by the turksovnarkom he organised the most powerful band of Basmachi in Ferghana. A fanatic conservative Muslim, he had the support of the *ulemas*, and in 1918 he did not hesitate to proclaim himself Khan of Ferghana in the holy place of Hazrat, according to the enthronement customs of the khans. In March 1919, he sought to unify the movement and convened an assembly which reunited forty *kurbashi*. The same year he suffered a severe defeat and signed a treaty of peace with the Soviets, but this proved only temporary.

Khal Hodja: Sheikh belonging to the Yasawiya Sufi brotherhood, he was a powerful *kurbashi* in Ferghana, and died in October 1920 under an avalanche.

Madamin Bek: Principal Basmachi leader in Ferghana with Irgash, and rival of the latter.

His true name was Amin Ahmad Bekov; he was son of a merchant of Margelan and was 23 years old in 1917. Deputy under the provisional government, and ex-member of the Soviet of Margelan, he was also chief of the militia of the town; he later went over to the side of the rebels.

In June 1919, he made an alliance with the "peasant army" of Monstrov, and in September, convened an assembly which proclaimed an ephemeral government which was provisional in Ferghana of which he was the president. In March 1920, he gave himself up, and was killed on 24 May by the *kurbashi* Kurshirmat, who considered him to be a traitor.

Much more open and liberal than Irgash, he has the support of the moderates, and gathered the Tatar and Bashkir nationalists together, who joined the revolt.

APPENDIX II.
JOURNALS' COMMMENT ON SELECTED TOPICS

NO. 1. ANECDOTE: IN THE KISHLAKS, IT WAS THOUGHT THAT "BOLSHEVIK" MEANS "BANDIT"

"The incident takes place in a town in Ferghana in 1919. The tribunal judges several bandits guilty of acts of brigandage in the *kishlaks* round about. The defendants are sitting on the bench of the accused. The president interrogates one of their victims, an old man, who is acting as a witness. To the president's question: 'Who committed these thefts?', the witness points a finger at the accused and says completely naively: 'it is the Bolsheviks.' The president asks with astonishment: 'who are you saying are the Bolsheviks?' The witness replies: 'you see, I have been living in my *kishlak* for nearly forty-five years. I do not know and I have never known the land. How do you expect me to know who the Bolsheviks are? That is why I call them the Bolsheviks, and I demand that they be punished immediately!'"

Dervish, "Ferganskaia problema" (The Problem of Ferghana), *Voennaia mysl'*, (May–July 1921), p. 112.

NO. 2. USING THE "NATIVES" TO BEST ADVANTAGE

"Natural curiosity, the ability to adapt quickly to a situation, the habit of listening attentively . . . and a memory which is well enough developed together with the natural spirit, to which should be added a good amount of guile, make the nomad the ideal scout . . . The services of transmission and order, the guard posts and the engineering works in the fighting units can without hesitation be entrusted to those soldiers who have come from towns, on the condition, of course, that serious educational work is undertaken. Thus, the significance of the Red Army will be appropriately understood and assimilated by these workers . . . In the mountains, the Tajiks must particularly be used."

N.S. Lykoshin, "Narodnosti Turkestana kak voennyi material" (The People of Turkestan as Military Material), *Voennaia mysl'* (September 1920), pp. 42 and 44.

NO. 3. REQUISITIONS (OR PILLAGE) FROM THE NATIVES

"The revolution had an urgent need for foodstuffs. Bread and meat could only be had from the indigenous peasants. Because of the lack of State machinery with regard to provisions, one had to proceed to disorganised requisitioning. Often it was armed detachments of soldiers who took the initiative, taking not only wheat from the peasants, but also all the diverse objects used for work or in the home. Under the old regime, one did not mind pillaging the natives, but it was, one might say, done in a systematic way, organised, which allowed the natives to adapt their economic resources to the pressure exerted by the colonial power. The new power pillaged without any system at all, and without any order."

V. Iudovskii, "Marksistoe vospitanic chlenov Partii" (The Marxist Education of the Party Members), *Kommunist* (June–July 1922), p. 11.

NO. 4. ALLIANCES AND DEFECTIONS

"Meanwhile, the negotiations with Djunaid Khan by our representative did not end in peace. To the contrary, during the last negotiations, Djunaid Khan behaved in such a suspicious manner, that he was asked to disarm immediately. Djunaid Khan and his escort, visibly prepared for this eventuality, opened fire on our detachment, wounded four men, and, on seeing help arriving, fled into the desert. A little later,

we learnt from our reconnaissance service that Djunaid Khan was to be found in the region of Sheikh-Uvas-Kurganchik, where he was distributing up to fifty carbines to the Mesherik tribe, and led them in an uprising against those men we had acquired, the tribe Yomud of Kosh-Hamid Kha, which meant this latter had to side with Djunaid Khan. Added to which, Djunaid Khan knew how to attract our old allies Bakshi and Gulian."

S. Mikhailov, "Khivinskii front", (The Khiva Front), *Voennaia mysl'* (September 1920), p. 252.

NO. 5. THE EXTORTIONS OF THE MILITIA

"Pillage without precedent, affairs of the wine jug and thefts committed by members of the militia — which was the case at Samarkand, where the chief of the militia of the third district (today shot) was at the head of a band of militia horsemen which terrorised the population with its acts of brigandage — did have an echo in the military revolutionary Soviet whose competence in treating this type of affair was legalised."

A. Gornyi, "Deiatel 'nost' revoliutsionogo voennogo tribunala" (The Activity of the Military Revolutionary Tribunal), *Voennaia mysl'*, (January–April 1921), p. 312.

NO. 6. THE LOCAL PRO-SOVIET PRESS

Kzyl bairak, Uzbek newspaper of the *krai* and organ of the C.C. of the Communist Party in Turkestan and of Turtsik.
Appears threee times a week. Attempted to be serious, but still published many articles of no interest.
"This newspaper focuses a lot of attention on the struggle against the Basmachi. It associates the fight against the Basmachi with restoring the economy."

Ak Zhol, Kirghiz newspaper of the *krai* and organ of the C.C. of the Communist Party in Turkestan and of Turkistik.
Appeared three times a week.
A quick look shows that it did not have a good editor-in-chief. Numerous articles on the famine, particularly in Kirghizia, few articles on international subjects, and nothing on the NEP and the Party.

Ferghana, Uzbek newspaper of the oblast', organ of the Committee for the *oblast'* of Ferghana of the Communist Party in Turkestan and of the Revolutionary Committee of the *oblast'*.
Appearing in an *oblast'* where the Basmachi movement was rife, it understood its task perfectly, by bringing a lot of attention to it and recording the least act. All the questions are linked with the Basmachi movement. The fight against this phenomenon is present from beginning to end in all the articles."

Turkmenistan, Turkmen newspaper of the *oblast*, of the Communist Party in Turkestan and the Executive Committee of the *oblast'*.
International policy is the principal theme of the articles.

Kashtagaliar-Taush, Uzbek newspaper of the *oblast'*, organ of the Central Committee of the *oblast'* of Samarkand.
"Not one word on the Basmachi movement, which is taking on a menacing character in the *oblast'*."

Kasym, S., "Gazety na mestnykh iazikakh" (Newspapers in Local Languages), *Kommunist* (June–July 19??), pp. 69–73.

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Ambiguity and India's Claims to the Aksai Chin

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INTRODUCTION

A certain maturity sometimes comes to historical controversies. After a subject like the India–China border dispute has passed through the requisite stages, a time comes when findings and ideas for the various sides can be fashioned into new interpretations.

The body of literature on the Sino–Indian conflict is dialectical in nature. The earliest accounts were partisan toward one side — India. Research findings which even suggested revision aroused anger in some quarters. Among such findings were those of Alastair Lamb on the historical evolution of the border. With the publication of a comprehensive work of revisionist scholarship by the former London *Times* correspondent Neville Maxwell, the lines of thesis and antithesis were clearly drawn.[1] They have remained so for over a decade and a half, most recently renewed in the new semi-official biography of Jawaharlal Nehru by the Indian historian Sarvepalli Gopal.[2]

Ultimately the dialectic should go into its synthesis stage. What follows in these pages is a limited synthesizing effort, focused on just one aspect of the boundary conflict. The argument presented here is that formulation of the Indian version of the border with China required the deciphering of ambiguity. Most Indian politicians and officials were not aware of that ambiguity. Instead they thought that a traditional border had been discovered through documentary and geographic investigation. This was a case of ambiguity or indeterminacy being shaped according to psychological predispositions already held by decision-makers; predispositions derived from Indian nationalist thought and experience.

An essay of this size cannot cover the entire 2000 mile long India–China border. The focus shall be upon a particuarly sensitive portion of that border called the Aksai Chin. The Aksai Chin Plateau is now fully occupied by the Chinese, despite Indian claims to it. Situated at

an altitude of 16,000–17,000 feet, the Aksai Chin lies between two Chinese frontier provinces: Tibet and Sinkiang.

China's government presently includes it in Sinkiang. The Indian government regards the Aksai Chin as part of the Ladakh region of Kashmir. For China the Aksai Chin serves as a necessary communications link; an all-weather road system goes through there. For the Chinese it also symbolizes their unwillingness to grant legitimacy to the European imperialist phase in Asian history, and to that episode's territorial results. For India, the Aksai Chin still represents historic territory lost; something unjustly taken from the national patrimony.

THE AMBIGUOUS BRITISH LEGACY

By the late 1940s, when Indian nationalism and other pressures finally induced British abandonment of empire, and when communist victory finally freed China from civil war and foreign intervention, no mutually acceptable India–China border had yet evolved. Demarcation of a border on the ground had occurred at only a few places. Much of the frontier region known as Ladakh had come under the control of the Maharaja of Kashmir in the century or so before 1947. But more crucial to pre-independence thinking about a northern border for Ladakh were British-Indian strategic interests, as gauged in London, Calcutta and New Delhi.

There was no one British policy on the disposition of that territory on the Ladakh frontier called the Aksai Chin. A high altitude desert lying on the edge of the great Tibetan plateau, and cut by some valleys, the Aksai Chin had no intrinsic value. People did go there; nearby Ladakhi villagers used it for summer grazing and thus made it part of the "Cashmere" wool trade. There was jade mining from the Sinkiang side, and some ancient (if secondary) trade routes crossed it. That was all.

Yet, the Aksai Chin could be strategically important as a buffer zone, depending upon developments in the great game of big power influence and balance in Central Asia. To have buffers lying between the populated parts of northern India on the one side, and Russia and China on the other, was a constant British policy. Precisely which regions were to serve as buffers, however, and in what combinations, and the primary power to be thus contained, were all matters which varied as British perceptions of threat varied.

According to a summary memorandum prepared in 1952 by the first Historical Division Director in the External Affairs Ministry of independent India, three alternative British boundary lines had been formulated for Ladakh.[3] The most northerly was the so-called Ar-

dagh–Johnson line, which went as far as the great Kuen Lun range of mountains on the north and northeast sides of the Aksai Chin (see Appendix for map). Thus the Ardagh–Johnson line included the Aksai Chin within the area of British-Indian control.

The second of the proposed British borders, in recent years called the Macartney–MacDonald line, represented more caution. Its most significant feature was that almost all of the Aksai Chin's main section lay in Sinkiang. Certain localities on the Ladakhi periphery of the Aksai Chin were on the British-Indian side of the line. These places were the Lingzitang salt plain, and the Chang Chenmo and Chip Chap valleys.[4] Later they would also become subjects of dispute between India and China.

Finally, the British had at various times thought of the Ladakh frontier as lying along the Karakorum mountain range. But any conceivable Karakorum boundary (such as the Foreign Office line of 1873) would lie far to the south and southwest of the other lines, and thus be favorable to forward movement by the Chinese.

An Indian scholar who helped devise the official view of the Nehru government after independence has argued that during the last two decades of British-India a version of the Ardagh–Johnson line came to be accepted as a matter of policy. He says the final British acceptance of such a line came in 1936.[5] These assertions must remain speculative so long as independent scholars do not have ready access to the records of that period in Government of India archives. But scholarly opinion is supportive in a general way. Alastair Lamb, for example, reports that after World War I British-India emerged with an Ardagh–Johnson boundary so far as the Aksai Chin was concerned. A 1927 decision to drop any claim to Shahidulla fort north of Karakorum Pass (and thus beyond the Aksai Chin) left intact the claim to the Aksai Chin itself, either because the British had no reason to set a new policy for it, or because they wanted to retain it as a buffer between India and a possibly Russian-dominated Sinkiang.[6]

If a post-1927 version of the Ardagh–Johnson line continued to serve as the basis of British thinking about the Aksai Chin thereafter, this policy was not made clear on Survey of India maps. Despite some references on other official and unofficial pre-1912 maps to an Ardagh-style boundary, it was only after 1945 that Survey of India maps hinted at an Aksai Chin claim by the way a broad "color wash" (band of color) was used along the northern and eastern frontier of Kashmir. The frontier itself was still labelled "undefined".[7]

That the British considered other possible Ladakh boundaries besides the Ardagh–Johnson line, all through the period from the 1890s to the 1940s, has been proven by recent research in India Office files no longer restricted by the time limit of the British official secrets

rules.[8] What explains the evidence of competing policy directions is the nature of the institutionalized relationship existing between the British-Indian government in New Delhi, and the India Office (Secretary of State for India) in London.[9]

Where frontier questions were concerned, the India Office was cognizant of more considerations than just the advantages and disadvantages of a specific move in India's borderlands. Together with the Foreign Office, the India Office had to be concerned with the wider political and strategic implications for the Empire of any boundary agreements concluded with other powers bordering India. Such powers included Russia and China and relations with them were seen from London as set by such issues as Anglo–Russian dealings in Europe and the Middle East, and British interests on the mainland of China.

On the other hand, the Government of India and particularly its Foreign Deprtment (after 1935 the External Affairs Department),[10] was naturally most concerned with potential and actual threats to India. Influencing Delhi's perception of such threats was a mentality consistent with ruling a colonial empire rather than an internally secure nation-state. The coming of any independent sovereign power toward India's frontiers, especially an Asian power, was seen as potentially disruptive to internal stability.[11]

The different perspectives of London and Delhi sometimes led to what one close observer of this relationship has called "bureaucratic chicanery". Via various strategems Delhi officials like Olaf Caroe, at one time Deputy Secretary of the Foreign Department, would try to push British imperial policy further in certain directions than the India Office in London was prepared to allow. Given the suspicion which often prevailed between the two bureaucratic establishments, the Foreign Department in New Delhi might see London as pro-Chinese, while the India Office might regard someone like Croe as a "wild man" having to be reined in.[12] It is not surprising, therefore, that India Office documents would often reflect thinking which either favored a cautious line tied to the Karakorum or left the border undefined, while Delhi leaned another way.

Another reason for the appearance of different and competing strands in British policy was that opinion within the Government of India also varied over time.

Thus, a forward boundary for Ladakh proposed by the chief of British Military Intelligence in London, Major-General Sir John Ardagh, was not at first accepted in Delhi when first put forward in 1897.[13] The then Viceroy (Lord Elgin) and the General Staff of the Indian Army preferred a Karakorum boundary. In 1899, the Indian government initiated discussion with the Chinese government on ac-

ceptance of the Macartney–MacDonald line. The Chinese never agreed to it formally, but their provincial government in Sinkiang thought the proposal a fair one.

Among officials in both India and London, during 1907 and 1908, the proposed Macartney–MacDonald line "was regarded in official British circles as the international boundary of British India, a boundary which, again for this limited period, was certainly delimited."[14] But in 1911, when apprehension about Russia was again promoting reexamination of the Kashmir frontier situation, the Indian Army came to look more favorably upon the notion of an Ardagh-style line. Aware that the then Foreign Secretary of the Government of India supported an Ardagh option, the military's opinion was that "the extended frontier would be an advantage provided we have not to occupy the portion beyond our present frontier posts, but merely aim at keeping it undeveloped".[15] Accordingly, in 1912 the Viceroy (Lord Hardinge) proposed to the Secretary of State for India that the Aksai Chin and adjacent territory be placed within the limits of British India, by using Ardagh's line.[16]

While London and Delhi might have been willing to adopt this suggestion formally, had successful negotiation with Russia taken place, Anglo-Russian diplomacy never went that far. A round of talks over the respective interests of the British and Russian empires in Asia and the Middle East commenced in 1912. It was designed to revise the last broad scale agreement reached between them — the Anglo-Russian convention of 1907 (which had covered Tibet among other things). But the onset of World War I, the inconclusiveness of talks during the war, and the Bolshevik takeover of Russia in 1917, all served to preclude any agreement.

It was the absence of such formal agreement which permitted New Delhi to attempt another policy innovation in 1914, when the British-Indian delegation to an India–Tibet–China conference attempted to assign the Aksai Chin to the then independent Tibet. At the Simla conference of 1914 the British delegation leader, Sir Henry McMahon, produced a map showing (among other things) the Aksai Chin placed within Tibetan territory. An earlier reference to such an idea had been made by the previous Foreign Secretary of the Government of India (Sir Louis Dane) in 1907 and now McMahon (the present Foreign Secretary) was apparently trying it out on the Chinese and Tibetans. The gain being sought in 1914 was to have a Tibetan Aksai Chin serve as a buffer between Sinkiang (still thought likely to come under Russian influence) and British India (Kashmir), without giving the Aksai Chin to revolutionary China. The effort failed when China rejected the conference results for other reasons.[17]

Despite the Government of India's general preference for an

Ardagh–Johnson boundary after 1927, a deviation from that policy came a generation later when the General Staff of the Indian Army assayed the likely defense problems of an India nearing independence. The General Staff's map submitted to the 1946 Cabinet Mission team showed no evidence of either Ardagh, McMahon, or Macartney–MacDonald thinking.[18] Either during 1946 itself, with no obvious threat looming on the frontier, or at some earlier time, the military arm of the Government of India had become reluctant to envisage a forward defence for Ladakh.

THE OTHER SOURCES OF AMBIGUITY

KASHMIR GOVERNMENT CLAIMS

If British border policy left behind some options among which independent India could later choose, so did the frontier policies of Indian rulers before and during the time of their subordination to British power.

Among such rulers was the Kashmir Dogra dynasty, whom the British confirmed as monarchs of Jammu and Kashmir in 1846 as a reward for support in the First Sikh War. The dynamic founder of the dynasty, Maharaja Gulab Singh, had conquered Ladakh a short time earlier as part of an abortive invasion of Tibet. Although the former Kingdom of Ladakh had once been tributary to the Mughal empire, other periods of its history had seen it gravitate toward Tibet. Gulab Singh's takeover had come while he was politically and militarily subject to the Sikh state in the 1830s.

The Kashmir Durbar (i.e. the Government of the Maharajah of Kashmir during the century and a half of its autonomous existence), valued Ladakh highly for its role in Central Asian trade.[19] Expansion beyond the frontiers of Ladakh to enhance control over trade routes was a constant motive underlying Kashmiri claims. The Kashmiri claim to Shahidulla fort, on the route to Yarkand and Kashgar in Turkestan (i.e. Sinkiang), came from that motive as did similar interest in places lying on the trade routes to Tibet.

The conception held by the Kashmir state of its proper Aksai Chin border is probably best seen in a map by the geologist and explorer F. Drew, drawn in 1874 and published in 1875. Having served for a time as an official of the Kashmir government and then as the Kashmir Durbar's governor of Ladakh, his map was based on his own journeys, the travel and survey reports of W. H. Johnson (and those of another explorer named Hayward), and upon the report of the Forsyth mission to Chinese Turkestan in 1870.[20]

Drew placed the Aksai Chin in Ladakh, as had Johnson, but the

main part of the immediately adjacent Karakash river valley he awarded to Kashgaria (in Sinkiang). The Kashmir government's subsequent willingness to exclude the Karakash valley from its Ladakh claims probably rested upon the interest shown for a time by both the Kashmiris and British in securing good trade and political relations with the then ruler of the Kashgaria principality, Yaqub Beg. He was enjoying *de facto* independence from the Chinese. But with the death of Yaqub and the temporary reassertion of Chinese authority over what had been his domain, the Ardagh–Johnson strain in British–Indian thinking apparently prompted the Government of India to claim the Karakash valley along with the Aksai Chin. Judging from hints in later publications, however, the Kashmir government continued to exclude the Karakash from the claim it was making.[21]

After 1947 the new government of independent India would choose to continue the Karakash claim. But no choice would be necessary between British and Kashmir claims concerning the Aksai Chin. That was because the Drew boundary divided the Aksai Chin from Sinkiang and Tibet by strictly following the line drawn by Johnson (who would succeed Drew as Ladakh governor). Moreover, post-1947 Indian decision-makers would have available to them Kashmiri and British evidence to show that the Ardagh–Johnson–Drew line had some historical basis to it, and thus was not just a matter of British strategic convenience or Kashmiri ambition.

One piece of evidence was a treaty concluded between the Kashmir government and Tibet in the mid-nineteenth century. In September 1842 the Kashmiris and Tibetans had signed a treaty which bound them to respect each other's territory and referred to "old established frontiers" between Ladakh and Tibet. More evidence of an already-fixed Ladakh-Tibet border dates from 1847, when China was pressed by the British to undertake joint border delimitation in this area (at this time Britain recognized Chinese paramountcy over Tibet). A Chinese statement described the Ladakh–Tibet borders as already "sufficiently and distinctly fixed . . ." and as an "ancient arrangement".[22] Equivalent language was used in a Ladakhi–Tibetan agreement of 1852.

Yet, while it is possible to see these statements as referring to a traditional border, the post-independence Indian Government surely knew that the British had chosen not to do so. It was British policy to restrain what they regarded as frontier adventurism by native rulers. Successive British-Indian governments were quite dubious about the historic rights allegedly acquired by the Kashmir Government at the edges of Ladakh. Not only was the 1842 treaty taken as not binding upon British India, but the Ladakh–Tibet border was considered unsettled in the absence of formal delimitation and demarcation.[23]

Nor did the British think that the 1842 treaty covered any portion of what would later constitute the Aksai Chin. It applied only to part of the Ladakh–Tibet border, and more specifically to places related to recent military action between Tibet and Kashmir. Of the territory further northeast along the Tibet frontier and then northwest into territory contiguous with Sinkiang (Turkestan), the British had no knowledge in the 1840s.

The British approach to Kashmir's claims was based largely upon considerations of strategy and expenditure, but there was some historical justification for British caution, as has since been pointed out by both the Chinese and independent scholars. The 1842 treaty was (or so it has been argued) a nonaggression pact referring to broad frontier zones separating the populated areas of Ladakh and Tibet, rather than linear borders in the modern sense. Moreover, the Chinese were not so much signalling satisfaction with a traditional state of affairs by their 1847 statement on demarcation, as being evasive. They did not want to be drawn into a border creation exercise with a foreign power, having had bruising experiences with such powers on other territorial issues.[24]

This source of ambiguity is worth exploring further.

It is true that the 1842 treaty was a nonaggression pact designed to cover a large zone of recent hostilities, rather than a document created for the purpose of confirming the existence of a definite border. Yet both that document, and the Ladakh–China agreement which supplements it, speak of frontiers and boundaries to be respected. An earlier Ladakh–Tibet treaty (1684) also referred to commonly understood jurisdictional limits, and there are indications of such known limits in Ladakhi and Tibetan documents going back to the 10th century A.D.[25]

There is reason, however, to think that such references may not have been to a definite border line. As Lamb suggests, the known traditional border in a sparsely populated mountain region like this one will usually be only a series of separate points. These will generally be "located at passes or at crossing points of streams or rivers".[26] No consensus among frontier peoples or states would necessarily exist as to how to join those points together.

Moreover, Maxwell has argued cogently that inner Asian peoples and rulers traditionally conceived of boundaries as large zones (like the "march" lands of European history) rather than lines. Zones were sufficient to separate populated areas. The concept of linear borders is a modern European invention.[27] The implication is that treaty documents from earlier periods in Asian history would not have distinguished between frontiers (as the term is being used here) and borderlines.

The fact that so much of the Indian documentary evidence is specific about particular crossing points from one ruler's jurisdiction to another's, and vague on lines, favors the Lamb–Maxwell argument. But the present Indian Government can claim that linking known border points together, in a way sensitive to topography (noting watershed ridges and other population dividing features), and utilizing evidence of such regular activities as trade, grazing, travel, administration and revenue collection, shows the traditional and customary boundaries to which the treaties refer. Not all segments of such borders may have been linked at the time in the mind of any one ruler or map-maker, but when given a modern interpretation their linear nature is clear. It can also be argued that the known boundary points were such clear political jurisdictional markers to the people using them that some regional awareness of the general location of a linear border must have existed.[28]

On whether the Ladakh–Tibet treaty of 1842 covered the Aksai Chin at all, by applying to Sinkiang–Ladakh frontier as well as the Tibet–Ladakh frontier, the Government of India can claim that it did. Since China had approved the 1842 treaty at the time, all Chinese dependencies (including those in Sinkiang) were bound by it, and the Chinese Government would have been concerned to "safeguard and represent the legitimate territorial interests" of another of their constituent provinces besides Tibet.[29] Moreover, the Ladakh-Tibet line had to reach a junction with the Sinkiang frontier somewhere. The line eventually drawn by Johnson to cover both the Tibet and Ladakh sides of Ladakh, upon his completion of the first official survey of the Aksai Chin and adjacent terrain in 1864, simply showed where that junction was historically known to be, namely in the Kuen Lun mountain range, near 80 degrees longitude.

But this reasoning is rather tortuous and leaves the applicability of the 1842 Treaty to the Sinkiang side of the Aksai Chin ambiguous at best. As for Johnson's work, it creates other problems of ambiguity in addition to this one.

THE EVIDENCE PROVIDED BY W. H. JOHNSON

The legacy of the explorer and surveyor W. H. Johnson, in first setting a boundary line for the Aksai Chin and adjacent territory that the Kashmir government could endorse has been interpreted in several alternative ways. Johnson's line either reflected British imperialism as befitting something drawn by an employee of the Government of India (the Chinese view), Kashmir government ambitions (an interpretation offered by Alastair Lamb), or confirmed an historic bor-

der which long predated the Dogra dynasty in Kashmir (the modern Indian view).

Surely the proposals of Johnson were sensitive most of all to the territorial ambitions of the Kashmir state. Johnson's alignment "coincides very closely with that claimed in 1865 by the Kashmir Government".[30] The Kashmiris were still pressing an earlier claim to Shahidulla fort, which lies south and west of the Aksai Chin, on the Sinkiang side of the Karakorum range. As a political surveyor, dismayed at the inactive frontier policies of the British in India at that time, Johnson "may well have felt it his patriotic duty to lend cartographic support to Kashmir's forward claims".[31] Both Johnson and later Ardagh, by hinging their lines on Shahidulla, may have felt forced to specify a boundary that placed the Aksai Chin within India.

Yet as the Indian side has argued, there is no direct evidence that the Aksai Chin issue was closely tied to the question of Shahidulla in the British mind generally. Shahidulla was a Kashmir claim the British did not want to pursue. Moreover, temporary shifts in British policy on Shahidulla did not produce corresponding map or documentary changes with respect to the Aksai Chin frontier. Thus, Shahidulla and the Aksai Chin, separated by the Qara Tagh mountains, could well have been separate matters to Johnson, and all who supported his boundary definition.[32]

Further supporting the post-1947 Indian view is the argument that Johnson and those who had employed him did not think of the territory between Ladakh and Sinkiang as a no man's land, but as an historic Kashmiri region crossed by travellers. Some of those travellers were on the way to the Central Asian principality of Khotan, while others were folowing a lesser route to Kashgaria, instead of the main one through Karakorum Pass. Johnson and his successors would also have been aware that the Khotan government did not regard the Aksai Chin as its own; the Khotan frontier lay along the Kuen Lun mountains.[33] Thus, Johnson's own reports, and the official position taken by the 1866 report of the Great Trigonometric Survey project (for which Johnson worked before taking employment with Kashmir), do speak of traditional limits of territory, rather than limits newly defined.

It is difficult to determine if he was correct, but he did faithfully represent the Kashmir government's perception.

THE AMBIGUITIES OF AKSAI CHIN GEOGRAPHY

If British policy, the claims of the Kashmir government, and the work of early explorers, did not establish an Aksai Chin boundary unequivocally, can the facts of geography do so? While an overall

Ladakh border claim can be tied to watershed ridges (i.e. those ridges which divide one river system from another), this is not easily done for the Aksai Chin. The plateau itself is a jumble of ridges and basins, containing no one drainage system, bound by high mountains only to the southwest and northwest, and blending on its northeastern side into the great Tibetan plateau.

The Indians have sought to use the great Kuen Lun mountain barrier to mark off the Aksai Chin from Chinese territory. But this measure applies only to the Sinkiang side of the Aksai Chin, and even there questions can arise as to inclusion or exclusion of parts of the Karakash river basin. As a team of scholars sympathetic to the Indian case points out, the Aksai Chin alignment the Indians eventually drew follows only one of several plausible watershed divisions.[34]

However, the Indian line linking Karakorum Pass and the Kuen Lun range does go along a clearly identifiable topographical feature (the Qara Tagh range) and then follows the Kuen Lun crest. On the Tibetan side, the line from Lanak pass up to the Kuen Lun does at least have the justification of being sited along the divide between the Amtogor and Sarigh Jilganang lakes on the one side, and the Lighten and Tsoggar lakes on the other, despite some inaccuracy in Johnson's original plotting of the line, and some vagueness in current Indian conceptions of it.[35]

There is an overall geographic sense, then, to the Indian line, despite some ambiguities. In contrast, the final (1960) Chinese claim line along the entire Tibet-Sinkiang frontier with Ladakh is geographically arbitrary; following no definite topographical features.[36]

PROBLEMS WITH ADMINISTRATIVE EVIDENCE

Another realm in which Indian decision-makers faced ambiguity in formulating a border was that of administrative records. Detailed evidence of administrative jurisdiction and practice, drawn from the Kashmir archives, were compiled by the Indian Government.

Among these pieces of documentary evidence were:

1. A Kashmir Government map of 1865 showing the location of police check-posts in the vicinity of Yangi Pass in the northern Aksai Chin;
2. The Gazetteer of Kashmir and Ladakh, regarding use of the Aksai Chin for collection of fuel and fodder;
3. A preliminary report of the 1908 Ladakh (tax) settlement, which included the Aksai Chin and Lingzitang in Ladakh;
4. A map of the Ladakh tehsil (ca. 1913) showing that the Tankste Ilaqa included the Aksai Chin and Lingzitang; and

5. A Kashmir Government record of 1950 regarding salt collections by Ladakhis from the Amtogor lake region of the Aksai Chin.

What the Indians sought to show with these documents and others was that both the Aksai Chin and Lingzitang were traditionally part of the Tanktse Ilaqa (subdistrict) in the Ladakh Tehsil (district) of Kashmir. Revenue records of the Kashmir Government showed assessments and setting of tax rates done from time to time, and "revenue collected from all inhabited places up to the Indian boundary alignment".[37] Such records showed that "Ladakhis had been taxed for use of the area — which was one of seasonal, nor permanent habitation — for at least three-quarters of a century before 1950".[38] The documents also showed Kashmir Government levies on flocks and pastures, maintenance of caravan routes and rest houses, and supervision over trading parties.

The objections made by the Chinese (after 1960) to Indian use of such evidence are pertinent. A village (Tanktse) could not possibly administer the Aksai Chin, the Lingzitang plain, and the Chang Chenmo valley; the area was too large and documents and maps were too imprecise. To rebut the 1865 police post map, for example, the Chinese have cited the 1908 Gazetteer of India which showed no police force stationed in Ladakh, as of that date, although a small garrison of Kashmir troops existed at Leh. The Indians have had to agree that the map of police posts was introduced only to show effective Kashmir jurisdiction over the Aksai Chin as early as 1865, and not to claim that such posts existed on a continuous basis since then.[39]

However, at least the Indians have been able to describe some administrative dealings with the Aksai Chin over time, associated with the largest village near to it (Tanktse).[40] The equivalent Chinese evidence has been sparse. The Indians can buttress their administrative case with more surveys and records of journeys made by officials and the occasional private explorers. Despite disagreement by some of them with Johnson's claim of a border beyond the Karakorum range, these explorers and travellers from the British-Indian side of Ladakh provided the main body of 19th and early 20th century knowledge about the Aksai Chin. Thus the Indian case has rested not just on odd pieces of evidence, but on a "regular sequence of official records, stretching over many years".[41] Up to the early 1950s, when the Chinese constructed the Aksai Chin road, perhaps with Indian knowledge,[42] the intermittent contact with the Aksai Chin from the Kashmir side was more than the Chinese or their tributary states had maintained.

It was on the strength of such evidence that the Government of India could ultimately argue that what might be called Chinese juris-

diction had never extended south of the Kuen Lun mountains, despite Chinese insistence that the Aksai Chin and adjacent areas had been administered from the Shahidulla district of Sinkiang. Yet one can argue as well that the Chinese or Chinese tributary states in Sinkiang had established at least minimal contact with the Aksai Chin. The upper Karakash valley was a well-known source of jade, and had been mined from time to time over the centuries.[43] Some surveying had been done from the Chinese side for the Kuomintang in the 1930s and 40s.[44] This sort of contact was quite limited, but it was enough to prove that the Indian tie was not exclusive.

In all, can India claim that there was an administratively defined border? It is doubtful. Even the Indian evidence presented to the Chinese in 1960–61 did not show regular Indian contact and jurisidiction extending all along the boundary line finally claimed for the Aksai Chin. The area was too big, too much of it was uninhabited, and not enough of the empty places could have been seen from grazing grounds or trade and exploration routes or contacted in some other fashion over extended periods of time. Census returns and other public works projects which demonstrated Kashmiri control in other disputed portions of Ladakh would not apply to the bare Aksai Chin. Pasturage records would not cover the large portions of it which are high desert.

From the administrative evidence, however, as with the legal (treaty) and geographical evidence, one can see how the Indians drew the broad conclusions they did. They were that the Aksai Chin was never administratively Chinese, and was less of a no man's land than the British often took it to be. Therefore it must be Indian, and a geographically sensible border could be devised for it which would represent the traditional alignment which must have existed from time immemorial.

INDIAN BORDER DECISIONS

The Aksai Chin border ultimately adopted by the Nehru government was the Ardagh–Johnson line, separated from earlier claims to Shahidulla and other areas further west and south. Just as the British had done in the 1920s and 30s, the Indians decided to make no claim to Shahidulla, but their position on the Aksai Chin showed none of the tentativeness which had characterized British policy up to 1947.

The Government of India was determined that the entire India–China border, including the Aksai Chin sector, be seen as "delimited" even if not physically "demarcated." "Delimited" meant a border based on tradition and custom more than on British author-

ship. Despite some hesitation shown in public statements by Nehru in the early autumn of 1959, the Indian Government has never deviated from its contention that the delimitation concept covers the Aksai Chin.

The weight of all the positive evidence amassed by the Indians, rather than any individual peice of it, made for a plausible case, although not as strong a case as has been fashioned for most of the rest of India–China border. Relative to the largely negative line of argument advanced by the Chinese, the Indians have the advantage.

But, to the extent that independent India claims absolute rather than relative worth for its Aksai Chin case, by holding that the border has been conclusively and unambiguously delimited, the Indian argument goes beyond what the historical evidence will justify. Whenever someone discovers one or another flaw in the Indian case, a presumption is naturally created that if India's claims are not absolutely correct, then they must be absolutely unjustified. This is far from the truth, but the Indian Government has so structured the situation as to allow even fair-minded critics to perceive matters in this fashion, at least initially.

THE INDIAN DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

As the recollections of some of its founders have shown, the foreign office (i.e. the eventual Ministry of External Affairs) of the independent Government of India was already functioning soon after independence. It was the direct successor to the Foreign Department (after 1935 the External Affairs Dept.) of British days, although its personnel were generally not drawn from that source.[45]

The primary responsibility for determining what kind of border the new Indian nation-state shared with its northern neighbors, China and Tibet, fell to the Ministry's Historical Division. With the Prime Minister, Mr Jawaharlal Nehru, serving as his own foreign minister and having the MEA report directly to him, his involvement in the border formulation process was intensive and detailed.

The key person handling the documentary detail was the Historical Division's first Director, Dr K. Zakariah. A former academic and an older man who did not remain in government service long, he is recalled by his colleagues as brilliant, scholarly and honest.[46] As part of a long discussion about the northern frontier taking place within the Ministry between 1947 and 1954, Zakariah came to be charged with gathering British and Indian records and collating them. Only in 1951

did he start putting them up to the Prime Minister. Kashmir government documents were not yet included.[47]

Junior officials like those at the Historical Division level, and even more senior ones within the MEA, counted for little compared with Nehru's own experience and ideas. There were few restrictions on him since foreign policy decision-making was hardly institutionalized at this point,[48] and his domestic political standing was secure. Long the keen student of world politics, and practitioner of it for the Indian nationalist movement, he was also an amateur historian. Although Nehru read every line of the historical material the MEA submitted to him (he liked to do the work of officials for them), it was the sweeping political conclusions to be drawn from history that held a fascination for him. Nehru would never know the documentary details as well as his subordinates, but the policy conclusions were very much Nehru's own.[49]

It has been suggested that the adoption of the Ardagh–Johnson line as the basis for the Ladakh border came just after independence, with the crises then besetting the new Government of India. Contributing to the decision were: the trauma of partition and the sense it left behind of a fragile Indian state and nation, the dispute with Pakistan over Kashmir, the presence of Kashmiri politicians in India able to act as lobby, and the close ties between the Prime Minister and other high officials with a Kashmiri heritage.

Involvement in a territorial conflict with Pakistan was especially important, since it required that the limits of the disputed region be defined. But such definition could not offend the sensibilities of those Kashmiris leaning toward India, or uncommitted to Pakistan. Considerations of subcontinental military defense similar to those which had exercised the British also had to be given their due.[50]

It is quite likely that the process which eventually produced the Aksai Chin border was begun in this way and for these reasons, in 1947. But the sparse evidence available now indicates that the actual drawing of the Aksai Chin boundary and the decision to declare openly where it lay was a delayed reaction to the Chinese military takeover of Tibet in 1950. Only then was the interministerial North and Northeastern Border Defence Committee (Himmatsinghji Committee) created with participation by the military. The committee sought historical information about the Ladakh border from the Ministry of External Affairs.[51] The Committee probably recommended that some boundary defining decisions be taken, not merely for the Aksai Chin but for the entire India–China frontier.

The Nehru government was then impelled to act on the strength of certain strategic perceptions as well. The Prime Minister was prepared to accept the consequences of the loss of Tibet as an autonom-

ous buffer between Chinese and Indian power. While he always maintained a sense of India having a special political interest in Tibet and in Tibetan autonomy, he made clear his conviction that instead of a Tibetan buffer India must have a recognized border.[52]

In addition, Sino-Indian ties had been strained briefly, at the time of the 1950 Chinese move into Tibet. Rapid recovery and improvement of those ties did not entirely erase concern about the Chinese intentions. Although no armed attack on India was expected, Nehru "did not rule out infiltration by groups or even occupation of disputed areas".[53] It was therefore important to establish Indian border claims clearly and leave no question about them.

A decision by the Prime Minister to reject the Macartney–MacDonald alternative and consider the Aksai Chin to be properly Indian came in 1953. It was part of a larger policy-setting decision to publish official maps showing an unambiguous delimited boundary between India and China. Just at this point Zakariah was retiring, to be replaced by Mr J. N. Khosla, who stayed only until 1954. Most of the work of confirming and solidfying the Indian case for the border fell to Khosla's successor, Dr Sarvepalli Gopal, who assumed the Director's post in 1954.

Examination of Kashmir records did not come until 1959, after the Sino-Indian border conflict had already erupted. At that time Gopal reviewed the whole historical-documentary case, with trips to Srinagar and London. He did so because the Prime Minister wanted a reconsideration of the entire issue. With Gopal reporting that the case was sound, and with the completion of India's portion of the Indian and Chinese document known as the *Officials' Report* in 1960–61, the Prime Minister wasfinally satisfied that proper historical research standards had been observed. His 1953 Aksai Chin decision was thereby confirmed.[54]

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF BORDER FORMULATION

A more basic set of attitudes and beliefs shared by both the Prime Minister and his officials, was brought to bear on the process of border formulation, in addition to strategic or political considerations. Underpinning them all was the fervent belief that an Indian nation had existed through time, defined by culture, common experience, custom and geography, long before the British had created and imposed their own state structure on the subcontinent.

Nehru's own pre-independence writings had dealt with this last point at length. Indeed, his major books, such as *The Discovery of India* (published in 1945, only two years before independent Indian

border definition began in 1947), ranked among the most eloquent nationalist repudiations of the British view of India. Crucial to that view had been the British belief that India existed as a viable political unit only because of of British military and administrative power.

With the Indian belief in a "discovered" India came a corollary. The traditional and customary boundaries had long existed, based on natural features like mountain ridges and watersheds, and naturally evolved by populations and cultures. The British had chosen to reinforce these boundaries, or to deviate from them, either for political reasons or from ignorance of geography, history, and Indian society. Indeed, because the British were a foreign occupying power, with a perspective that was non-Indian, the British were sometimes prepared to sacrifice Indian interests and sensibilities when formulating frontier and border decisions.[55]

It was toward this last conclusion especially, that the Prime Minister and the MEA would have been drawn when confronting the British-Indian historical files. They did not have immediately available to them all of the India Office records (the London archives were not consulted until 1959), but they did have the National Archives in New Delhi. Those archives would contain most of the relevant India Office material and most pertinent documents from the British Foreign Office as well. They would show the restraining hand London had often applied on the British-Indian government and the restraint Calcutta and New Delhi had exercised upon the Kashmir government. It is ironic that Indian nationalists had themselves once castigated the British for adventurism and expenditure undertaken in Afghanistan and other places.

The Prime Minister also acted upon his belief in the historic expansionism of the Chinese state. He told his intelligence chief at the time (1952) that during periods of internal unity and vigor China tended to be aggressive, or so his reading of Chinese history indicated to him. Despite his hopes of establishing a friendly India–China relationship, given the imperative Indian need for it, and despite his recognition of the anti-imperialist experience and feelings the two countries shared, he was still prepared in 1952 to see China as a potential security threat on a par with Pakistan.[56]

CONCLUSIONS

There are some generalizations in the political science literature which help to explain India's creation of an Aksai Chin border. A convenient way of summarizing them was devised some years ago by the political scientist Robert Jervis.

One of his points was that: "decision-makers tend to fit incoming information into their existing theories and images. Indeed, their theories and image play a large part in what they notice."[57]

In the case of the Aksai Chin it cannot be said that Nehru and his advisors were applying well-developed theories so much as important attitudes and images embedded in Indian nationalism. But a particular theory of border origins was developed between 1947 and 1953 as historical and geographical evidence was first examined. It was probably made more sophisticated when the full historical-legal case had to be presented to the Chinese between 1959 and 1961. Development of an Indian border theory and gathering of information were two parts of the same process.

Jervis further argues that: "it is not necessarily irrational for actors to adjust incoming information to fit more closely [to] their beliefs and images . . .". He goes on to say that foreign policy decision-makers, especially, must form conclusions on the basis of evidence that is usually ambiguous. Indeed, the evidence "almost always permits several interpretations".[58]

Thus, while those formulating the Aksai Chin border (and indeed the Indian version of the entire Sino–Indian border) may have made occasional factual errors, it was not necessarily erroneous or irrational to see their information as more determinate than it was. Despite the fact that the task before them was unusual in late 20th century (establishing a border some 2000 miles in length), the psychological approach they brought to it is common and indeed normal in foreign policy decision-making.

Moreover, the process of choice involved in formulating the Indian border was not irrational, if one defines irrationality (the way Jervis does) as acting under influences that the actor would not call legitimate "even if he were conscious of them".[59] Persons involved in the creation and later elaboration of the Indian border case have openly written or spoken about their assumptions and attitudes. Indeed, they see their thinking and criteria for decision-making as falling well within the context of regular international law and practice.[60]

"Decision-makers who reject information that contradicts their views" says Jervis, "or who develop complex interpretations of it, often do so consciously and explicitly."

> Since the evidence available contains contradictory information, to make any inference requires that such information will be ignored or given interpretations that will seem tortuous to those who hold a different position.[61]

Some scholarly opinion has not merely decried the seeming tortuousness of Indian border reasoning. A few critics have even come to

see the Indian border case as deliberately falsified from the start. Either Nehru was deceived by advisors like Gopal (the Karunakar Gupta position) or Nehru himself was involved in deception of his country.[62]

Yet scholars, like statesmen and officials, are liable to see things as self-evident and unambiguous on the strength of pre-existing beliefs. "To someone with a different theory the same data may appear to be unimportant or to support another explanation."[63] Rather than devise conspiratorial explanations, scholars may find it wise to deal with psychological subtleties still unexplored.

Similarly, on the political level the Chinese Government may have to recognize that whatever debating points they (or anyone else) may score against the Indian position, no *de jure* boundary settlement will be achieved unless Indian psychological assumptions are respected. Just as the Indians failed to be sufficiently sensitive to the border psychology of the Chinese, when China was considered merely expansionist by India and much of the world, China has never understood the Indian psychological dimension of the border dispute.

Were the Chinese to do so now, they might abandon their public claim that the entire Sino–Indian boundary is negotiable, with uncontested title to the Aksai Chin and other parts of Ladakh to be secured by trading away other Chinese territorial claims elsewhere. Few self-respecting states would consider a 2000 mile long frontier open to barter, even if assured of a favorable negotiating outcome and no expansionist designs on the other side. Surely that is too much to expect of the present Government of India, which perceives in the Chinese negotiating stance an attempt to denigrate the historical authenticity of the Indian nation. A true nation would not, in the Indian view, be asked to negotiate its historically evolved borders. That request or demand could only come from a neighbor which (like India's former British rulers) regards India as an artificial creation.

NOTES

1. For early but sound scholarly works leaning toward the Indian side see Margaret W. Fisher, Leo E. Rose and Robert A. Huttenback, *Himalayan Battleground: Sino–Indian Rivalry in Ladakh* (New York: Praeger, 1963); Dorothy Woodman, *Himalayan Frontiers: A Political Review of British, Chinese, Indian, and Russian Rivalries* (New York: Praeger, 1969); P. C. Chakravarti, *India's China Policy* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1966); and W. F. Van Eekelen, *India's Foreign Policy and the Border Dispute with China* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1964). Among Alastair Lamb's major books on the border dispute are: *The China-India Border, The Origins of the Disputed Boundaries,* (London: Chatham House Essays No. 2, Oxford University Press, 1964); and *The Sino–*

Indian Border in Ladakh, (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1975).

The Chinese position on the dispute is given in the *Official Report* compiled by Indian and Chinese teams teams in 1960–61, the full citation of which is *Report of the Officials of the Government of India and of the Peoples Republic of China on the Boundary Question* (New Delhi: Ministry of External Affairs, 1961). For a recent presentation of their case see Chen Tiquang, "Legal Aspects of the Sino–Indian Border Question" reprinted in Joint Publication Research Service, *China: Political, Social and Military Affairs*, No. 298, pp. 1–52.

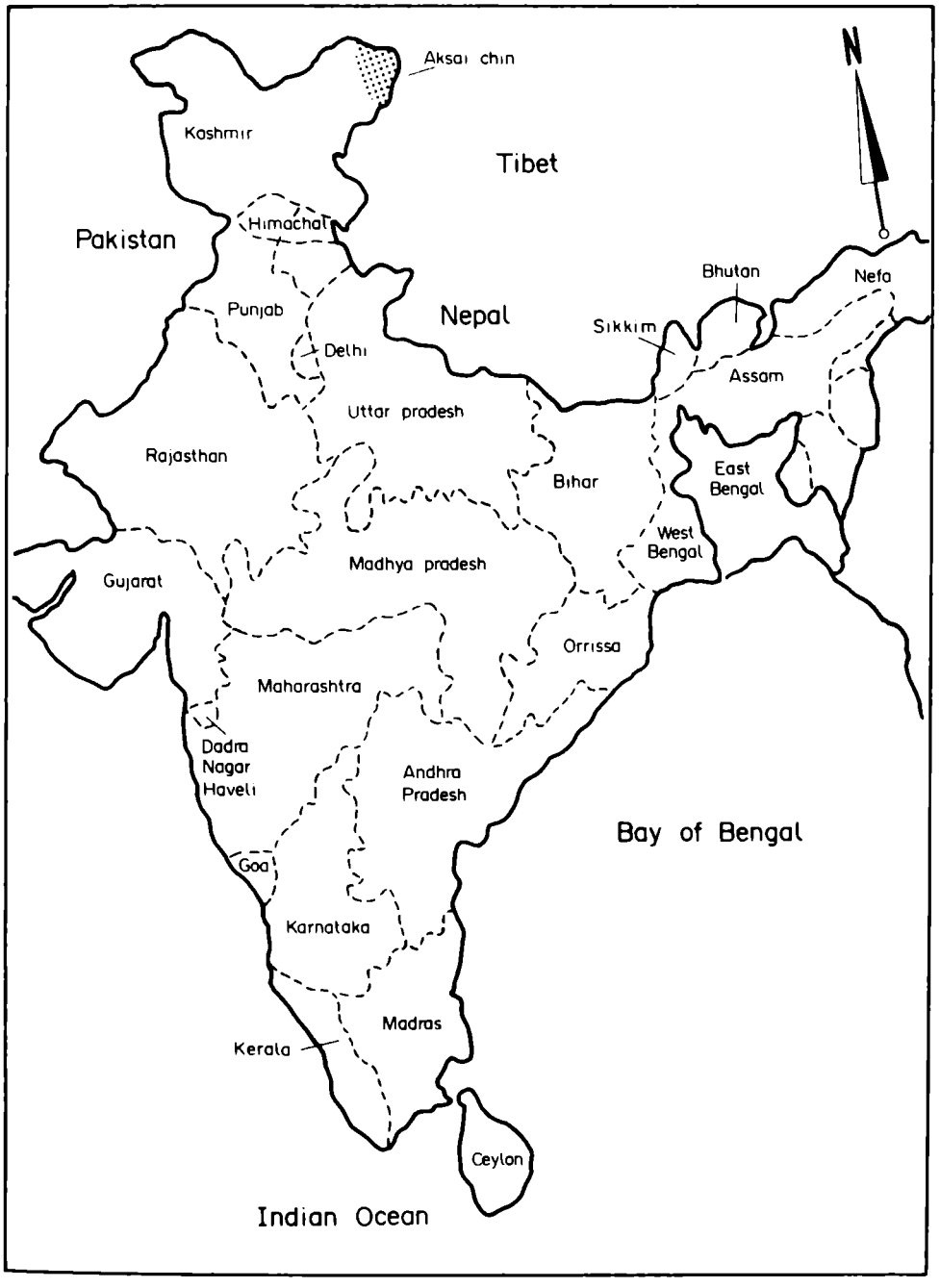
The citations from the Maxwell book used here come from the paperback edition — *India's China War* (New York: Doubleday, 1972).

2. Sarvepalli Gopal, *Jawaharlal Nehru, A Biography,* 3 Vols. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976, 1979, 1984).
3. Karunakar Gupta, *The Hidden History of the Sino–Indian Frontier* (Calcutta: Minerva Associates, 1974), pp. 22–23.
4. The names now used for the several proposed Ladakh borders of British days were coined by Alastair Lamb in his 1964 volume. Prior to that, it seems that the only Kashmir boundary given an official name was the Durand Line. Lamb, personal communication (7 May 1984).
5. G. Narayana Rao, *The India–China Border: A Reappraisal* (New York: Asia Publishing House), pp. 59–60.
6. Lamb, *China–India Border,* pp. 110, 112–114; Ladakh, p. 14.
7. Gupta, *Hiddin History,* p. 23; on pre-1912 maps see Lamb, Ladakh, pp.8–9.
8. See Karunakar Gupta, "A Note on Source Material on the Sino–Indian Border Dispute — Western Sector," *China Report* Vol. XVII (1981), No. 3, pp. 51–55.
9. Alastair Lamb, "Studying the Frontiers of the British Indian Empire," *Royal Central Asian Journal* (October 1966), p. 247.
10. In 1935 the two wings of the Foreign and Political Department were made into two separate departments. What responsibility was permitted the Government of India for foreign and border affairs came under what was now called the External Affairs Department. See Subimal Dutt, *With Nehru in the Foreign Office* (Calcutta: Minerva, 1977), pp. 20–21.
11. Lamb, "Studying Frontiers," p. 245.
12. Alastair Lamb, interview — Hertford, U.K. (1983).
13. Woodman, *Himalayan Frontiers*, pp. 364–365.
14. Lamb, *Border in Ladakh* p. 12.
15. Rao, *India–China Border*, p. 59.
16. Much of Hardinge's text is in Woodman, *Himalayan Frontier,* pp. 79–82. For complete text of Ardagh memorandum, see Woodman, Appendix 5.
17. Lamb, *Border in Ladakh,* pp. 11–12, 67–68.
18. Gupta, "Source Material," p. 54.
19. Lamb, personal communication, (7 May 1984.
20. Frederic Drew, *The Jummoo and Kashmir Territories; A Geographical Account* (London: Edward Stanford, 1875), pp. 1, 23–25, 331–333, 474–476, 496.
21. Alastair Lamb, personal communcations, (7 and 17 May 1984); Lamb, *The Kashmir Problem; A Historical Survey* (New York: Praeger, 1966), p. 95.
22. *Officials Report* (1961), pp. 53–54.
23. Maxwell, *India's China War*, pp. 11–12.
24. Such was their reasoning in 1847 when approached by the British about the Ladakh–Tibet border, and most likely would have been their reaction throughout the rest of the 19th century, see Chen (1982), p.6.
25. See Woodman, *Himalayan Frontier*, p. 36–37, 351; Fisher *et al.*, *Himalayan*

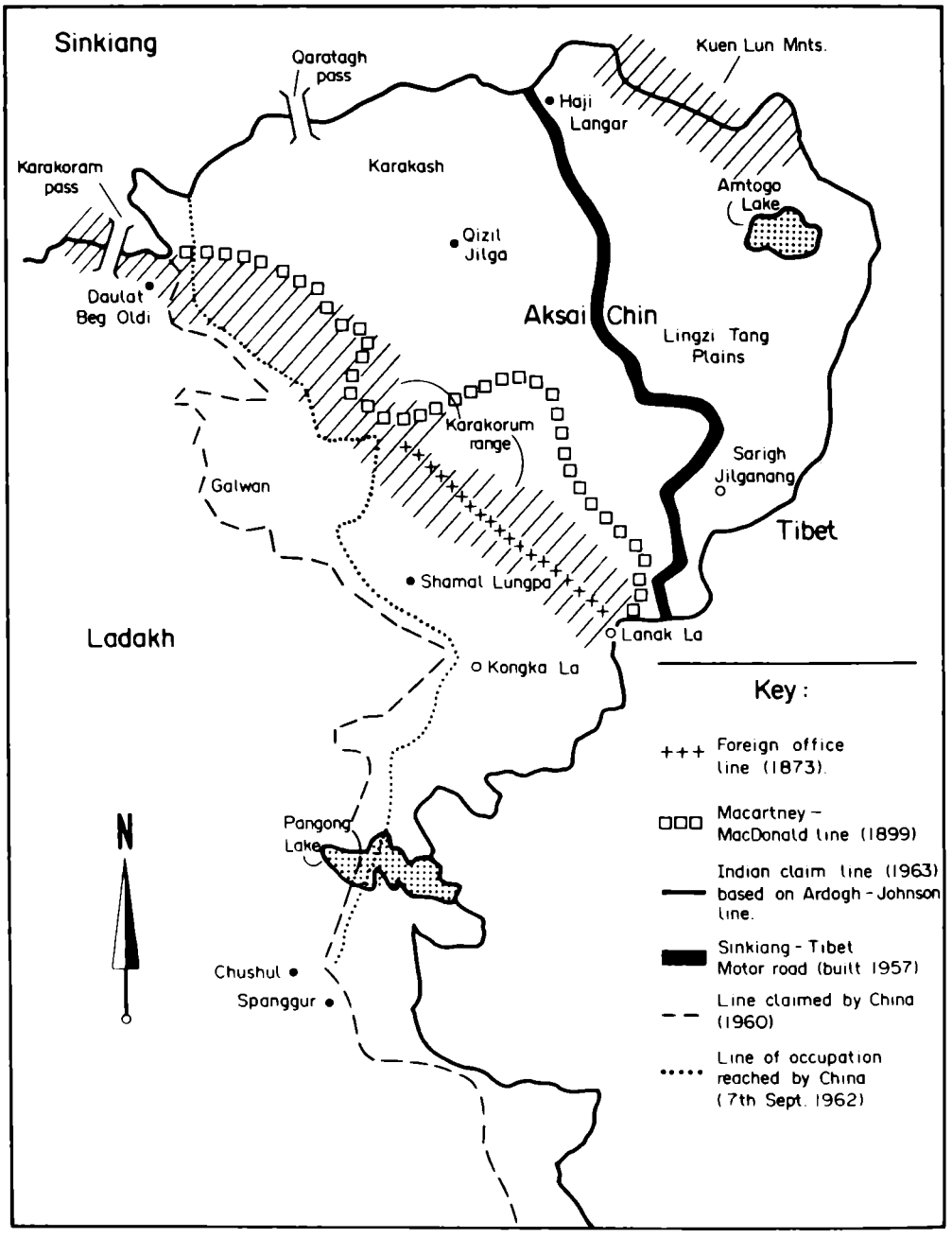
Battleground, pp. 18–41.
26. Lamb, *China–India Border*, pp. 67–68.
27. Maxwell, *India's China War*, p. 7. The comparison to the European "march" land is from Lamb (Interview, 1983).
28. Mr J. S. Mehta, Foreign Secretary (ret.), Government of India (Interview, New York, 1984).
29. *Officials' Report*, p. 266.
30. Lamb, *China–India Border*, p. 83.
31. Lamb, *China–India Border*, oo, 34–40.
33. *Officials' Report*, p. 145.
34. Fisher, *et al.*, *Himalayan Battleground*, p. 96.
35. Lamb, *Border in Ladakh*, p. 10.
36. Fisher *et al.*, *Himalayan Battleground*, p. 119. After first making their most plausible argument, i.e., that no boundary for the Aksai Chin ever existed, the Chinese ultimately did produce their own version of such a border, starting in 1959 and more fully in 1960. According to Alastair Lamb, the Chinese 1960 line seems to have merely linked points of occupation recently established by them (interview, 1983).
37. All foregoing quotations and material taken from Fisher *et al.*, *Himalayan Battleground*, p. 118–119.
38. Geoffrey Hudson, "The Aksai Chin," *St. Anthony's Papers* Vol. 14 (1963), p. 12.
39. *Officials Report*, pp. 153, CR p. 112 (CR refers to Chinese-supplied version).
40. Drew in 1875 described Tanktse as the largest settled place encountered on the Ladakh side along the track to the Aksai Chin. There is no evidence of any change occurring up to 1959. See Drew, *Jummoo and Kashmir*, p. 334.
41. Sarvepalli Gopal, "Appendix: The Northern Frontier of India of India," in *Jawaharlal Nehru, A Biography*, Vol. III (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), p. 303.
42. See Hudson, "Aksai Chin," pp. 20–22.
43. Lamb, personal communication (7 May 1984).
44. *Officials Report*, CR pp. 80–82.
45. Dutt, Foreign Office, pp. 4–5, 20–21; Badruddin Tyabji, *Indian Policies and Practice* (Delhi: Oriental Publishers, 1972), pp. 12–13, 21.
46. Interviews, N. R. Pillai (London, 1983); J. S. Mehta (New York, 1984).
47. Interview, Gopal (London, 1983).
48. Shashi Tharoor, *Reasons of State, Political Development and India's Foreign Policy Under Indira Gandhi* (New Delhi: Vikas, 1982), pp. 22–23.
49. Gopal interview (London 1983); see also Tyabji, *Indian Policies*, pp. 7–8.
50. This point of view is Alastair Lamb's, presented in his review of the Maxwell book for *Modern Asian Studies* Vol. 5 (1971), No. 4, pp. 392–397. Parts of this summary were also taken from an interview (1983); and personal communications (7 and 17 May 1984).
51. Karunakar Gupta first reported this information in his *Hidden History*, pp. 22–23, but seems to have secured it from one or more Indian officials. Judging from Dr Gupta's later writings the source was either Mr K. P. S. Menon or Mr R. K. Nehru. There is no reason to doubt that the information on the Zakariah memorandum was accurate.
52. This writer's interpretation, explained at greater length in *India and the China Crisis*, book-length manuscript, in preparation. On the failure of Nehru to secure Chinese acceptance of a border, under the influence of Ambassador Panikkar in Peking, see Gopal, *Nehru*, Vol. II, pp. 177–181.

53. Gopal, *ibid.*, p.176.
54. This account of the Aksai Chin descision-making process was supplied by Dr Gopal during an interview, (London, 1983). It is a valuable version for several reasons. First, it is information coming from a participant in decision-process, rather than an interpretation. Second, a similar description (although much more general) emerged from interviews conducted in New Delhi during 1966–67 with another veteran of the Historical Division, Dr K. Gopalachari. Gopalachari served as Acting Director in 1958–59, while Gopal was on leave. He had also been a research officer in the Division since 1949. On the subject of Nehru's hesitation in 1959, see my article: "Perceived Hostility and the Indian Reaction to China," *India Quarterly* (October–December, 1973), pp. 283–299.
55. See Rao, *India-China Border*, p. 30; and S. Gopal's review of the Maxwell book, in *The Round Table*, No. 245 (Institute of Commonwealth Studies, Oxford) (January 1972), p. 117.
56. B. N. Mullik, *My Years With Nehru 1984–1964*, pp. 78–79.
57. Robert Jervis, "Hypotheses on Misperception," *World Politics* Vol. 20 (1968), p. 455.
58. Jervis, "Hypotheses," p. 460.
59. Jervis, "Hypotheses," p. 456.
60. E.g. see T. S. Murty, *Paths of Peace, Studies on the Sino–Indian Border Dispute* (New Delhi: ABC Publishing House, 1983), pp. 37–134.
61. Jervis, "Hypotheses," p. 460.
62. This last view was expressed by Mr Neville Maxwell (interview, Oxford, 1983).
63. Jervis, "Hypotheses," p. 462.

APPENDIX: MAPS



Map 1. India and the Aksai Chin.



Map 2. British formulated boundaries for Ladakh.

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Return to Karagunduz With the Kirghiz in Turkey*

REMY DOR

In the distance, dark smears of burnt scrub, khol smudged by the rain's tears. Rocked by its languid undulations, the coach falls peaceably asleep. The driver starts involuntarily now and then, as he clutches the steering wheel. He is grey with fatigue, hard long hours of work are recorded in the network of deep lines, the clusters of lengthy arrows pointing towards his temples. Twenty-odd hours between Ankara and Van. Of course I could have gone by plane. But, after all, it seemed preferable to carry out a gentle transition between two different worlds: *güle güle* Istanbul friends, good-bye high society; *güle güle* the solemn rites of the university at the History Congress in Ankara . . . I'm allowing myself the time to moult, as I change from one role to another. I'm respecting a stage of decompression as I approach a new milieu.

So the coach penetrates the Steppe, heading towards the night. Night is my deliverance. Darkness releases me from the weight of stares that fall heavily upon me, that follow me in the street. I do not know how to swim amongst these stares, I am as drowned in them. Like a *lun-gom-pa*, a mysterious Tibetan ascetic, capable of covering unheard-of distances, I walk with my eye trained on a distant landmark. I cannot confront these stares which exclude me, heavy stares like that of the policeman who approached me at the coach station in Ankara:

"Now then, man, what's your name? You look like a friend of mine."

"I don't think so, no, I don't think so, I don't live here."

"Oh, a foreigner are you?" he says, stepping away, an arrogant hand on the butt of his pistol.

So the coach is covered by the darkness, swallowed up by the sombre Steppe. Above the driver's head, the digital clock gives off a sinister red glow and pitilessly reels off the minutes and hours of a

* I thank Clare Perkins for translating this article from the French.

time which belongs exclusively to the vehicle. Suddenly a feeling of intense solitude grips me and oppresses me. Without space is opaque, within time uncertain.

I am seated up front, right near the driver, my ears ravaged by the criminal snores of my neighbour; he has a broken nose, cropped hair, a two-day beard: I only hope the young man sleeps soundly and wakes late!

Everyone is asleep, and I am alone with the driver and the night. Alone with fears of the night, century-old obsessions. Today I read in the newspaper *Milliyet* that in the east of the country highwaymen — doubtless Kurds — pillage vehicles that venture on the roads after sunset. The driver's head jerks regularly each time he recovers his senses. I sink into a chaotic slumber. A fairly mild impact, rather sharp braking. I shudder, my limbs icy, my blood beating in my temples.

"It's nothing. Only a donkey, a donkey, dead already, must have been hit by a car."

I recall the bus driver in Paris, who, a few months ago, having run a girl over, drove calmly on, saying, "It's nothing to worry about. Just a plank, an old plank." And no-one in the bus corrected him . . .

"*Bâx ârqâdâş, hiç bi şey gürmädim*, listen friend, I didn't see nothing . . ."

The driver's pronunciation has the harsh tones of the east. To escape from my stiffness, I let myself drop into whatever sleep I can muster. Two o'clock in the morning, halt, police inspection, identity check. We leave the bus, unload the luggage, search through one's own bags in the beam of the torch of a plain-clothes policeman, stung by the sharp chill of the wind, dazed with fatigue and sleepiness. Three quarters of an hour later, we set off again. Somewhere towards Muş the sun rises abruptly. I was vaguely hoping for a gentle dawn with subtle colours, but harsh Anatolia betrays no such weakness.

At ten o'clock we arrive at Van. I rush immediately to Yalçın Kıtapçı's, the bookseller's. Yalçın leans over the counter to embrace me.

"*Hoş geldin*, Rémy bey, welcome back."

A soft, humble smile plays over Yalçın's face, over his smooth, pleasant features. Yalçın is a most efendi person, *çok efendi*, and he combines a most exquisite politeness with a simplicity of manner which puts one immediately at ease. One never disturbs him. It seems as though he spends his life awaiting one's arrival, spends his life waiting to be of help. A small, slim man, with a greying moustache, he is the local correspondent for *Milliyet*. A few days ago, in Istanbul, whilst in the office of the elegant Pınar T***, whose husband runs the paper, I had telephoned to inform him of my imminent visit and was purposely evasive about the date of my arrival.

The bookshop-stationers is situated on Van's main street, and specialises in school supplies and official pamphlets. I force my way through the crowd of regular customers and clear myself a place to sit down with my cumbersome luggage.

"I am so sorry, Rémy bey, really so sorry, please forgive me."

Yalçın bey is unable to extricate himself from the crowd that surges round him. "No trouble, my dear Yalçın, *rica ederim*, don't mention it, it is my own fault." I should have remembered that yesterday was the first day of the school term. Even on normal days, there's a continuous procession; children and adults, civvies and soldiers, policemen, peasants; a crowd, a human tide sweeps through the shop in endless waves. To buy, to sell, to talk, to exchange news; many activities are dovetailed together. A sociologist could write a paper on Yalçın. I am reminded of E. Hall's observation in "The Dance of Life": it was while watching a grocer in an Indian reserve that he formulated the opposition between monochrony and polychrony; in the West a linear accomplishment of tasks which the East overlays.

In the centre of the shop an illuminated advertisement reads "Buy a Pelikan pen, the gift everyone would like to receive." I daydream for a moment. The pelican is writing with his beak in blood in huge letters: "I am weary of a long journey". An hour and a half slips by before Yalçın finds the time to ring the civic hall. The vali agrees to receive me at four o'clock. That leaves me time to renew my acquaintance with the town.

Van as a town holds no surprises. The recent establishment of the Centenary University and industrial expansion resulting from increased commercial exchange with Iran make it a dynamic and rapidly developing town. But Van is superbly unaware of the tourist. The ancient capital of Urartu turns its back disdainfully on the intruder. No amenities, no *turistik tesisleri* which would enable one to discover the charms and benefits of the sodic waters of the lake. As for the wonderful sculptures in the Akdamar church, those who seek them out deserve the pleasure of admiring them.

Three thirty, back at the bookshop. Yalçın is out. I sit down and wait. In Afghanistan I learned to fossilize myself. I coil myself away effortlessly into these small corners of time, motionless for hours, rooted to the spot. One day in Badaxshân — at Fayzâbâd maybe? — I spent six hours watching a post office clerk trying to obtain a line to Kabul. He progressed, from one operator to the next, in twenty mile leaps. At the last moment a *kalan nafar*, a VIP, always requisitioned the line. Kunduz was the furthest he got.

To wait it is essential to lay aside hope. In fact, I would be able to manage perfectly well on my own. However, Yalçın represents a precious advantage: thanks to his intervention, my position changes, I

become acceptable within this framework. A chain of responsibilities is created. I have, of course, all the official permits but that is not always enough.

Just before four, Yalçın returns. We go to the civic hall. Unfortunately, the vali is out for the afternoon. One of the staff approaches me with an auriferous smile to ask me for French cigarettes for his collection (two years ago I gave him some Gitanes): unfortunately I have given up smoking . . .

Provided with the necessary directions, we set off on the tracks of the prefect. Ah, here is the car with the official flag, the gleaming black Mercedes, parked in front of a building: a good sign. Unfortunately the vali is at a meeting. So why not take this opportunity to go and have a cup of tea? Twenty minutes or so later I suggest we send a secretary to inquire discreetly. Thanks to which, the vali sees me forthwith. He is a busy man. A pile of files on his desk are witness to this. He has the incisive look of those who are constantly obliged to make judgements, the sharp eye of those who endlessly take decisions. From a strategic point of view, I should never have taken the chair on the left-hand side of the desk: too late, I disappear behind the pile of files. At the price of a heroic twist of the hip, I surface and reappear in the prefect's field of vision. People enter, come forward timidly, speak softly. Behind the vali one can sense the entire strength of the state.

"*Hürmetlerim sunarim, sayın Vali bey*, my respects, sir."

I make it my duty to explain in Turkish the point of my mission. Having studied at Galatasaray, this high-ranking civil servant has a perfect understanding of French, but after all I really must prove that I am not just a tourist. As I already came here two years ago, it is imperative that I justify my reasons for coming again. I respectfully proffer the invitation card for a lecture that I will be giving next month in Istanbul. About the Kirghiz, naturally, so you understand, *ne var ne yok diye*, I must collect information, I must be up to date on the latest developments. After several agonising minutes of reflection:

"It is agreed, you may proceed."

Relief. All I need to do now is to see the Security Chief. I'm there within the hour. As always when I enter a police station, I am particularly ill at ease; will they not discover some fatal guilt; my God, what have I forgotten, neglected to do, been unaware of . . .?

"That letter there, from the Turkish Embassy in Paris, it's very nice, but it's in French, so I just have to trust you, do I? And its no replacement for a document from the Ministry of the Interior."

"Yes, precisely, the Foreigners Department of the Ministry of the Interior did not want to issue me with documents. They said they

would be sent there directly."

"Alright. But don't stay too long."

"Definitely not, a few days, a week, no longer."

In possession of an official guarantee, I return to my hotel, the Beş Kardeşler. One problem remains: how to travel to Karagündüz? If I hire a taxi as I did last time, I will "eat a stake" as the Turks say, or in English "pocket an affront". Oh, well, Allah will provide, for the moment I am helpless with fatigue and I sink into a glaucous slumber.

After nightfall, it must be after eight o'clock, I return to the bookshop. The first sight that greets me is the round face and slanted eyes of Adnan Menderes, the grandson of the Kirghiz Khan.

"*Kandaysıng, Dor afandim*, how are you, Mr Dor?"

Afandim, I note the concession. In the Pamir I was most often "âghâ-ye Dor", sometimes "Altın Bek" for the local touch (I can translate my name without betrayal) and to give me the excitement of a masquerade: another name, another man. Here I could be "Altunizade", the smartest of names, very "ancient-ottoman-nobility"; my friend Prince Ortaylı calls me thus (*Maşallah, yani!* . . .). And, why not, I could even become "Altinizade Rémy Çelebi", in memory of the great 17th century Turkish traveller. One quickly succumbs to megalomania . . .

"My grandfather is coming to Van tomorrow with our minibus".

"Could you tell him that I am here, and to come and collect me at nine thirty at the Beş Kardeşler?"

"*Boldu*, agreed!"

My travel problem is thus resolved in unhoped-for fashion, as always in the East. There is the key word that I approached earlier. Unhope, I mean neither hope nor hopeless. To remain firmly distanced from expectation and regret, to rely on the *kısmet*, individual destiny.

The following day, the young Kirghiz comes to collect me, approximately on time, and, at a smart pace, we make our way to the warehouse of the Van Regional Development Fund run by Ahmet Akyürek: it is the meeting place for the Kirghiz when they come to town. Rahman Kul, the Kirghiz Khan, has gone to the bank. I pass the time doing the crosswords in an old newspaper that I find lying around. Suddenly there he is before me, in his felt hat. Beneath the burden of his years, his joys and his sorrows, his shoulders are stooped, but his eye is firm, and engages one's attention without ambiguity.

"Aha, Dor afandim, there you are . . ."

The past is resurrected. Kabul, 1971, the office of R. Farhadi, the vice minister of Foreign Affairs:

"You wished to meet R. Kul, well may I now have the pleasure of introducing you".

The Kirghiz chief looks at me in silence. In his black corduroy tunic over his contrasting white cotton shirt, soft knee-length boots, fur-trimmed cap, he is undeniably the image of a lord of the Steppe. As is customary every year, he has come to pay homage to his lord, King Muhammed Zaher, for his lands in the Pamir.

The Khan's eyes consider me, evaluating profit, interest, risk. As a certitude, the confidence of uncontested power emanates from his person. All of a sudden I understand the notion of *kut*, the peculiar charisma which for Turks in general and for the Kirghiz in particular, is part of the role of the chief. A more intense life-force, a superior capacity for luck than the norm. Is it by chance that Rahman Kul, when he became naturalized, chose the Turkish name of Kutlu, "He who has *kut*"?

The mists of time are torn away.

"Have you eaten, Dor afandim, *cedingiz bi*?"

We set off with his son Uşan, whom I photographed long ago: he is in one of my books, a little boy with scarlet cheeks and hands chapped by the frost. Now he is a tall lad of sixteen. He is a boarder at the Atatürk High School, with seven of his clansmen. Another thirty or so of the group are at the *İskele Temel Eğitim Okulu* secondary school. One other has been accepted for the Hoteliers' School at Antalya, so do not be surprised if one day in a luxurious hotel in Lara Plajı you are served by a waiter with slanting eyes set in a Mongolian countenance.

After lunch in a *kebapçı*, in the bazaar, we go to a tea-house. There is nothing romantic about the place: the courtyard where we sit overlooks a truck depot. It is a grubby, cheerless corner, where a few low stools struggle for survival around a few rickety tables. Next to us a gang of boys chat and snigger. Each phrase is punctuated with loud swearing and with the thumping of fists on the table, which is weakened with each blow. We make a wonderful new target for them.

"Hey, look at the Japanese, and what about the other one? What's he up to with them?"

Imperiously, the gangleader seats himself at our table. He is short, fat and chain-smokes, exhaling in spurts with his mouth wide open.

"Hey, grandpa, you must be at least ninety? Are you a Muslim? How do you know this guy?"

Rahman Kul answers the impertinent questions without irritation, sometimes seriously, sometimes ironically and he finally gains control of the verbal exchange: no victory is too small, no success minimal for he-who-has-*kut*. Soon the gang remove themselves, and at last we can breathe freely.

During this lull, the minibus arrives and we leave town. The road out towards Özalp presents a strange spectacle, which attracts the at-

tention of the traveller. On each side of the road he is escorted as far as the eye can see, by a guard of honour of piles of rubbish. As a sort of reflection of the extensive nature of the agriculture, the disposal of refuse spreads itself out with nonchalance, instead of concentrating itself shamefully in dumps. Council lorries unload neat piles of rubbish and rubble, and blown about by the breeze, strange plastic grasses, stiff reeds of cardboard bloom on the Steppe, and the wind plucks strange tin flowers grown of fertile compost and scatters them artistically over the wastelands.

After about twenty kilometres, at Erçek, we turn off to the left. The village, where Armenians once lived, is now occupied by refugees from the Caucasus. Then we follow the stony road that leads to the two Karagündüz villages: one must make the distinction between Old Karagündüz, where Kurds and refugees from Iran live side by side, and New Karagündüz, where the Kirghiz have been installed. For four years now. Four years ago one thousand one hundred and thirty eight men, women and children landed in Adana, probably with no idea of what was happening to them, unaware of the journey, of the number of miles they had travelled. Like the peasant woman I managed to catch by her belt, in Istanbul, when she was about to fling herself out of the door of the *dolmuş* which was going at top speed: she must have recognised the landmark for finding her way back to the house where she was in service and with complete disregard for the laws of dynamics, she decided to alight . . .

Karagündüz aligns its houses in impeccable order, a challenge to the chaos of the surrounding hills, a challenge to the untidiness of the neighbouring villages. Without hesitation, the Kirghiz have exchanged their herdsman's lassoo for the peasant's hoe. The felt yurt is no more, and here they are villagers, townspeople even, as a number of them, through lack of space have had to go to live in Malatya. And they, indeed, seem to be the most successful; in Karagündüz umeployment is the sad norm. Without the allowance of six thousand Turkish liras per adult and three thousand per child, survival would be problematic. "Those in Malatya" are lucky, "those in Malatya" have jobs. Jealousy is soon roused, and the difficulties experienced together are forgotten. "Those in Malatya" are rich, they are believed to have bank accounts, savings, hundreds of thousands of Turkish liras raining down upon them. But they were all poor in 1978, in the Ishkuman Valley, where they had retreated, after having crossed the high passes, climbing painstakingly over the giddy tracks which lead to Pakistan, via the Waghjir Pass. Fleeing amidst children crying, the elderly gasping, fleeing amidst the anguished bleatings of their sheep swallowed up by the crevasses, the neighing of the horses, whose hooves slipped on the frozen snow, fleeing before the threat of

the Communist revolution, fleeing before the feared Bolshevik. The four years of purgatory at Gilgit and Hunza are forgotten. Secure again, in asylum, in Turkey, day to day survival assured, their tribal solidarity diminishes. Other causes reinforce the process; benefits allotted to nuclear families (*exit* the patriarchal unit), dispersal over eight years, and changes wrought within the society, all contribute in weakening the traditional framework. *Horresco referans*, even the Kahn is criticised.

"He is rich, and we are poor. Who knows how many dollars he has in the bank! . . ."

Karagündüz has always been intended as a reception point for refugees: first those of the 1975 earthquake, and now the Kirghiz. But it is only for the Kirghiz that work has been carried out to provide a mains water supply, electricity and telephone lines, a school, a health centre, a post office and a grocery store. This is sufficient to fuel jealousies, this time jealousy of the Kirghiz. The Kurds from the neighbouring villages are envious; now they would like to take back New Karagündüz, and too bad for the Kirghiz! . . .

Kurds! . . . This year for the first time, the Kirghiz allow themselves to express a dull anguish, the first symptom of an obsidional complex.

"They do not like us and we are the only Turks around here."

Watch-dogs have appeared at New Karagündüz.

"Why do you have dogs? You didn't used to have any! And anyway you don't like dogs."

"Last year I planted melons and watermelons, Dor afandim, and I didn't eat any of them. They were all stolen."

"Someone cut down one of my trees."

"Our washing was hanging out to dry, and it was all taken."

Voices are raised in complaint. "They", "them", "the neighbouring villagers".

I enquire about the flocks and breeding.

"How is it going, how are you doing?"

"It's very difficult, very difficult. We'll never manage. There's too much snow here. Up to here (indicating his thigh). The animals can't get by on their own. In the Pamir, the wind blew the snow away, and when the yaks scratched a bit with their hooves they found the grass. Here we have to give the cows fodder. Lots of fodder. And to make hay you've got to have land."

"Yes, but you'll soon be moving to Altın Dere . . ."

"Oh, yes, Altın Dere! We were supposed to go there long ago. What are we supposed to do? Get ready for the winter here or leave and go there? Winter is nearly here and we don't even know whether to get in a supply of coal."

Indeed, the prefect assured me that the Kirghiz would be moving in two months, that is in December. It must be said that Altın Dere is Paradise-World for the Kirghiz. A whole valley to themselves. The Promised Land, putting down roots, retrieving the dignity of being someone somewhere. The Kirghiz refugees from the Roof of the World know all about purgatory; they have spent the past eight years there. Eight long years during which autonomous individuals have lost responsibility for themselves. Yes, but Altın Dere! It must be understood that for them it is not only land and roofs over their heads . . . But the firms who are responsible for building the site, responsible for this five million dollar project do not understand. They have their own reasoning, their own view of things, these firms. So the buildings grow in Altın Dere, but with the slow growth of trees. They emerge from the earth, but they are only ligneous skeletons; the sap is wanting, fresh sap to nourish the branches and give colour to the leaves. There is no water at Altın Dere, so what do you do about that? . . .

"*Xoş keldingiz, Dor afandim*, welcome!"

My quarters are to be at Rahman Kul's house. Nothing distinguishes it from all the others apart from the fact that it is number one. Two small rooms, a store, a sort of kitchen, a lavatory. Oh, the relief brought by this last amenity. No more long anxious wanderings in search of a sheltered spot. The Kirghiz, unlike myself, have no need to overcome the inhibitions of a prudish, Catholic upbringing. They are not embarrassed to be seen pulling their pants down, — the men, of course, the women, they must be angels — they don't even mind someone going by close to them, the only thing that matters is that the chosen spot be a reasonable distance from habitation, and that they do not sully a useful spot or hallowed ground.

I settle into one of the two rooms inhabited by R. Kul and his wives and children. How wonderfully prolific are the polygamous; over seventy and still surrounded by kids! . . . It reminds me, I don't know why, of Lou Andréas-Salomé and his happy childhood with an elderly father.

A little ballet commences, mad manoeuvres, a game of hide-and-seek: as soon as I enter a room, the women leave. A particularly unfortunate outcome of their stay in Pakistan: the women have become *ruypuş*, veiled-faces. They avoid men. Anything masculine unsettles them. At Gilgit, the mullahs obliged them to stay inside and wear the veil. They will need plenty of time to free themselves of the habit. The time when the proud Kirghiz women welcomed me into their yurt is well and truly over. Orun Bibi is dead; I spent many hours in conversation with her while she did sewing or cooking, and learned such a lot from her. Her body rests here in Karagündüz, beneath the humble

anonymous headstone. She has followed all my other informers of the past down the shadowy paths of the underworld, on the dismal tracks of *kara cer*. The Kirghiz culture itself is sinking gently into the beyond, is returning to the ultimate *materia prima*, whence it may, one day, reappear regenerated.

The women are in the kitchen. Finished, the carefree rides from one encampment to another, the horse races when the boys pursued the girls, avoiding the girls' crops, finished the *aytış*, the song jousts where male and female singers pitted their eloquence against one another. Cooking, washing, cleaning are still part of their lives. That part is unchanged!

For novelty, look to the children. They are all over the place. In the Pamir they died, and the survivors made themselves inconspicuous, and hid away to escape their destiny. They were children without laughter, children with wide grave eyes, full of the mortal distress of the condemned. Here they are blossoming. From dull and lacklustre their eyes are transformed to voracious. They are discovering that life is a game. They pretend to be bulls or dogs and chase each other with cries of simulated fear. They make terrifying "woof woof" noises, hold threatening fingers to the sides of their heads and run after one another, snotty-nosed and happy in the sunshine, kicking up the dust of the stubble-fields.

I watch a group of children playing on a swing; and no, there is no mistake, they really are talking Turkish to each other. Today perhaps, tomorrow certainly, they will be at a loss for words in Kirghiz, they will hesitate and stammer, and their children will be bemused by the strange patois spoken by their grandfather, which their father finds hard to follow.

The children nourish themselves with television. Their fathers didn't know how to look at a photograph. They would indulge in frightful gymnastics, forehead furrowed, closing one eye and bringing a half-closed fist up to the other like a view-finder; and unable to comprehend the photo as a whole, they needed to remove part of the scene to decode it efficiently. The children are watching the *Reklâmlar*: they watch the Teddy bear that advertises Yumoş, a Turkish fabric-softener, bouncing silently onto a pile of softened clothes; they see Arçelik refrigerators marching down the street; they see the little Eti biscuit fishes wriggling in a plate.

As for the parents, they do not understand anything this strange little window shows them, they lose track; the situations are unbelievable, the characters incongruous and ghost-like; *in mi, cin mi*, men or devils? I give up trying to explain to Rahman Kul the pseudo-comedy (ridiculously tragic) which is inflicted upon us this evening: a man returns after years of absence to find his wife living with two lovers.

"What's got into them all? How can they show themselves in such a manner? Do they not realise to what extent they are lacking dignity?" Ah! Rahman Kul, Rahman Kul, these are spectres you are watching. We are all spectres in the West, rotten, decomposing from within, our brains are liquified and our thoughts are turbid. Why explain all this to him? I haven't the strength. Why reduce his vision (Napoleon, de Gaulle, Ariane, Concorde) to mine (unemployment, terrorism, violence, despair). For an illiterate Kirghiz, France of the Enlightenment continues to shine like a dead star.

He makes his decision; as soon as the Turkish authorities have issued him with a passport, he will come and see me in Paris, and he'll go to the States as well. Fine! It's agreed, Hajji Sahib, come to my one-roomed apartment, I will push back the walls so that you can stay there with your family; I will curve the ceiling into a dome to remind you of the shape of your lost yurts. We Westerners have the power to constrain matter, do we not?

The Kirghiz chief lights a cigarette with a disposable Cricket lighter that I gave him two years ago.

"Is it still working?" I ask with surprise.

"Look, Dor afandim, the Turks are cleverer than you!"

Thanks to a tiny valve, this typical product of the consumer society, the disposable lighter, attains infinite use; having discovered the principle of the refill, it abandons it's original frailty and aspires to the perenniality of the Zippo. Like the old DeSotos in use as *dolmuş* in Istanbul, everlasting exhibits in a museum open until the end of time, the refilled Cricket now perceives a life of toil stretching before it. For generations it will rub shoulders in the depths of pockets with Maltepe cigarettes (alas! where are the Üçüncüs of the good old days?)

"You are smoking too much, Khan Sahib, two years ago you didn't cough."

"Cigarettes are good for the health, they stimulate the brain. Anyway I smoke three packets a day and I'm not dead yet."

He must do everything better than everyone else, Rahman Kul, of course he must, he has *kut*.

He already had his always overflowing ashtray at Tergen Gorum. And his radio. He listens to the BBC news in Persian on it every day that Allah gives him. This admirable and formidable consistency crucifies me. Even if he lived to be a thousand he would never miss it. Maybe it is an Afghan characteristic. I remember the lieutenant who commanded the Qala-e Pandja garrison, the last military outpost before the Pamir. He was an elderly officer approaching retirement, he must have killed mother and father to have been sent to this hole where departure always seemed impossible. He was unanimously hated and feared by the local peasantry. And he definitely did have

the look of an executioner. Recognisable immediately as being one of those people from whom one can expect nothing, neither justice nor pity. Every day he came to sit in this former "king's pavillion", a wooden shack infested with bugs, where I was staying while assembling the horses for my caravan. He would come, in his uniform now consisting only of a torn tunic slipped over his Afghan dress. He would sit down without speaking a word to me, and he would stare in the direction of the Soviet border. He would stay there for hours, his heavy features fixed in a hieratic expression. His gaze immobile and empty, as if hypnotised by the shining line of the river and the Soviet road beyond. I understand now, after all these years, what a titanic struggle he maintained alone against a fearsome enemy. Waves of Russian soldiers came to break against his stare, long lines of Soviet soldiers stumbled against this undaunted sentry. One day the vision became unbearable, he shut his eyes, turned his head, and then at that moment the enemy flung themselves towards him. *Mane, thécel, pharès* . . . Only the Kirghiz had foreseen the flood.

Now they are Turks, and proud of it. They count their blessings; they count the 35,000 *dönüm*, the 320 square kilometres they have been given at Altın Dere; they count the benefits of education, health care; they count the distances still to be covered; they count the obstacles to be crossed before they become citizens like others.

When I left Karagündüz, I called at Van University. I visited the studio where two Kirghiz artists, sons of the Khan, were working. I spent a long time in the Rector's office looking at Akbar's sculptures and I lingered in the refectory which is decorated with huge brightly coloured frescoes by Malek. I couldn't help feeling a certain malaise. Of course they had made progress, of course the composition of their work had improved, it was more thoughtful, also more ambitious . . ., but something was lacking, something which burst out of the first paintings, from the early sculptures of the Pamir period, and that something made one forget the naïvety, the awkwardness, and that something was sincerity. An impression of transparency, an intuitive perception of the truth of the work, of a nameless work, a product of the collective conscience of numerous generations. But doubtless, in the same manner as one must proceed from orature to literature to approach the source of discourse, so crude art must be refined before attaining its ultimate form.

I think that Akbar and Malek will make a name for themselves; I think they have much work ahead of them, long years of apprenticeship, before they master new and complex techniques, and assimilate abstraction; and they will need time, a long time, and then more time to forget all this again. And isn't that, in fact, what is in store for each one of the Kirghiz refugees?

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The Events in Kazakhstan — An Eyewitness Report*

After the expulsion of the First Party Secretary of Kazakhstan, Kunaev, a fierce power struggle began in the republic's party apparat. In view of this it was decided to appoint an outside man. The result was that the obkom secretary from Ulianovska, Kolbin, was chosen.

The Kazakhs were unhappy with this. The Russians congratulated each other saying "Finally there will be order, these Kazakhs are everywhere — in the institutes, they occupy the best posts and are the first in line for apartments".

On the day of the famous event posters began to appear near the educational institutes and near students' halls of residence about a meeting in Brezhnev Square. That same morning respectable-looking people in two white cars appeared and demanded that the students go along to the meeting.

A peaceful demonstration was taking place in Brezhnev Square. People were carrying placards with quotes from Lenin's nationalities policies and with the slogan "Kazakhstan must belong to the Kazakhs" and sang national songs.

The people who had congregated in the square were mainly young Kazakh students. Many were from the Kazakhstan State University, and from the law, agricultural and other institutes. There were also young workers from youth hostels. There were also Russians amongst the demonstrators.

The chairman of the Soviet of Ministers of Kazakhstan appeared before the crowd and having named all the state posts occupied by Kazakhs said: "What are you unhappy about? Which of your rights have been violated?" — after which he ordered everyone to go home. The demonstrators replied that key posts in the army, MVD and KGB of Kazakhstan were occupied by Russians, and they refused to disperse.

* From the *Arkiv Samizdata*, AC 5913 (10 April 1987).

Leaders of the Komsomol repeated similar calls to disperse but without effect. In the evening some of the demonstrators left. The remainder organised a "sit down" in the square in front of the Central Committee of the Kazakhstan Communist Party building (in Brezhnev Square).

The militia and soldiers surrounded the square.

According to some reports the disturbances started because a soldier from the cordon struck a young woman holding a baby over the head with a truncheon. Other reports talk of the fire brigade, who in order to scatter the demonstrators, started spraying water over the grounds. One of the vehicles apparently crushed a girl who was sitting down; some people overturned the vehicle and set it alight. Following this the infuriated young people began to break off the facings from around the square, breaking them up into smaller pieces and throwing them at the soldiers and militia.

Fighting broke out. Weapons were not used. The students were beaten with truncheons and kicked. The instigators were pulled from the crowd and taken away. According to some, the battered students were taken to the militia station. Others say they were loaded on to dumper trucks and dumped beyond the town.

At the same time hooligans swooped in various parts of the town, and attacked the nursery belonging to the MVD located not far from Brezhnev Square. Subsequently, it was discovered that those arrested had identical knuckle-dusters.

That evening a vehicle drove through the cordon to the demonstrators; from it vodka and cigarettes that had been laced with drugs were distributed. The demonstration was eventually crushed the following day. The soldiers began to rush into the halls of residence, beating up the students and throwing those who showed resistance out of the windows (3–5 floors).

Several days later the organs of power revealed the names of those who had been present at the demonstration. They demanded to know from those who were absent from lectures where they had been and what they had been doing. There was an inquiry in all the hospitals and polyclinics with the purpose of discovering who had applied for medical help. The demonstration had been filmed, and this was used to identify the demonstrators.

At the present time the arrests are continuing. So are the expulsions from work and from institutes. The students do not have the right to enter other educational establishments.

A famous poet, Olzhas Suleimenov, was present at the demonstration. He turned to the cordon of militia and soldiers with a request not to touch the young people. He said that they would find a solution themselves. Olzhas Suleimenov has since been arrested. Also a

Kazakh film director was arrested (his name isn't known but it is presumed that he is a Kazakh).

According to some reports there were separate outbreaks in other Kazakh towns. Kazakhs who were travelling to Alma Ata in order to join the demonstration were pulled off the trains. Contact with the town was broken. It is said that Kolbin rang Gorbachev twice that night. Gorbachev replied: "It's not possible".

According to the inhabitants 2138 people were arrested, 280 students were killed and 29 were killed from the cordon of militia and soldiers. Four hundred Russians took part in the demonstration. According to reports circulated amongst the population by the MVD 280 were arrested and one *druzhinnik* was killed. In order to sound convincing the MVD point out that many of the demonstrators do not have relatives in Alma Ata. The dead are being buried outside Alma Ata.

There are some who hold the opinion that the organisation of this "nationalist revolution" was the work of the Kazakh authorities. At that time, the authorities could not allow the precedent of a peaceful expression of will by the people. That is why the demonstration was misrepresented and the demonstrators were revealed as drunkards and drug addicts. Recently gangs of hooligans (teenagers and youngsters) have appeared in the town beating up everyone they come across.

After these events Russians are saying unashamedly: "What is needed is a machine gun to kill them all [Kazakhs]". "They should be sent to the Urals, Alma Ata should be cleansed of them."

There is despondency and sorrow in Kazakh families. However, it is quiet on the streets.

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Guerre d'Afghanistan
Images de femmes

MARIE-ODILE TERRENOIRE

Igor est prisonnier de la Résistance quelque part à l'intérieur de l'Afghanistan. Il est originaire de Karkhov en URSS. Il a le grade de sergent et faisait son service militaire. Igor a été interviewé par la télévision française par Victor Loupan et Christophe de Ponfilly durant l'été 1985. Voici ce qu'il disait:

"A proximité du village, on s'est étalés en tirailleurs pour aborder les premières maisons, et les chiens sont sortis tout de suite. On avait deux kalachnikov avec des silencieux. Donc on entend charger les fusils mais tu sais on n'entend pas du tout le coup de feu, on n'entend rien que la culasse, chlac-chlac, mais pas de détonation. Donc on a abattu les clebs qui nous attaquaient, ici, tous les chiens attaquent. Donc on les a abattu, après on s'est avancé vers les premières maisons. Tout allait bien et on s'est réparti comme ça devant. Alors Polovinkine a fait: "Bon allez, allez-y, putain", et mon copain George a défoncé la première porte à coups de pied. A peine est-il entré dans la baraque qu'il a reçu un coup de faucille dans le bide. Il a gueulé, ses tripes ont giclé. Quant au lieutenant Polovinkine qui se planquait près de la fenêtre, il l'a défoncée à coups de crosse et s'est mis à arroser l'intérieur de balles, puis on a jeté une grenade offensive — Bam! — Plein de fumée, alors on s'est tous mis à tirer comme des fous par les ouvertures de la maison. Moi, j'essayais de sortir mon pote de là. Puis, quand on a regardé dans la maison, il y avait les restes d'une quinzaine de personnes, plein d'enfants, du sang, de la bidoche et puis la puanteur, une vraie boucherie! Et comme ça d'une bicoque à l'autre. Merde. On s'en va de là comme saouls, on ne pige plus rien, comme des cons, personne ne parle. On se dit que bon, on a accompli notre mission, on a fait ce qu'il fallait faire. Donc, sur le chemin du retour personne ne parle. Il n'y a que les officiers qui n'arrêtent pas de jacter entre eux, comme si tout était normal, quoi! Mais pour nous c'était la première fois, bordel. On marche, puis il y en a un qui se met à dégueuler, un autre qui tombe dans les pommes. Et on avance comme ça en trainant notre copain George. Tout ça en silence . . . Puis les plus vieux commencement à parler tout doucement. Mais nous on y était pour la première fois, on n'y comprenait rien à cette chierie. Alors, nous voyant comme ça, les vieux chnoques ont amené de la vodka, de la came, ils nous ont bourrés de came et de vodka, on est tombés raides. C'était la première fois, bordel, oui!"[1]

Aller au-delà des impressions fortes et horrifiées d'un premier voyage dans les camps de réfugiés afghans au Pakistan; relire les récits

alors entendus sur la guerre, dépasser le choc produit par ce que j'ai appris des massacres, et la peine des femmes; retravailler ces paroles recueillies fin octobre 85 au magnétophone pour les interroger à nouveau sur d'autres aspects, d'autres questions restées sans réponse dans une première exploitation des interviews; vérifier, confronter d'autres témoignages -ceux d'autres femmes, notamment des infirmières françaises ayant séjourné longtemps en Afghanistan et durant ces dernières années (cf. liste des personnes interviewées).

Mon but est d'aborder la question de la vie des femmes afghanes dans la guerre.

Le statut de la femme dans la société est un objet de discorde, de "frictions" entre occidentaux et afghans, noeud où se bloque la communication entre les cultures, enjeu dans la question de l'aide, notamment médicale car elle met en jeu le secteur trouble et sensible des valeurs. Au moment même où je faisais les interviews, une équipe de MSF voulant entrer à l'intérieur de l'Afghanistan se faisait refouler du fait de la présence jugée déplacée de femmes dans l'équipe médicale. Aujourd'hui, il semble que ce problème précis soit sur le point de se résoudre. Mais cet incident est révélateur d'une interrogation mutuelle sur la question des femmes.

Il ne s'agit pas du tout dans cette petite étude de prendre part à la polémique et de heurter les convictions; encore moins de lever les interrogations — en ethnologue — sur la place et le rôle des femmes dans la société afghane.

Prendre la guerre par le biais des femmes: leur vie, leur rôle, c'est tout simplement dans cette répartition des rôles plus tranchée là-bas qu'ici se donner un moyen pour parler de l'organisation de la vie civile, et du soutien réciproque de la population et de la Résistance dans l'ensemble du pays, car il implique de la part des femmes un engagement spécifique et majeur dans les tâches quotidiennes. L'apport des femmes se fait surtout au niveau de l'économie de guerre.

On ne peut que répéter hélas ce que tous les analystes constatent: les opérations soviétiques contre la population civile ont beaucoup augmenté depuis le début de 1985 dans toutes les zones stratégiques où passent les quelques voies routières, et dans les zones frontalières par lesquelles transite l'approvisionnement de la Résistance: destructions des récoltes, des canaux d'irrigation, des villages, pillages, massacres de plus en plus professionnels opérés par des commandos spéciaux (spitnaz). L'armée soviétique cherche à dépeupler ces campagnes pour conquérir sans doute un contrôle territorial qu'elle ne peut obtenir tant que la population qui est là héberge et nourrit les résistants.

Le maintien héroïque de la vie grâce aux femmes qui résistent en restant dans ces provinces d'Afghanistan les plus touchées par la

guerre est crucial dans la bataille qui oppose soviétiques et afghans. Mais l'action des femmes peut prendre des formes plus directement combatives, surtout dans les villes. Enfin, même dans l'exil au Pakistan, dans le sacrifice qu'elles font de leurs hommes qui partent au combat les laissant seules très régulièrement si ce n'est parfois pour toujours, les femmes participent à la volonté farouche des afghans de retrouver leur pays libre.

Avant de me lancer dans ce travail de re-lecture pour retrouver à travers les récits des atrocités commises par les soviétiques et les témoignages des infirmières, la part spécifique qui appartient aux femmes dans les combats contre les soviétiques, je me dois de faire quelques mises au point:

1. Il y aurait certainement un travail en profondeur à faire sur cette question avec l'idée que la guerre a peut-être modifié dans un sens ou dans un autre des comportements et clivages ancestraux, mais ce travail ne pourrait être fait sérieusement que après avoir récolté au Pakistan et en Afghanistan une somme de matériaux dont je ne dispose pas ici.

Les réflexions auxquelles je vais me livrer sont plus à prendre comme un rassemblement d'éléments recueillis ici ou là. L'enquête reste à faire.

2. Le véritable clivage au regard de la guerre d'ailleurs se situerait sans doute plus entre ceux qui combattent avec les armes, des hommes (il y a quelques cas exceptionnels de femmes armées), et ceux — hommes, femmes et enfants confondus — qui ne combattent pas mais qui subissent parfois plus lourdement la guerre et qui doivent assurer le quotidien, ce qui suppose de prendre le relais des absents, de ceux qui montent au front, donc une charge supplémentaire.

3. Il faut surtout se garder de généraliser. Il y a, pour le non-spécialiste, une impénétrabilité de la société afghane.

L'Afghanistan est une mosaïque tribale avec des ethnies qui ne se ressemblent pas, plusieurs langues. Le statut de la femme lui-même diffère selon les ethnies, c'est-à-dire pashtou, hazaras, tadjicks, turkmènen, ou selon les modes de vie — sédentaire ou nomade, paysan ou citadin. La guerre surtout n'atteint pas toutes les régions de la même manière. Il y a des villages qui ne connaissent de la guerre que des échos lointains: à peu de choses près la vie se déroule comme avant, la guerre n'a pas changé la vie. Le drame, n'est pas omniprésent même au pire moment: une bombe larguée sur un village ne fait pas forcément de victimes: dans bien des cas, on a vu les villageois se réunir quand le sort les avait ainsi épargnés, pour fêter leur chance.

4. Les interviews concernent essentiellement des évènements qui se sont déroulés durant l'année 1985 mais d'après tous les échos que nous recevons régulièrement au BIA[2], la situation n'évolue pas dans

le bon sens. Il y a un redoublement de la guerre depuis que les soviétiques laissent entendre qu'ils seraient favorables à une solution politique du conflit. Dans le numéro 60 de *Afghan Realities* paru le 1er juillet 1986, on trouve l'écho d'un nouveau massacre dans la province de Faryab qui, d'après l'informateur du bulletin aurait fait entre 800 et 1000 morts en avril 1986.

Les soviétiques ne se contentent plus de la maîtrise de l'air: ils veulent désormais étendre leur influence au sol.

C'est ainsi que l'on peut affirmer que nos récits ne datent pas, ils ne vieillissent pas. Chaque récit est poignant. Sans même recourir aux cas extrêmes de l'atrocité qui pourtant existent — des femmes enceintes éventrées, des enfants torturés ou pris à leur famille pour être endoctrinés en Union Soviétique — il suffit d'écouter les cas les plus banaux entendus parmi les femmes réfugiées autour de Peshawar pour comprendre ce qu'a d'insoutenable la guerre qui s'abat sur une famille pour la décimer et la ruiner.

I. VISAGES MULTIPLES DE LA GUERRE: LES FEMMES SONT PLUS EXPOSÉES

LA PRÉSENCE D'UN DANGER

La guerre passe par une sorte de couloir stratégique de la mort épargnant de vastes zones: le Hazaradjat et L'Urozgan n'avaient jamais été touchés avant cette année, la province de Faryab restait calme, seulement deux bombardements dans le Badakhshan près de Kechel en six années de guerre, le dernier en date au printemps 1984 n'a fait que très peu de victimes. La vie suit son cours comme avant. "Inch Allah! Si on doit être bombardé, on le sera." Tel est l'état d'esprit. La guerre pourtant peut être là tout près, à 50 km. "On est libre mais en danger", m'a-t-on dit. Ilots de paix coincés entre deux garnisons soviétiques; dans le Badakhshan la population porte le deuil de la guerre, on ne joue plus au Bouskachi (jeu populaire où s'affrontent deux équipes à cheval), on ne joue plus aux cartes, plus de musique. Le commandant et les mollahs l'interdisent pour respecter la mémoire des morts. Le 7 avril, le jour où Babrak Karmal a pris le pouvoir, tout le monde s'habille en noir.

Dans ces régions très reculées, l'activité économique faiblit par manque de matières premières et d'intérêt: l'artisanat a diminué, la guerre a accéléré un processus déjà en cours, les femmes dans le Badakhshan ne font plus de nappes brodées, ne décorent plus les chaussures, elles ne jouent plus d'instruments de musique. Dans cette même région, la population manque de nourriture: plus de farine,

pas de sucre, pas de riz. "Nous, on mangeait le pain avec de l'orge, . . . de l'orge pour les chevaux, et encore parce qu'on était les invités" raconte Anne-Marie (infirmière MSF). La vie s'étiole et s'appauvrit, mais c'est surtout le ciel qui est un sujet d'inquiétude: "Pendant un mois, tous les lundis, il y avait un passage d'avions. Ils ont alors aménagé des 'sangar', en fortifiant les grottes, les abris sous roche où s'entassent les enfants quand passent les hélicoptères." Les femmes surtout ont peur.

LES FEMMES SONT PLUS EXPOSÉES

Les bombardements surviennent la plupart du temps comme mesure de représailles à l'égard des actions de la résistance: un moudjahed tire sur un avion de repérage photo? Le lendemain, les hélicoptères viennent sur les lieux pour repérer le village voisin, c'est le "fishing", une fusée rouge délimite l'endroit à bombarder, il y a un premier passage de jets, le deuxième bombarde, le village est rasé. Le but visé est moins de tuer les civils que d'en tuer quelques uns pour les affoler tous et les pousser à fuir.

Cette logique infernale rend les femmes plus vulnérables dans le contexte afghan.

En Afghanistan, une femme, par définition, est dans sa maison. Quand elle sort de chez elle, quelqu'en soit la raison (chercher de l'eau, visite chez la voisine, travaux des champs ou achats), elle doit prendre certaines précautions vestimentaires dont l'homme est dispensé. La fuite en catastrophe vers les abris perturbe tellement leurs habitudes que certaines femmes n'arrivent pas à acquérir le réflexe salvateur et restent chez elles pendant les bombardements. De plus, le costume de l'homme qui est traditionnelllement terne, assez souvent brun-kaki ou beige, lui procure un camouflage spontané. Par contre la femme de part sa condition même est amenée à porter des vêtements de couleurs beaucoup plus vives qui marquent sa féminité, sa situation familiale, son appartenance à une ethnie, voire à un clan dans cette ethnie. Tout changement dans ce costume a une signification sociale et culturelle, d'où l'extrême répugnance à en changer certains éléments, même pour se camoufler.

Chantal Lebato (CEREDAF) raconte comment elle même, à Kandahar qui était alors pilonné tous les jours, allait se réfugier dans les tranchées creusées en souterrain à coté des "dachakas", et se sentait à l'abri. Les femmes afghanes par contre risquaient leur vie en restant chez elles par peur de la promiscuité, pour éviter de se retrouver côte à côte, femmes, hommes et enfants dans un même trou. Nombreuses sont les femmes qui sont mortes sous une bombe dans leur maison

écroulée alors qu'elles auraient eu le temps de se cacher. Rien d'étonnant alors que le seul bruit des avions provoque chez elles une peur, une tension nerveuse qui peut aller jusqu' à la panique: "si un avion passait très haut, même un avion de reconnaissance, au milieu de la consultation, c'était fou. Nous, parfois, on s'arrêtait, et elles, elles écoutaient, elles allaient à la porte, toute l'activité s'arrêtait pour écouter, elles étaient complètement désemparées, elles allaient jusqu' à se jeter contre les murs."

D'une manière générale, l'ensemble de la population civile, femmes, enfants, hommes confondus, souffre plus de la guerre que les combattants: les civils sont les otages de la guerre, la branche fragile sur laquelle tient la résistance, la cible facile des forces soviétiques.

Les moudjahedin comprennent mieux la logique des combats, ils ont une prise sur la réalité qui s'abat sur eux. Il y a même un coté exaltant, presque rassurant, dans la vie du modjahed qui part en guerre. Le centre militaire où il va vivre, entre hommes, est isolé et difficile à atteindre par les avions et les chars soviétiques. Il a plus peur pour sa famille que pour lui même, d'ailleurs le plus souvent, il préfère la voir partir se réfugier au Pakistan car là bas, au moins, les femmes et les enfants sont en sécurité, pendant que lui est au combat.

INSPECTIONS, FOUILLES, MASSACRES[3]

Les inspections, fouilles, perquisitions, rafles diverses opérées par les forces gouvernementales et soviétiques apparaissent encore plus traumatisantes que les bombardements pour la population civile et donnent lieu à des scènes insoutenables. Une femme du nom de Adam Goula, turkmène venant d'un village non loin de Mazar-i-Sharif nous dit comment sa famille et elle même ont eu à subir des inspections régulièrement tous les deux mois, pendant l'année 1985: "Puis, un jour, les forces sont arrivées au village pour une nouvelle inspection, j'étais à la maison", dit-elle. "Ils m'ont demandé de trouver les moudjahedin, j'ai répondu que je ne savais pas où ils se trouvaient. Mon fils étaient dans mes bras. Ils ont pris un kalachnicov et l'ont abattu sous mes yeux. Je n'ai pas eu de réaction. Je l'ai enterré".

Fouilles en ville. Fahima Nassery, professeur à Kaboul: "Ils fouillent systématiquement, jusqu'aux tapis qu'ils coupent et mettent en lambeaux, les matelas, les couvertures, ils creusent les murs, brisent les armoires, renversent les boites d'huile, vident les bouteilles, suspectent les liquides, ils en ont jeté sur ma main en disant 'c'est de l'acide'. Ils fouillent tout et mettent eux-mêmes des documents contre le

gouvernement dans les maisons, ou dans les poches des gens et les emprisonnent de cette façon. Quand ils voient quelqu'un médire du gouvernement ou des soviétiques, ils l'embarquent."

Pillage. Malmurad, de la province de Balkh, parle d'une inspection qui a e lieu en août 85: "Les russes ont emporté vivants nos chèvres, moutons, et vaches. Il n'ont pas pris les ânes mais ils les ont tués. Ils ont aussi emporté les bijoux des femmes. Nous ne gardions pas les tapis à la maison car nous savions qu'ils les emportaient. Aussitôt terminés, nous allions les vendre sur le marché."

Atrocité. Maimouna, une femme du village de Baladouz, dans la province de Baghlan raconte qu' "on avait mis une baïonnette dans la bouche d'un bébé, il l'a sucée, tétée, ils ont poussé, la baïonnette a traversé la tête."

Massacres. Le commandant Sayed Mohamad Reza vient du village de Said-Ahammad dans le Kunduz. "Les tanks sont arrivés tôt le matin. Ils ont commencé à bombarder le village avec des roquettes. Le village tout entier a été détraut. Tout le monde a été tué et enterré sous le village. Il y avait surtout des femmes, des enfants et des vieillards."

DES FAMILLES DISLOQUÉES

La séparation des hommes et des femmes se prolonge jusque dans la mort qui les atteint. Les troupes sovieto-afghanes ne leur réservent pas le même sort au même moment. Sanzala vient de la région de Hada, près de Djellalabad. Son frère, son père et deux de ses cousins sont morts dans un massacre qui a eu lieu au cours de l'été 1985. Au village, Jahan Sid, un moudjahedin célébrait son mariage. C'était un vendredi soir, la fête a duré toute la nuit. Le matin, ils ont entendu le bruit des tanks: le village était assiégé. Les gouvernementaux ont dit aux hommes de se rassembler dans la Akhundzada Sahed Madrasa, l'école coranique. Puis ils les ont transférés hors du village, au poste de Sar Shari, puis ils les ont remis aux russes. Les russes les ont transportés dans un endroit nommé Spin Khwar (petite rivière) et les ont tous tués.

"Puis, on a pris la fuite" dit-elle. "Je peux nommer les hommes qu'ils ont tués, ceci parce que je veux que le monde sache qu'ils ont tué des innocents."

Combien de femmes se retrouvent ainsi seules avec la charge des enfants? Ainsi, près de Zari (province de Balkh) un groupe de 32

moudjahedin s'est fait prendre en embuscade, je ne saurais pas dire précisement à quel moment, pendant l'année 1985, il y a eu deux survivants seulement, chaque famille était en deuil.

Dans les provinces de Kunduz, de Balkh, de Baghlan, et dans bien d'autres régions encore combien de familles sont disloquées, décimées? Pas une femme qui n'ait perdu, elle son mari, elle ses enfants ou son frère. Toutes les femmes que j'ai rencontrées autour de Peshawar en octobre 1985 pleuraient des morts très proches.

L'une d'entre elles me disait: "Quand nos maris meurent, nous ne nous remarions pas, c'est notre coutume. Si une femme a des enfants, elle reste seule, elle ne retourne pas chez son père et sa mère. Son beau-frère doit prendre soin d'elle. Moi, je suis seule, je suis veuve, je n'ai personne, sauf Dieu. J'ai une seule petite fille." Son mari est mort parce qu'il aidait les moudjahedin. Cette autre femme rencontrée, elle aussi a Nasir Bagh, dans le camp sinistre réservé aux veuves, c'est-à-dire aux femmes qui n'ont aucun homme pour les prendre en charge: ni mari, ni beau-frère, ni aucun autre, m'explique qu'elle est là toute seule avec ses huit enfants.

EXODE

Les familles qui partent des régions du Nord de l'Afghanistan ont attendu le dernier moment pour partir, elles sont allées jusqu'aux limites du supportable, car pour elles le trajet est plus long et plus dangereux. Le phénomène de l'exode massif qui caractérise cette guerre depuis son début a changé de nature. Il ne peut en aucun cas être assimilé à une sorte de quasi-nomadisme facilité par la ressemblance ethnique des tribus frontalières au Pakistan. Les familles qui partent sont à bout: peur des bombardements, peur des massacres, mais surtout impossibilité matérielle de vivre. Le commandant Reza du Kunduz me disait que les bombardements s'amplifiaient dans sa région mais qu'il n'en avait pas peur. Il a pourtant été obligé de fuir avec sa famille parce que les récoltes avaient été brûlées, et qu'il n'y avait plus rien à manger. Ils ont tenu six ans mais ils ont craqué. Ils ont d'abord essayé de faire un exode interne et voyant que tout était détruit, ils se sont résolus à partir.

Le chemin de l'exode n'est pas épargné. L'acharnement sauvage se poursuit. Les colonnes de réfugiés sont une cible facile; les femmes et les enfants sont là, à nouveau, les plus exposés. Les familles voyagent trop souvent en pleine journée, les femmes et les enfants avec leur "barda", revêtus de vêtements multicolores extrêmement voyants, et

les animaux, chameaux, ânes, chevaux. "Quand le cortège traverse des plaines nues comme la mer où il n'y a pas un brin d'herbe pour se cacher, il devient une proie facile. J'ai vu une colonne de cinquante femmes, aidées de deux ou trois moudjahedin avec quelques vieux. Elles étaient trois-quatre par cheval avec des bébés et d'autres enfants!", raconte Elisabeth (M.S.F.). Quand une bombe tombe, c'est l'affolement bien sûr. Evelyne (M.S.F.) a assisté à une de ces "scènes". Cela se passait près de la frontière, ils étaient presque au but, entre Jawar (Afghanistan) et Miram Shah (Pakistan). Tout le monde s'en allait dans tous les sens, les chevaux et les chameaux étaient affolés, les réfugiés couraient dans la montagne pour essayer de récupérer les affaires qui tombaient des chameaux. Il n'y a pas eu de morts. Mais que dire du traumatisme subi par ces enfants traqués par la guerre. Catherine Chattard a décrit les souffrances de Nafissa, 10 ans:[4]

"L'insécurité s'est logée dans son ventre". Même la nuit les caravanes sont attaquées. Un vieil homme arrivé la veille du jour où je l'ai interviewé au Pakistan après un trajet de vingt deux jours pour venir de la province de Baghlan avec soixante autres personnes de sa famille et de son village me racontait qu'ils ont eu à subir une attaque en pleine nuit: "On a croisé une voiture. Les avions nous ont repérés à la lumière des phares. Ils ont tournoyé dans le ciel et ils ont jeté des bombes. Dieu merci, personne n'a été blessé. Nous nous sommes cachés sous les arbres et nous n'avons pas été touchés."

Autre danger sur le long chemin de l'exode: les mines. Le commandant Reza rapporte l'accident arrivé à une colonne de réfugiés venant de la province du Kunduz. Ils ont du, à l'approche du Logar passer par une ligne minée par les parchamis et les khalquis. Certains d'entre-eux ont eu leurs pieds et leurs mains broyés, déchiquetés. Les blessés qui avaient de l'argent ont loué des chevaux, les autres ont été portés par des gens. Une parente à lui a perdu son enfant de deux ans qui était dans ses bras. Elle-même a été amputée des jambes pendant le chemin. Elle a été portée à bras d'hommes jusqu'à Peshawar. Ceci, à cause des mines.

Ainsi, l'exode devient de plus en plus difficile. Wali Khodja est réfugié de la province de Baghlan depuis deux ans, il nous a dit sa longue histoire. Pour lui, c'est le deuxième exode. Il est né à Bokhara et a du déjà fuir à huit ans quand les bolcheviques sont venus sur la terre de Bokhara. Aujord'hui, il est inquiet. Il dit que sur cent personnes qui fuient l'Afghanistan pour se réfugier au Pakistan, quarante seulement pourront arriver, les autres seront tuées.

"Sur la route, déjà, il y a l'odeur des cadavres" dit-il. Le col qui sépare le Nouristan du Pandchir: "un vrai cimetière" dit Chantal Lebato.

LE LONG CORTÉGE ININTERROMPU DES RÉFUGIÉS

Et pourtant le long cortège grossit et s'étend. Durant l'été 1985, les gens venaient du fin fond du Nord: Maïmana, Kunduz, Faizabad. Ils se dirigent tous vers le Pakistan d'après Chantal "même ceux qui viennent des régions situées au Nord-Ouest plus près de l'Iran préfèrent traverser tout le pays pour arriver à Peshawar. Parmi ces réfugiés venant du Nord, de Kunduz et de Faïzabad, on reconnaissait des paysans du coin, ouzbecks, tadjicks, mais aussi beaucoup de pashtous installés dans le Nord, qui du fait de la guerre ne s'entendent plus avec la population locale. Le village entier se déplace alors sur ce long trajet qui leur prendra quarante jours ou même plus de deux mois. C'est la même route qui est prise par tout le monde. Il y a un moment où de toutes façons, ils se retrouvent dans le Nouristan il n'y a pas le choix. Sur l'unique route libre /. . ./ C'est une colonne presque ininterrompue, espacée de temps en temps, parce que l'oncle aura du retard, il a du mal à marcher, . . . chacun à ses rythmes."

Evelyne en arrivant en Afghanistan a eu l'impression que le pays se vidait, elle a vu des villages dévastés, désertés, où il n'y avait plus que quelques moudjahedin; puis en s'enfonçant dans le pays, en arrivant dans le Wardak, elle s'est aperçue que malgré tout une grande partie de la population était restée sur place. Le dépeuplement est très inégal, il suit la courbe de la guerre.

MISÈRE DE L'EXIL

Sur la misère de l'exil: des pages et des pages dans la transcription des interviews. Les réfugiés arrivent au Pakistan meurtris, humiliés, assoiffés, affamés, les enfants ont des blessures aux pieds à force d'avoir marché. L'organisation au Pakistan avant d'obtenir l'aide espérée n'est pas facile. Il faut faire des allées et venues, des démarches. En attendant, c'est la misère des campements de fortune: dans un coin de Katchagari, ce campement de transit près de Peshawar, des centaines de réfugiés venaient d'arriver du Nord (fin octobre 85), ils s'abritaient sous leurs misérables vêtements, s'en servant comme d'une tente.

Le mal du pays, le sentiment d'insécurité économique et social, le chômage, l'absence de projets et l'impossibilité d'en faire à long terme, la peur de la guerre, le deuil, le désespoir, tel est le lot commun de nombreux réfugiés. La misère psychologique du à l'exil atteint les femmes plus durement encore que les hommes.

L'ambiance plus rigide islamiste du Pakistan contraint la femme afghane à "faire plus attention". Elles sont privées de tout ce qui con-

stituait leur force, leur pouvoir, leur activité, leur raison de vivre: la maison, la terre sur laquelle elles travaillaient. La tente ou l'enclos dont elles peuvent disposer au Pakistan est souvent réduit, sans espace pour la femme. Chantal remarque qu'elles peuvent retrouver une certaine autonomie si l'homme, le mari, retrouve du travail et une maison organisée pour elles, mais l'environnement reste étranger, les voisins inconnus. Les enfants se retrouvent dans les jupons de leur mère, et le jeunes doivent arrêter leurs études. Le résultat est le grand nombre de dépressions et de maladies psychiques parmi la population féminine. 60% des patientes qui se présentent aux centres médicaux au Pakistan souffrent de maladies mentales; elles cherchent un secours dans les médicaments. Les enfants aussi souffrent, ils sont très sensibles.

II. LUTTE: LA PART DES FEMMES

LE COUP D'ETAT DE 1978: UN FREIN À L'ÉMANCIPATION DES FEMMES

Les quelques témoignages que nous avons recueillis concordent: l'Afghanistan d'avant 1978, avant le coup d'Etat communiste, avait enregistré quelques progrès sur le plan de l'émancipation des femmes. Progrès sensibles dans certains milieux éduqués de Kaboul et dans une petite bourgeoisie urbaine d'origine récente. Issue de ce milieu, Fahima Nassery exprime son point de vue:

"La ségrégation entre hommes et femmes avait commencé à disparaître en Afghanistan. L'éducation gratuite et mixte avait été instituée en 1945.

Dans les écoles primaires, les filles et les garçons allaient ensemble au cours, il en était de même à l'université. C'est seulement dans le secondaire, de la 6ème à la terminale, qu'on séparait garçons et filles, du fait de la crise de l'adolescence. Il y avait alors une grande liberté: des femmes au parlement, des femmes ministres, professeurs à la fac ou au lycée, ingénieurs. Ce travail d'homme, les femmes le faisaient, et pas comme en Europe où dit-on, pour un même travail, le salaire de la femme est inférieur à celui de l'homme, en Afghanistan, elles recevaient le même salaire. On attachait plus de valeur à la femme, on la respectait beaucoup plus parce que c'est dans la religion islamique que la femme est le plus respectée. Il y a un grand respect pour la mère, c'est une question religieuse.

Mais après le coup d'Etat en avril 1978, avec ce régime fantoche, il y a eu un renversement de tendance. Par peur, elles se sont centrées de nouveau vers le foyer, elles se sont à nouveau enfermées, elles ont

été de plus en plus soumises.

Par peur. Car celles qui n'avaient pas une connaissance suffisante, celles qui ne comprenaient pas bien, celles-lá ont eu le sentiment que c'était l'école qui leur avait amené le communisme. Elles ont pensé que l'école et l'alphabétisation pourraient transformer leurs enfants en communistes parce qu'ils' avaient créé des cours politiques à l'école, ce n'était pas de la science politique mais de l'endoctrinement au marxisme-léninisme ou des cours à la louange du gouvernement fantoche de Kaboul. Ils ont même ridiculisé la politique, ils ont même ridiculisé le communisme, et dénaturé ce qu'on avait lu dans les livres. Le prosélytisme est très fort. La plupart des prof sont harcelés par les 'organisations démocratiques'. Les gens sont exaspérés, ils en deviennent allergiques.

Maintenant toutes les écoles ont été tranformées en 'poste de sécurité'. Ces postes les résistants ont dû les attaquer, ils y étaient obligés.

Les résistants ne sont pas aveugles au point de ne pas vouloir l'ecole. Ils ne sont pas si misérables. Ils savent que s'ils apprennent la géométrie et le calcul, ils pourront mieux viser: l'ennemi, mieux tirer au fusil.

En fait, la plupart des écoles ont été détruites par les bombardements du gouvernement et des russes eux-mêmes. Par peur des résistants, ils bombardent n'importe où, là où ils peuvent."

. . . Long témoignage de Fahima Nassery qui en dit long sur les contradictions à l'oeuvre dans la société afghane qui, alors que se dessinaient des perspectives d'évolution a été brusquée dans ce processus de changement, par une force étrangère trop brutale (c'est un euphémisme) et totalement ignorante du contexte et des mentalités afghanes.

Dans les campagnes, les réformes en cours avant le coup d'Etat avaient été acceptées de manière "mitigée": certains en gardent de bons souvenirs comme cet élève infirmier qui avait trouvé ça "chouette" d'aller en classe avec les filles, mais les "barbes grises" des villages étaient opposées au fait que les filles et les garçons des villages se retrouvent ensemble, opposés surtout au fait que les femmes quittent la maison, alors qu'elles ont tant à faire: trier les haricots pour les mettre à sécher sur le toit, torcher les petits, nettoyer, etc . . .

L'opposition habituelle entre le progrès et le conservatisme, la libération de la femme et son oppression, l'archaïsme des moeurs ou l'émancipation n'est pas opérante pour comprendre la place qui revient à la femme dans la société afghane. Car l'histoire présente de l'Afghanistan charge ces termes d'autres significations qui renversent le sens de l'histoire si tant est qu'il y en ait un.

LE STATUT DE LA FEMME: UN DES ENJEUX

Le recours aux valeurs traditionnelles de l'Islam n'est-il pas à l'heure actuelle le meilleur ciment de la lutte . . . révolutionnaire contre l'envahisseur. Le fait que la libération de la femme soit un des thèmes favoris du régime communiste en place ne peut que hérisser la population, et aboutir à un effet inverse jusqu'à freiner toute évolution à "l'occidentale" de la femme.

Le statut de la femme est en effet un des enjeux exprimés de la dite révolution communiste. Il n'y a qu'a regarder les documents de propagande publiés régulièrement en anglais par la RDA. Dans le numéro de juillet 1985,[5] un article consacré à la question des femmes: les photos sont éloquentes, images d'une femme libérée et dynamique, sans voile, quelques unes ont des foulards, d'autres ont les cheveux libres, pas de tchâderi (voile couvrant les femmes de la tête aux pieds avec une ouverture grillagée au niveau des yeux). Ces femmes sont présentées au travail dans des activités nobles et qualifiées: devant un microscope ou dans une bibliothque; ou les armes à la main prêtes à défendre les "acquis de la révolution", ou encore dans la rue participant à une marche pour la paix contre l'impérialisme! C'est trop!

Images recomposées d'une femme afghane très moderne, on reconnaît le modèle soviétique de la femme accomplie, image qui succède à l'image, je cite, d' "une femme aliénée privée de tous ses droits sociaux, culturels et politiques, qui n'était pas traitée comme un être humain, principalement du fait du maintien des relations féodales et pré-féodales arriérées". L'opposition entre le féodalisme et le progressisme opère à la manière de l'opposition ancienne entre les sociétes civilisées et les sociétés primitives. L'argumentation progressiste justifie l'imposition abusive d'un modèle culturel, on est en plein dans l'idéologie coloniale reprise d'ailleurs par les communistes français quand ils évoquent l'Afghanistan. On se souvient que Georges Marchais dénonçait "le droit de cuissage en Afghanistan"; Madame Lajoinie a elle, quelques descriptions très méprisantes des femmes afghanes "oisives-non salariées" qu'elle traite d' "horrible poupées fardées"[6] . . . au nom de quoi l'invasion et l'occupation sont justifiées.

Cette mise en opposition des valeurs n'est donc pas pertinente. Elle est même devenue inacceptable. L'éventualité d'une évolution est bloquée du fait même de ses protagonistes. Que les islamistes essaient alors de réislamiser la femme urbaine qui s'était émancipée ne doit pas nous étonner, qu'ils se méfient des occidentaux voulant introduire une évolution des moeurs même par le meilleur des biais, celui de la santé (contraception, médicalisation des accouchements), est compréhensible.

De toutes façons, la position des femmes dans les campagnes af-

ghanes est à considérer avec mesure. Elles sont moins cloitrées que le sont, par exemple les femmes des riches commerçants en ville.

La coupure entre la société des femmes et des hommes renforce une forme de respect mutuel. Micheline Centlivres dit[7] à ce propos que "les femmes afghanes ne sont pas enfermées dans la solitude du couple; leur place est dans le monde des femmes et à l'intérieur de l'habitation, certes, mais ce monde n'est pas nécessairement ressenti par elles comme inférieur. Elles y vivent dans une société féminine qui connaît une solidarité extraordinaire /. . ./

Pour les femmes des paysanneries du Nord Afghan, ce n'est pas nécessairement le mari qui est le personnage le plus important de leur vie, c'est jusqu'au mariage et parfois au-delà, le frère qui est l'homme le plus proche et ensuite les fils qui vont très souvent prendre le parti de leur mère contre leur père. Et si la femme a des moyens — de l'argent et des biens — poursuit Mme Centlivres, ce ne sera jamais le mari qui sera chargé de les gérer sur la place publique, mais plutôt le frère ou le fils (le wakil). La femme se trouve ainsi au centre d'un réseau de relations qui passe en dehors du mari." Et dans cette société où les alliances conclues à l'occasion des mariages sont si importantes, il n'est pas d'union qui ne soit l'oeuvre de tout un réseau de "commères", que l'homme ne vient ratifier qu'en tout dernier lieu.

Le système de parenté est "autre", sa particularité repose sur une autre idée de la famille, du couple, du ménage, et des relations entre les hommes et les femmes. En se conformant à notre strict point de vue occidental influencé par un certain féminisme, cela donne un bien pour un mal dans certain cas: dans des familles où il y a plusieurs femmes, il y a la belle-mère et les belles-filles, cela peut donner lieu à une organisation qui facilite la vie de toutes. Elizabeth est allée à Zari, près de Mazar-i-Shariff chez un "type" qui avait trois femmes. Chaque femme avait deux-trois enfants, elles avaient des tours: elles faisaient la cuisine deux jours par semaine à tour de rôle, la lessive, pareil.

Le pays est resté à 85% rural, le mode de production traditionnel et agricole s'accorde bien de cette répartition définie des tâches et des rôles entre les hommes et les femmes. Le ramassage des mauvaises herbes (utilisées pour le four), le travail de semence, le plantage du riz se font, paraît-il ensemble mais c'est elle qui traie les vaches et lui qui tient la charrue et s'occupe des boeufs. Il ne faut pas généraliser, mais il semble certain que malgré les compensations qu'elles y trouvent, les femmes assurent une large partie du travail. "Demandez à un nouristâni de vous parler de la répartition du travail dans une famille; il vous répondra le plus simplement du monde que les femmes font tout. Et les hommes? Oh! presque rien!" Isabelle Delloye décrit[8] ces femmes paysannes qui n'arrêtent pas de l'aube jusqu'au

soir tout en assumant des maternités multiples qui commencent très jeune. La guerre modifie-t-elle ces comportements ancestraux? La guerre est-elle un élément de changement social qui affecte et transforme les relations entre les hommes et les femmes?

LES FEMMES TIENNENT L'ÉCONOMIE

Autant que je puisse en juger par les témoignages que j'ai entendus, il ne semble pas que ce soit le cas. Les femmes résistent, elles sont aussi combatives que les hommes, parfois plus, mais elles combattent avec les outils conférés à leur sexe dans la société afghane, elles tiennent par leur travail l'édifice économique sur lequel s'articule les actions de la résistance avec lesquelles elles sont largement solidaires.

Les femmes ont ainsi un rôle majeur mais discret en respectant le rôle que l'Islam leur impose à l'intérieur de la maison mais qui rayonne à l'extérieur.

Alors que l'homme part à la guerre en héros, elle continue à faire les repas, le linge, la couture. Mais surtout c'est à elle qu'incombe la tâche primordiale d'éduquer et d'instruire les enfants pendant leur jeune âge.

Dans les régions où la guerre sévit, une forte proportion des hommes, si ce n'est tous, peut partir au combat, laissant les femmes seules au village avec les enfants et les vieillards. Elles se retrouvent alors avec une responsabilité et une charge beaucoup plus importante: elles sont obligées de s'occuper de tous les travaux des champs et des animaux, que les hommes font d'habitude, en plus de leurs occupations quotidiennes. De peur des bombardements, elles sont souvent obligées de travailler la nuit. S'il y a encore une activité agricole à l'intérieur de l'Afghanistan, et un peu de nourriture, c'est aussi grâce au travail de ces femmes.

Odile Botti[9] a interviewé Fahrida, au village de Hayat Kala dans le Logar. "Son mari et les frères de son mari sont partis combattre, ils circulaient en grappes entre la plaine et la montagne /.../ Il y a encore quatre ans, elle n'avait jamais travaillé aux champs, si ce n'est pour ramasser de l'herbe pour ses moutons. Mais là, il a bien fallu remettre derrière les bêtes le vieux qui avait pourtant bien mérité de se reposer. Le grand-père en est mort d'épuisement quelques mois plus tard. Alors Fahrida a laissé à sa fille ainée, dix ans, le soin de la maison et de ses quatre petits frères. Elle part dès l'aube avec le plus jeune qu'elle nourrit encore au sein et revient à la nuit tombante, harassée."

Mais en fait cette grande solitude de la femme qui doit tout assumer est rare car on rencontre, ne semble-t-il plus souvent le cas de familles

et de villages qui essaient de maintenir la vie telle qu'elle a toujours été. L'organisation familiale le permet: le frère remplace le mari, un homme en remplace un autre.

LA RÉSISTANCE ORGANISE LA VIE CIVILE

Dans l'ensemble, les femmes ne participent pas à l'organisation de la résistance. Les femmes de moudjahedin se sentent un peu plus responsables mais c'est à nouveau dans des rôles traditionnels d'intendance qu'on les retrouve le plus souvent. Dans le markas (centre militaire) du Wardak, la charge de la cuisine pour tous les moudjahedin est revenue à une femme du village pendant plusieurs années de suite.

Ce rôle de cantinière est relativement fréquent. Ces femmes sont généralement veuves ou délaissées par un mari qui a fui. Elles jouissent d'un grand respect.

Dans les relations qui lient la Résistance à la population cet aspect d'intendance en fédère d'autres et donnent lieu à toute une organisation de la vie sociale et économique. La population nourrit la Résistance:

1. D'abord de manière quasiment spontanée quand les combattants passant dans un village cognent ici ou là pour demander ici du pain, là du thé, et plus loin de la graisse et des plats, ils reçoivent bon accueil, même en pleine nuit en l'échange d'un dédomagement: Amin Wardak, par exemple a distribué à des familles les chaussures qu'il a reçu de France.

2. Mais le soutien peut être également organisé à la manière d'un tribut, de l'impôt coranique (Zakat) légitimement prélevé sur chaque famille par les réels représentants de la population, les commandants de la Résistance, qui défendent le pays et protègent le territoire menacé par l'invasion soviétique. Même dans les régions peu touchées par la guerre comme l'était le Badakhshan quand Anne-Marie y vivait il y avait une réglementation précise faite par les commandants de la part qui revenait aux moudjahedin. "Chaque famille doit apporter sa contribution, dit-elle, il y a des champs et des troupeaux réservés aux moudjahedin, et plusieurs personnes dans le village qui ne font que cultiver pour les moudjahedin."

Quand il n'est plus possible de prélever une part des ressources sur les productions familiales trop affaiblies par la guerre, comme dans le région de Kunduz[10] le problème se renverse. La résistance doit trouver les moyens d'aider la population pour qu'elle se maintienne sur place: "Je dois trouver des ressources pour soutenir les familles de mes combattants qui sont pratiquement des permanents et ne peu-

vent plus travailler comme paysans", nous dit le commandant Aref. Ainsi, le système se complique au fur et à mesure que la population s'appauvrit. Zabiullah demandait à chaque famille d'aider mais il finançait en partie cette aide, par exemple en fournissant les semences pour faire le blé, ou en fournissant la farine pour faire le pain, de mille et une manière selon le cas précis, mais qui suppose de surcroit une administration compliquée pour ne pas peser toujours sur les mêmes familles et ménager les susceptibilités.

La vie des femmes, comme celle de toute la population civile repose sur cette organisation savante de la vie de tous les jours dans un pays en guerre. Même dans le régions les plus dépeuplées comme au Pandchir où le commandant a fait évacuer l'ensemble de la population, quelques familles sont restées dans les vallées adjacentes pour maintenir une base sociale et un minimum d'agriculture. Autour de Kandahar tout est dépeuplé, mais un homme par famille revient du Pakistan pour entretenir les vignes qui sinon seraient perdues pour toujours.

RÉSISTER EN RESTANT

Le simple fait que les femmes acceptent de rester chez elles à l'intérieur de l'Afghanistan est les plus important. Evelyne a été frappé en traversant des zones qui étaient très près de la ville de Ghazni, de constater la détermination de ces femmes: "Elles étaient sans arrêt survolées par des hélicoptères, c'est un risque permanent. Leurs enfants riaient et jouaient malgré tout. Moi, je me disais "si j'étais mère et que j'avais mon enfant sous les hélicoptères, je crois que je le prendrais et je m'enfuierais à l'autre bout du monde."

Chantal constate qu'il y a une certaine exaltation à rester chez soi même dans ces conditions. "Elles sont d'autant plus fermes et déterminées que c'est plus dur, surtout pour les persanophones dit-elle, elles ne veulent pas partir et redoutent l'exil car elles savent que là-bas elles pourraient bien perdre leur coin, c'est-à-dire leur autonomie et leur liberté, en perdant notamment toute possibilité de communiquer avec des personnes qui ne parlent pas leur langue, y compris parmi les réfugiés.

LA DÉCISION DE PARTIR APPARTIENT AUX FEMMES

Car les femmes détiennent un élément clef dans le contexte présent: ce sont elles qui décident de rester ou de partir, de lutter sur place ou de fermer les maisons et d'aller se réfugier.

Toute la question de l'exode s'articule autour de cette décision plusieurs fois repoussée.

Cette décision qui appartient spécifiquement aux femmes, une fois qu'elle est prise, entraîne un mouvement collectif. On imagine mal dans le contexte afghan, une femme prenant la fuite seule. Sur les chameaux, ânes, chevaux et charrettes s'entassent les plus petits et les plus vieux. Parler des femmes en Afghanistan, c'est désigner avec elles l'ensemble du contexte familial élargi où chacun entraide l'autre.

"Quand les représailles sont trop fortes, il y a des vallées entières qui désertent, les femmes décident de quitter la maison, certains vieux et les jeunes vont aider la colonne de femmes qui se réfugie au Pakistan, les autres hommes restent pour faire la guerre. Il y a des chefs de caravane qui les accompagnent, et des résistants."

LE SOUTIEN MORAL DES FEMMES À LA RÉSISTANCE

La femme afghane a toujours été la première instigatrice de l'homme dans le guerre sainte. C'est un rôle que les hommes, quand on les interroge à ce sujet, reconnaissent volontiers. Le commandant Amin Wardak, du Wardak, à qui on demandait pourquoi il ne s'était pas enfui comme beaucoup d'autres en Europe alors qu'il en avait la possibilité, a répondu qu'il était arrivé à se décider à entrer dans la Résistance grâce aux femmes, à leur soutien. Le commandant Moustapha, frère d'Amin Wardak, raconte qu'un jour, au cours d'une tentative d'offensive contre un poste soviétique, il était passé à la nuit tombante devant une vieille femme qui sanglotait. Il s'est approché d'elle et lui a demandé pourquoi elle était si triste, elle lui a répondu "Mais tu ne vois pas, j'ai attendu toute l'après-midi et toute la soirée le passage des moudjahedin pour leur apporter du raisin pour les soutenir la nuit pendant les combats, et pas un n'a voulu de mes grappes de raisin." Elle était désespérée. Peut-être avait-elle été trop réservée? Alors, le commandant Mustapha a fait lui-même la distribution. Evelyne conclut: "Même si elles n'ont pas le fusil à l'épaule, elles soutiennent moralement les combattants par des petits gestes qui sont très importants."

Quand Zabiullah, commandant populaire et efficace de la province de Balkh est mort, toutes les femmes de la consultation à Zari pleuraient alors que c'était quelqu'un qu'elles n'avaient jamais vu en chair et en os.

Un proverbe pashtou dit que le bélier, donc le mâle, est fait pour être égorgé en sacrifice. Le chant des femmes, poèmes épiques qu'on appelle "landays" rappelle aux hommes leurs devoirs de guerriers:

"Mon amour a été tué pour sa patrie
Des fils de ma chevelure, je lui tisserai un linceul.
Dieu veuille te faire martyr au front de la tribu
De ton sang, je dessinerai un point de beauté à la fossette
de mon menton.[11]

Déjà au XIXème siècle, les chants de Malâlaï encourageaient les guerriers afghans en lutte avec l'envahisseur anglais: "Mieux vaut pour vous mourir sur place que revenir vivre comme des lâches!"[12]

La guerre contre les soviétiques est une guerre sainte, une jihâd. Le sentiment le plus général et les plus partagé dans la population va à l'unisson des résistants tous confondus dans la lutte contre l'infidèle et l'impie. Un homme qui part à la guerre est un héros. Un homme ou une femme qui meurt sous le feu de l'ennemi est un shahid, un témoin de sa foi par le martyr, il gagne sa place au paradis. C'est une gloire, c'est même l'aboutissement, le but de tout musulman.

C'est la raison pour laquelle les sacrifices, même les pires, dus à la guerre sont acceptés. Il y a une adhésion spirituelle qui soulève l'ensemble de la population. Dans l'esprit qui cimente cette croisade et lui donne sa force, les femmes sont souvent les plus combatives.

Martyres, c'est ce mot que les femmes emploient la plupart de temps pour désigner les personnes de leur connaissance mortes dans un massacre ou dans un bombardement. L'exil peut être compris comme une obligation religieuse. Ughul Bega, femme réfugiée de la région de Mazar-i-Shariff me disait: "Nous avons fui par respect pour l'Islam et notre dignité. Nous ne pouvions rien faire contre les Chouravi (les russes), ces païens."

LA RELÈVE DES ARMES

Simi Musharah, institutrice, afghane dans un camp de réfugiés nous disait: "Si, Dieu ne plaise, tous les hommes afghans meurent dans cette guerre, puissent les femmes combattre à leur place!" Les femmes restent "à leur place", certes, dans l'ombre, mais elles existent pleinement et sont prêtes à surgir et à prendre les armes. C'est également le sentiment d'Evelyne (MSF) qui me rapportait une anecdote survenue lors de l'enterrement d'un moudjahed tué par les soviétiques. Le commandant était venu assister à l'enterrement comme il en avait l'habitude dans ce cas là. Il avait la larme à l'oeil. La mère de ce garçon, c'était son fils unique, est venue nous voir et lui a dit: "Il ne faut pas pleurer, moi, j'ai encore mon épaule pour por-

ter la bazouka. Mon fils est mort mais tu peux compter sur moi pour prendre la relève!"

RESISTANCE OUVERTE

Parmi les femmes que j'ai interviewées au Pakistan, certaines savaient que leur mari était un moudjahed, ou qu'il aidait la Résistance, elles connaissaient leurs activités et devaient supporter pour leur famille et pour elles-mêmes toutes les conséquences de l'absence du mari, du risque et de l'angoisse quand il était parti; ou l'horreur des fouilles quand les troupes soviéto-afghanes étaient sur sa trace.

Maryam est originaire du Badarkshan, son mari, contremaître dans une usine de coton avait servi d'intermédiaire pour placer une bombe à retardement. Quand il fut capturé, elle eut à subir la venue de douze inspecteurs, six russes, et six parchami dans sa maison. Avant de savoir ce qu'il était advenu de son mari, avant qu'ils sacagent tout lamentablement chez elle, elle les avait accueillis dignement en s'adressant aux parchami "O mes frères, ô mes fils, nous sommes musulmans, pourquoi amenez-vous ces incroyants chez moi!"

Quand un commandant (Amin Wardak), voulant assurer la sécurité de l'équipe médicale alors que sa base était attaquée, demande en pleine nuit à des femmes qui pourtant n'étaient pas du tout au courant de ce qui se passait de recueillir les infirmières françaises, celles-ci le font gentiment sans hésiter alors que cet accueil leur fait courir de grands risques pour elles-mêmes.

Evelyne Dauzet m'a rapporté le cas d'une femme qui était restée toute seule dans un village près d'Hérat alors que le village avait été entièrement déserté. Le reste de sa famille était parti se réfugier en Iran, mais elle avait tenu à rester pour aider les moudjahedin. Elle passait son temps à repriser les chaussettes, et d'autres tâches humbles de cet acabit. L'intendance dans ces conditions change de nature. D'ailleurs les moudjahedin qu'elle soutenait et faisait vivre lui reconnaissaient un statut qu'on n'accorde pas aux femmes habituellement: c'est elle qui dirigeait la prière, car c'est elle qu'ils voulaient mettre sur le devant de la scène.

Elisabeth a connu quelques femmes d'exception, dont l'attitude et le comportement boulversaient les conceptions habituelles en Afghanistan des rôles féminins. Elle m'a parlé notamment d'une femme infirmière d'une vallée voisine de la sienne qui avait appris son métier avant la guerre avec des médecins américains. C'est elle qui tenait lieu de docteur dans sa région: elle soignait tout le monde, femmes, enfants, hommes moudjahedin compris. Elle n'était pas voilée, faisait ses tournées, à cheval et se comportait très différemment des autres femmes tout en étant très bien acceptée.

GUERILLA URBAINE

Mais c'est en ville qu'on peut compter le plus grand nombre de femmes directement impliquées dans des actions de la Résistance. Pour celles-là comme pour les hommes, tout a commencé par une réaction spontanée et épidermique quand les russes sont entrés dans Kaboul.

Fahima Nassery: "Le matin quand j'ai vu les russes dans les rues de Kaboul, j'étais si boulversée que je ne pourrais pas le dire, si triste. Pas seulement moi, mais tous mes compatriotes, hommes, femmes, vieux, jeunes, enfants, et nous avons tous voulu marquer le coup, parler d'eux, agir contre eux. Nous avions les mains vides, évidemment pas d'armes, alors nous avons été obligés de faire des grèves et de publier des tracts la nuit. Nous savions que les moudjahedin avaient des armes et pouvaient se battre contre les russes et le régime marionnette, alors nous voulions les aider collectivement."

Fahima était professeur au lycée Aeshaï Dorâni à Kaboul, elle dit qu'il lui est arrivé de cracher et de jeter des pierres sur les russes et sur les gens qui travaillaient pour la police secrète du régime. Elle distribuait des tracts pour pousser les gens à ne pas laisser leurs enfants partir à l'armée. Elle collectait de l'argent pour les moudjahedin. Elle essayait d'économiser sur son salaire ou sur la nourriture pour les aider. Elle leur a fait des vêtements et a cherché à leur faciliter la circulation en ville, à aider leur famille. Elle gardait des documents chez elle quand les moudjahedin avaient peur d'une fouille sur un trajet. C'est d'ailleurs pourquoi elle-même dans sa maison fut l'objet d'une fouille à la suite de laquelle elle fut emprisonnée et torturée:

"J'avais des documents qui n'appartenaient pas à un seul groupe mais à tous les groupes qui sont contre le régime de Kaboul et contre les russes. J'avais beaucoup de cartes et de tracts. Ils ont tout pris, et ils m'ont emmenée."

Peu après l'invasion soviétique en décembre 1979, les femmes de Kaboul furent les premières à se précipiter par dizaines de milliers vers l'infâme prison de Pul-e-Charkhy pour en forcer les portes et délivrer les prisonniers politiques. Elles ont été les premières à organiser une démonstration énorme dans les rues de Kaboul contre l'invasion soviétique.[13]

Jean-Christophe Victor raconte la manifestation partie du lycée de filles Zarghouna en 1980 à la veille du 27 avril, jour anniversaire du coup d'Etat communiste de 1978, cortège en colère où Nahid, 15 ans se fera tuer pour avoir crié dans les rues "mort aux russes! mort à Babrak!"[13]

Une centaine de femmes et de jeunes lycéennes ont été soit tuées, soit blessées à cette occasion.

Plus tard les femmes se sont organisées en petits groupes. Tajwar

Kakar, connue dans la Résistance sous le nom de Tajwar Sultan a trente-sept ans et est mère de sept enfants.

Elle est entrée dans la Résistance aussitôt après le coup d'Etat de 1978. Elle a fondé une école dans le petit village de Choqor Qishlaq, de la province de Kunduz où il y avait à la fois une formation scolaire et militaire, elle a participé à des réunions au même titre que des commandants, elle a organisé avec ses collègues le sabotage d'une cérémonie officielle en 1980, un an après l'invasion de décembre, et en mai 1981 (en lachant des guêpes dans un défilé). Elle a tenu des meetings dans sa propre maison et a été élue représentante des groupes féminins de la Résistance. Elle a structuré des groupes de femmes chargés de rechercher les collaborateurs, ainsi que d'autres chargés de tâches plus opérationnelles visant à enlever et exécuter des soviétiques en les agichant. "La majorité des soviétiques et des agents ennemis qui disparaissaient l'étaient à l'initiative des femmes."[15]

Tajwar, interviewée au Pakistan où elle s'est aujourd'hui réfugiée, affirme que, à part les femmes de Kunduz dans le Nord, qu'elle a elle-même organisées, il y a de vrais mouvements de résistance féminine à Hérat et à Kandahar à l'ouest du pays.

Plus communes à côté de ces grandes figures de la résistance sont les nombreuses femmes qui assument un certain type de travail de transmission et de communication: elles portent des renseignements ou transportent quelques armes d'un endroit à un autre en les cachant sous leur tchâderi: des pistolets, des munitions, des explosifs. Il leur est plus facile de tromper l'adversaire. Avec leurs airs innocents et honnêtes, les petits enfants sont aussi réquisitionnés pour porter des messages; les vieux aussi.

Les accidents arrivent: les munitions explosent sous le tchaderi, la femme se fait prendre . . .

TORTURES

Point n'est besoin de décrire les tortures que Fahima Nassery a subies au Khad à Shishdarak puis au centre de détention de Sadarat. Elles nous les a racontées: tortures psychologiques (humiliations), électrochocs, aiguilles, produits chimiques, cachot humide avec des rats, interrogatoires multiples, spectacles d'horreur. Fahima a tenu bon, elle n'a rien dit. Elle a été libérée aprés avoir passé un an et demi en prison.

La raison principale de sa deuxième arrestation était qu'après avoir été relachée, elle a témoigné de sa premiére expérience en prison. Elle est arrivée à Peshawar au Pakistan le 28 juillet 1985.

ON PEUT RÉSISTER DANS L'EXIL

Pour ces femmes qui ont été trés actives à l'intérieur, il est souvent pénible et frustrant de se retrouver au Pakistan. Fahima et Tajwar ont toutes les deux retrouvé une occupation à Peshawar: elles sont institutrices pour les enfants réfugiés. Simin Musharah, également institutrice, parle de son travail au Pakistan: "Je leur enseigne leur pays pour qu'ils le connaissent, qu'ils ne l'oublient pas et qu'ils n'oublient pas le guerre, parce que l'avenir de l'Afghanistan, ce sont les enfants. Je ne veux pas que les filles disent que le Pakistan est leur patrie. Nous avons une patrie que nous avons dû quitter à cause des russes et en accord avec la tradition du prophète".

Et pour conclure sur le travail spécifique des femmes à l'intérieur de la Résistance, il nous faut parler à nouveau d'intendance. Même dans l'exil, le travail de maison contribue à permettre aux résistants de poursuivre leur lutte. Les soeurs de Massoud du Pandchir par exemple, passent leur temps à recevoir ou à aider le reste de la famille masculine qui se trouve à Peshawar, à recevoir des journalistes et des commandants de la Résistance. Beaucoup de femmes de commandants réfugiées à Peshawar passent des journées entières enfermées dans le gynécée, à faire la cuisine des mudjahedin qui passent et qui vivent sous leur toît du matin jusqu'au soir: elles préparent des casseroles immenses comme on en voit dans les restaurants, elles font du thé à longueur de temps.

La guérilla ne tient pas sans une adhésion générale et spontannée de la population. La collaboration existe mais elle reste faible: quelques familles, quelques villages même, se rallient mais leur ralliement est instable car il est mu par l'intérêt le plus immédiat. A une autre occasion ils "retourneront leur veste". Olivier Roy dit qu'il n'y a aucune amorce d'un ralliement massif de la population au régime.[16] Fahima Nassery cite à tître d'exemple le lycée Aeshai de Kaboul: "Les communistes étaient très peu nombreuses. La force des russes leur donnait des ailes. Elles étaient cruelles, c'est pour cela qu'on les craignait. Parmi les professeurs elles sont si peu nombreuses qu'il n'est même pas la peine de les compter, une ou deux personnes peut-être parmi deux cent cinquante professeurs. La directrice était peut-être parchami, les autres ne l'étaient pas. Pour autant que j'ai pu m'en rendre compte, la majorité de ceux qui soutiennent le gouvernement le font par nécessité parce qu'ils n'ont pas à manger ou bien parce que, comme on dit, ils n'ont ni la route pour fuir, ni la main pour se battre / . . . /Ce sont des gens sans caractère: pour un peu d'argent ou quelques bouteilles de vodka ils se sont livrés à l'étranger, et pas n'im-

porte lequel, mais à celui qui n'a ni religion, ni foi, ni principes, ni humanité".

Les soviétiques n'ont pas réussi à asseoir leur pouvoir sur une base populaire. C'est dans ce contexte que voulant soumettre la résistance, ils ont du engager une guerre totale contre la population afghane. Mais une bataille qu'ils ont pu gagner pendant la journée est pres-toujours perdue la nuit suivante, car les femmes sont les gardiennes de cette "autre armée de l'ombre" pour reprendre l'expression d'Andre Malraux.

NOTES

1. Reportage télévisé Victor Loupan et Christophe de Ponfilly, diffusé sur Antenne 2 (31 janvier 1986).
2. B.I.A.: Bureau International Afghanistan, 24, rue de Chaligny, 75 012 — Paris. Le BIA est une association de soliderité avec la résistance afghane qui fait entre autres un travail d'information et d'analyse sur tous les aspects du conflit afghan, il publie une revue: *Défis afghans.*
3. La presse occidentale est très laconique sur ce thème. Pour plus d'informations, il est indispensable de se reporter notammant à la presse éditée par la Résistance: *Afghan Information Center Bulletin,* 1, Gharib Abad, Near PCSIR Labs, University, Po Box 228, Peshawar, Pakistan; — *Afghan Realities*, AIDC PO Box 324 Peshawar, Pakistan; *Afghan News*, Post Box 264 Peshawar, Pakistan; *The Mudjahedin Monthly.*
4. Catherine Chattard, — *Le Monde* (29/30 décembre 1985).
5. Documentation officielle gouvernementale en anglais (Juillet 1985).
6. Mme Bailleau-Lajoinie. Actes de la Recherche en Sciences-Sociales Septembre 1980. Citation de son livre: *Conditions de femmes en Afghanistan* (Editions Sociales, 1980).
7. Micheline Centlivres, Actes de la Recherche en Sciences-Sociales (Septembre 1980).
8. Isabelle Delloye, *Des femmes d'Afghanistan* (Editions des femmes, 1980).
9. Odile Botti. *Journal Marie-Claire* (Printemps 1985).
10. Commandant AREF, *Défis afghans* No. 9 (juillet/août 1986).
11. Isabelle Delloye *op. cit.*, p. 213.
12. *Idem.*
13. AIC, article sur les femmes dans la Résistance (Décembre 1985), No. 58.
12. J. C. Victor, *La cité des murmures*. Ed. Jean-Claude Lattès (1983), p. 158.
15. AIC No. 58.
16. Olivier Roy, *L'Afghanistan, Islam et modernité politique* (Seuil, 1985).

APPENDIX A

LISTE DES PERSONNES INTERVIEWEES
(Par Isabelle Delloye et Marie-Odile Terrenoire)

I. *Réfugiés afghans interviewés entre le* 25 *octobre et le* 8 *novembre* 1985
Hommes:
Wali Khwâdja, 64 ans, de la province de Baghlan, réfugié depuis deux ans au camp de Khorassan.
Walid Madjrouh, 27 ans, commandant d'un groupe de moudjahedin dans la province du Kounar
Commandant Sayed Mohammad, 55 ans, de la province de Kunduz. Sa famille est installée dans le camp de Swabee, près de Peshawar depuis environ un an et demi.
Femmes:
Simîn Musharaf, environ 30 ans, réfugiée de Djellalabad, professeur à l'école de filles du camp de Nasir Bagh.
Shirim Gol, femme de Mahmad Rassoul, de la province de Baghlan, arrivée 6 jours avant à Peshawar, souffre de brûlures, interviewée à l'hôpital chirurgical des femmes afghanes à Peshawar.
Fahima Nassery, 38 ans, ex-enseignante en sciences-physiques à Kaboul, réfugiée à Peshawar depuis juillet 1985.
Munda, de la province de Kunduz, réfugiée depuis un mois dans le camp de Nasir Bahg.
Maimouna, 45 ans, femme de Arbad Mohammad, de la province de Baghlan, refugiée au camp de Khorassan depuis deux jours.
Adam Goula, femme de Dur Gulet, de la province de Kunduz, arrivée la veille au camp de Khorassan.
Maryam, de la province du Badakhshan, arrivée au Pakistan depuis deux ans, "camp des veuves", à Nasir Bagh.
Haji Bibi Jam, de la province de Parwan, arrivée au Pakistan depuis un mois au camp de Katchagari, puis transférée à Nasir Bagh au "camp des veuves".
Zubaïda, fille de Haji Bibi Jam, de la province de Parwan, "camp des veuves" à Nasir Bagh.
Sanzala, de Djellalabad, arrivée au "camp des veuves" de Nasir Bagh deux jours avant.
Ughul Bega, femme de Quader Sofi, 51 ans, de la province de Balkh, arrivée la veille ou l'avant veille au camp de Khorassan après un voyage d'un mois et 7 jours.

Plusieurs témoignages de femmes ont été recueillis au camp de Katchagari où plusieurs centaines de personnes venaient d'arriver de la province de Kunduz, mais la situation était trop tendue dans ce terrain vague où tout manquait pour s'enquérir des noms.

II. *Femmes françaises ayant fait de longs séjours en Afghanistan*
Evelyne Dauzet, infirmière, est restée plus d'un an et demi en Afghanistan depuis décembre 1982 avec une équipe de Médecins sans Frontières dans plusieurs endroits du Hazaradjat, et s'est jointe en 1985 à une équipe de Médecins du Monde dans la province du Wardak.
Chantal Lebato, du CEREDAF, centre de documentation de l'AFRANE, a effectué plusieurs voyages en Afghanistan depuis 1980.

Anne-Marie le Magorou, infirmière MSF: plusieurs séjours prolongés dans le Badakhshan.
Christine Schevenement, infirmière MSF: un séjour de quatre mois pendant l'année 1984 dans le Badakhshan, près de Kechel.
Elisabeth Réglat, infirmière MSF: arrivée à Zari, province de Balkh au printemps 1984. Elle y est restée jusqu'au début de l'année 1985.

III. *Commandants de la Résistance de passage en France*
Allauxin Khan, second du commandant Ismaël Khan de la province d'Hérat. Interview en avril 1986.
Commandant Mohammed Aref, région de Kunduz. Interview juin 1986.

IV. *Spécialiste de l'Afghanistan consulté:*
Alain de BURES.

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Education in Afghanistan: Past and Present

A Problem for the Future

SAYD BAHAOUDDIN MAJROOH

Afghanistan today is under the impact of two Soviet offensives: the military and the ideological. The devastating military invasion is still going on and a strong popular resistance against it is still continuing. Here only problems related to the ideological offensive will be discussed; and they are connected with education.

In Afghanistan, Marxist ideology has no impact on two types of people: 1. The village farmer (forming the overwhelming majority of the population) who are deeply rooted in their popular and religious traditions; 2. The highly educated persons (few in number) who have a good knowledge of the West and also are aware of their spiritual roots in the country's past and present. Those vulnerable to the ideological offensive are a number of people among the urban youth who went to the modern schools and university colleges.

Modern education in the Western style is rather new in Afghanistan. The first modern school opened under the reign of Amir Habibullah in the beginning of this century. But the new system was promoted in a state of discontinuity with the old type of learning.

I. TRADITIONAL LEARNING — FROZEN KNOWLEDGE

1. THE CREATIVITY OF THE PAST

In the past there were many well-known centres for learning in Afghanistan. *Madrassas*, or traditional schools, flourished in Herat, Ghazni, Kandahar, Kabul, etc. Attached to the mosques, the *madrassa* was a private institution supported by the local population and the rich residents. The central figure of the *madrassa* was the scholar

or the master-teacher who was provided with a living; the students who gathered around him were also fed by the community. The students attached themselves to the master as his pupils. According to the reputation of the latter, young people seeking knowledge might travel from farther regions in order to join the well-known learning circle. The teaching was done on an individual basis. Each student, one after the other, would come with his book and receive his lesson for the day, the students being at different levels of learning or following different branches of knowledge. The sociological background of the student was usually that of poor landless families who were weakly integrated into tribal or local communities and who had no other prospects for the future other than to become a priest in a mosque or a religious scholar in order to find a respected position in the local society. Farmers, tribal chiefs and local *maleks* did not send their children to *madrassas*. Rich or aristocratic urban and rural families had private tutors for their children, including for the girls. Women were not admitted in the *madrassas*.

The master-teacher of the *madrassa* was supposed to have encyclopedic knowledge, able to cover any branch of arts and sciences. The traditionally recognised fields of learning were: Islamic jurisprudence, koranic interpretation and the tradition of the prophet (Tafsir and Hadith), philosophy, which included metaphysics, logic and grammar, theology, literary studies covering the Persian classics, and natural sciences focused on the old Greek medicine. The best master-teacher was a type of theologian–alchemist–astrologist.

During the earlier periods of Islamic civilisation, important learning centres were created. Open to new ideas, they made valuable contributions in various branches of sciences and arts. Outstanding scholars such as Al Biruni, Ibn Sina and many others emerged who made the highest contribution to the advancement of human knowledge. Studies of philosophy, astronomy and other natural sciences were encouraged. However, the central element of teaching in *madrassas* consisted of law and theology. In the course of time distinction was made between the religious and rational sciences. But gradually the *ulemas*, or religious scholars, adopted an increasingly hostile attitude towards science and philosophy. Attention was mainly paid to traditional studies, which included theology, law and literature. But even in the favoured traditional fields of studies, genuine research and creativity declined. Original texts of theology, philosophy, jurisprudence, etc., were replaced by commentaries and by commentaries upon commentaries. Time was spent on refutation and counter-refutation and never on basic problems and research. Learning was no more an active pursuit or a creative effort of the mind but a passive acquisition of already established knowledge.

2. THE STERILITY OF THE PRESENT

Traditional learning in Afghanistan mainly came under the influence of the Islamic teaching centres in the Indian sub-continent. Islam was brought to India by and through Afghanistan, but when, during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, Islamic *madrassas* were established in India, these became the main centres of learning for scholars from Afghanistan. However by the time *madrassas* started in India, the creative period of Islamic learning was already over; second and third hand commentaries became the basis of teaching. The subjects taught were: law, theology, rhetoric, Arabic grammar, medicine, astronomy, geometry, Hadith and Koranic interpretation. The basic trend of the *madrassas* was to eliminate the intellectual and rational sciences and to emphasise the purely religious orthodox disciplines. One influential Indian *madrassa* for training Afghan religious scholars was in Deoband in northern India, established in the second half of the 19th century. The progressively narrowing view of Deoband contributed further to the decline of traditional teaching in Afghanistan. When, from the beginning of the 20th century, the country slowly started to open to the influence of the outside world and modern schools, traditional education was at its lowest intellectual level. Strictly religious subjects such as Fiqh, Hadith and Koranic interpretation were retained, but only studied in second and third hand commentaries, never in the original texts; other branches of sciences and arts were ignored. Among the non-religious subjects, Arabic grammar was favoured, but the way it was studied illustrates the degree of sterility and absurdity of the present day traditional teaching.

The student would learn by heart all the grammatical rules, was never taught how to apply them; he would recite the conjugation of large numbers of Arabic verbs in all tenses, always starting with the verb "zaraba" (to beat: I beat, you beat, he beats, I have beaten, etc); but he was never able to make an Arabic sentence or understand an Arabic text. Grammar was considered as sacred knowledge having value in itself.

Another example of the sterility and absurdity of the traditonal learning was in the "art of disputation". The student was not taught any method of discussion or argumentation. All possible questions were listed and the answers given and the student had simply to learn them by heart — (if someone objects so and so, you answer so and so . . .). Opponents would come face to face; people would gather around them enjoying the confrontation as at a cock fight. The defeated party was the one who failed to remember the right answer to the objection or faced a new objection not mentioned in his references. The best fight was disputation between two well-known

maulawis (religious scholars). Each one would come with a large following of his students and donkey-loads of commentary books in Arabic. Arguments against arguments, objections against objections, books against books were produced. The disputation, interrupted by prayers, meals and sleep, was resumed the following morning and would continue for days. Strong displays of anger, exchange of insults and occasionally physical fighting among the rival students were integral parts of the art of disputation. In the end, the opponents would depart without having won a clear-cut victory, promising to come soon for the next round. The expenses for meals and housing of the disputing parties and their numerous followers were paid by the local population who enjoyed the occasion and were proud of their own *maulawi* if he was the strongest; but, even if clearly defeated, he was never dismissed; a religious scholar is always a religious scholar even in defeat. In Afghanistan, men of knowledge of any kind had the respect of the common people.

The traditional learning was represented by three different religious types: the *mullah*, the *maulawi* and the *pir*.

The mullah. The *mullah*, or the ordinary priest of a mosque, had a very narrow educational background. He knew only how to perform the five daily prayers, how to preside over marriage, birth and funeral ceremonies. He did not know how to write, and could only read the Holy Koran without understanding its meaning. His teaching activity was confined to the most elementary aspects of religious practice. The children would learn from him the physical motions and the texts of prayers and other short verses of the Holy Koran in daily use. His teaching included the rules of fasting, ablution and other basic permissions and prohibitions of Islam. The *mullah* and his family were supported by the community of believers. He was not involved in local socio-political affairs; he did not participate in the deliberations of the council of village elders; his only function on those occasions was to perform the opening and the concluding prayers of the *jirgah* session. While well-respected, still he remained the favourite character of popular jokes. There were abundant anecdotes about his gluttony, his hypocrisy and his supposed perverse sexual relations with his male assistant-pupil.

The maulawi (religious scholar) and *qadi* (judge). These were trained in Islamic *madrassas*, could read and write and were well-versed in Islamic law and jurisprudence. Often the same person was scholar and judge at the same time. As scholar he was a teacher training young students, who, for the great majority, became *mullahs* and for the

best few, would complete the cycle of learning by themselves becoming *qadis* or *maulawis*. As *qadi* he was a judge in an Islamic court. However, a part of civil affairs remained outside the scope of religious courts and were dealt with according to popular custom and tribal code (even crime). The scholar-judge was highly respected, his advice and judgement strictly followed. Concerning the judges, since the end of the 19th century (during the reign of Amir Abdurrahman), a gradual change occurred and two types of *qadis* emerged: the official one, appointed and paid by the central administration in Kabul, and an unofficial one in the countryside supported by the local population. But in the fifties and sixties the latter type slowly disappeared from the picture. The *mullah*, the *maulawi* and the *qadi* strictly adhered to the orthodox line of Islamic law.

The pir (spiritual guide). A *pir* was the leader of a Sufi brotherhood and was the most popular among all the religious figures. He was of saintly descent, and he himself, his ancestors and his progeny were considered as saints. He was in charge of disciples' initiation to the process of inner perfection and was supposed to lead them along the mystic Path. He was expected to keep a school of his own in which Sufi doctrines and works of literature would be studied. He was believed to have supernatural power (especially healing power). If the *mullah* and the *maulawi* were respected, the *pir* was venerated and the tomb of his ancestors worshipped.

In the past a religious scholar like Al Ghazali, while attracted by rational sciences, was also deeply influenced by the Sufis. A great Sufi leader such as Abdullah Ansari of Herat was also a great scholar of orthodox religious sciences. Shahabuddin Sohrawardi, the well-known mystic, was also a great philosopher. In modern Afghanistan almost nothing from the high intellectual level of the past remained. All the aforementioned representatives of the traditional education had two basic points in common: ignorance and intolerance.

The *mullah*, with his limited intellecutal capacities, knew nothing beyond the horizon of the village or the tribal area. In the past he was a little better educated, could read Arabic and write, but had never shined in his intellectual abilities. The religious scholar of the present was entirely confined to the text of his commentary books; although he may have travelled and stayed in India or made the required pilgrimage to Mecca, he had no idea of what was happening socially and politically in the sub-continent or in the Arabic and other Islamic countries. The *pir*, with his daily worship of his person and the increasing number of worshippers, had no time and did not feel the need to inquire about the rest of the world, and convinced by the superiority of intuitive communication with the Truth, he despised

rational knowledge. With the generous donations and the blind obedience of his followers, the *pir* became increasingly powerful financially and socially. Some of them became big landlords, rich businessmen and influential in the government and at court. All three had one thing in common: they were neither prepared nor willing to face the modern world, they had no answer for the new problems, and their common attitude was the systematic rejection of anything new. Their dogmaticism and intolerance pushed many people of the rising generation towards the opposite extreme: rejection of everything native and old and blind acceptance of everything foreign and new.

The tradition of secular education or "wordly sciences" was more or less maintained. It was carried out in Persian with private tutors which only rich families could afford. Those were the literate persons who became public letter-writers or clerks and secretaries in the government administration. The few outstanding intellectuals who were able to produce creative work belonged to this category. They were the ones who became instrumental in opening the country to modern trends.

II. MODERN EDUCATION — THE MAGICO-SCIENTIFIC APPEAL

For over a century, the Western type of education has been spreading all over the non-Western world. A large proportion of at least two generations received their education in modern schools. Two aspects of this important phenomenon will be considered here.

1. A MAN STRANGER TO HIMSELF

Generally in non-Western countries the new education system had no roots or foundations in the local culture. Except in Japan and in some other countries, no bridge was thrown between the new and the old, between past and present. In Afghanistan, modern education did not come as a continuation of the *madrassas* or our traditional schools; there was a wide gap between past and present. And the decline of traditional education described above made it difficult to bridge the gap. Neither the traditionalists, who did not have the ability or the will to come forward with a genuine solution, nor the modernists were prepared to face the problem. The modern schools started with a new building and a new type of teacher who ignored the traditional teaching. The modernisation of education was promoted

by people privately educated in Persian literary subjects. A second generation, having started in the private traditional schools, switched to the new government institutions. The third generation followed the new education from the primary school to graduation. Our best scholars, poets and writers were among the first generation. The second generation also produced some good literary figures. The third generation was much less productive.

An individual who was educated in the new system and also had the chance to complete his studies in an institution for higher education in the West, became a strange animal. He was neither a complete Westerner nor a genuine Easterner. He became a stranger: stranger to his own society and still worse, stranger to himself. A deeply split personality, he was constantly at war against himself. Suppressing his East-conditioned subconscious drives with his West-trained consciousness, he remained a prisoner of his foggy subjectivity and his own over-evaluated self-image. He would despise the villagers whom he considered as "backward and ignorant". With his Western outlook, he would deprecate his own culture and society about which he knew little. Also the people did not consider him as one of their own; he was received as a stranger, as "a government official from the city", who did not speak the same language, did not pray and was suspected of drinking wine. Thus the modern educated man was separated from the common people physically by his manners and Western clothes and morally by his value judgements and Western outlook; with the difference that the villager preserved his identity as a human being well integrated in his community, while the educated one had lost his own cultural and social substance. This weakness made him vulnerable to the ideological offensive.

The main lesson of modern education was that the new Western type schools opened the eyes of the people to the social, political and economic conditions in the industrialised countries and at the same time showed them what a gap was separating their countries from the developed world. The alternatives for an educated man from an under-developed country were either to go to the West and live under humanly decent conditions, or to make his own country worth living in, economically and politically. As all the educated people did not have the opportunity to live in the West, only the second possibility was left open to them.

2. THE MYTH OF REVOLUTION

Having learned the new ideas about time, history and rapid changes, the educated became impatient. There were in their coun-

tries the remains of the colonial time, tyrants and dictators, oppression and vast misery of the local people. They did not believe that a process of evolution would achieve anything; anyway it would have been too slow a process for them. They wished to see the changes in their own span of life. For this reason the myth of Revolution in their eyes took on the form of a magical means able to fulfil all their dreams. Revolution became the magical solution for all evil.

In this respect "Marxism–Leninism" presented the most attractive prospect: it was a magic with a scientific and rational appearance, a rational dream doomed to become true, with Marx presenting theoretical coherence and Lenin showing the practical ways to seize power in order to build the dreamland.

Some of the attractive aspects of Marxism–Leninism supposed to work on the minds of the under-developed seem to be the following:

— The historical presumption of the system made it something new for the educated to learn.

— The non-historical nature of the ideology as a dogma valid for all places and times should have made it attractive and even reassuring for people used to living under strong timeless dogmas.

— Its magic power and the messianic appeal of the ideology was expected to mobilise the magical-minded backward masses.

— Its scientific presentations were supposed to attract modern educated people.

— "Dialectical Materialism" was supposed to work in two opposite directions: for the educated it should have been a "revolutionary" logical system of thought with so-called scientific foundations; for the illiterate masses the dialectic should have worked as welcome scientific justification for the peacefully co-existing contradictions in a mythical mind.

To my mind, thanks to the Soviet system in general and Soviet military invasion of Afghanistan in particular, Marxism–Leninism is in the process of de-mystification. But the most serious side of the development up to 1985 and beyond is the persistance of the magic appeal of the myth of Revolution. Other modernist trends for fast change are trapped in it. A nationalist movement wanting a modern type of nation-building, thinks in terms of "National Revolution", an Islamic movement deciding to renovate the old message of Islam, also conceives it in terms of "Islamic Revolution".

III. AFGHANISTAN UNDER SOVIET OCCUPATION — A THREATENED CULTURE

Since the beginning of the 20th century, the modern system of educa-

tion became widely spread over the country. Despite the hostile attitude of the traditional religious leaders, the ordinary population slowly adopted the system and at the end of the above period, became strongly in favour of it; delegations from the countryside were coming to Kabul pressing the Ministry of Education to open primary and secondary schools for the villages. Two universities (in Kabul and Jelalabad), lycées, and professional high schools existed in the capital and in major provincial cities; secondary and primary schools, including schools for girls, were created in the remote corners of the country; an extensive literacy programme for adults (male and female) was launched. Increasingly large numbers of Afghans were regularly sent to Western countries for higher education. Since 1960, coeducation was introduced at Kabul University; women were no more forced to be veiled; a growing number of them, after graduation from Kabul colleges, started working in the government administration; for the first time in the history of Afghanistan, women were elected as members of parliament, became ministers, and diplomats.

With the communist coup of April 1978, the above development was interrupted, and the Soviet invasion of December 1979 set the modernisation movement in education back to its state of about 70 years ago. Presently Afghan culture is threatened from two sides: there is a process of destruction inside Afghanistan and a rapid degradation outside in the refugee camps.

1. CULTURAL DESTRUCTION INSIDE THE COUNTRY

As the Marxist trend was an entirely urban phenomenon and the party recruited its members mainly among city students and teachers, the population blamed the whole modern educational system for it. The favourable attitude of the people towards the modern schools reversed and changed over night. People stopped sending their children to schools; in the countryside the school buildings, changed into communist party headquarters, became the target of resistance attacks. Only in Soviet-controlled cities, especially Kabul, the schools were running but at less than half their normal capacity, under a heavy sovietisation process.

Generally speaking, the majority of the urban population living under the direct control of the occupation forces have the same negative attitude towards the regime and its educational methods as that of the rurals. Only a small number of party members, their families or some affiliated opportunitists are at the service of the enemy. The Russians, having lost confidence even in them, think no more that the present old and young generations of Afghans have the capacity to be

"re-educated" according to their will. Their hopes are now focused on children between 6 and 12. How much those young Afghans will actually be sovietised, only the future will decide. The sovietisation programme inside Afghanistan is confined to the cities, especially Kabul, and in the capital to some high schools, the university and the "Fatherland Orphanage", where the children of party activists killed in the fighting against the resistance are educated. The main aspect of the sovietisation programme are:

— The extensive teaching of the Russian language, started in the university and high schools and now expanded to the secondary and primary schools, replacing English and French.

— "Principles of Marxism–Leninism", "Political Economy", "Dialectical Materialism", "the History of the Party", taught in all departments of the colleges. Also the project to re-write the history of Afghanistan is progressing.

— Radio and TV programmes about life in Russia, documentary films about social and technical progress in different republics.

— Films about World War II and the so-called "Patriotic War" against Nazi Germany.

— Holding of regular propaganda and indoctrination meetings, conferences, film shows, dissemination of printed materials by the huge Soviet "Friendship House" in Kabul.

— Organisation, Soviet style, of women, youth, workers and writers, unions.

— Special institutions for higher education in economics and politics for party members.

— Over ten thousand students between 12 and 20 are sent to Russia and other East European countries for military, political and intelligence training. Moreover, boys between 6 and 12 are sent in increasing numbers. Many are simply taken in the streets without the knowledge and permission of their parents.

At present in Afghanistan there is not much remaining from the traditional or the modern education. The good *mullahs* and *maulawis* are either with the resistance or living in the refugee camps in Pakistan; the ones who have agreed to serve the Marxist reigme, well-paid, are only performing the daily prayers and religious sermons on the radio and TV in favour of the regime and are not allowed to teach religious subjects. Over 90 per cent of the highly educated Afghans in the Western or other non-communist universities were killed or disappeared in prisons or fled to Western countries. The majority of the young nonparty students of Kabul University and other colleges have been either arrested, or have left the country in order to avoid military service under the Russians, joined the resistance, or are living in foreign countries without having completed their studies. In the Af-

ghan countryside, for over six years there have been no government schools; the children are not going to school. A young generation of illiterates will be added to the old one. Presently some efforts are under way for opening primary schools in the villages. But the war situation and the constant threat of Russian military operations have made the task extremely difficult.

2. CULTURAL DEGRADATION AMONG THE AFGHAN REFUGEES OUTSIDE AFGHANISTAN

Afghan refugees who have settled in Western countries such as the United States, Germany and France, are using the educational facilities of the host countries. The children speak English, German or French, even with their parents; they do not have the means to learn to read and write their mother tongue, be it Pashto or Dari. They are in the process of being assimilated into Western society.

The situation among the five million refugees from Afghanistan in the neighbouring countries is quite different. In Afghan refugee camps in Pakistan with over three million refugees, the circumstances are tragic. In Iran with more than a million refugees, the position reportedly is worse.

In the first two years after the Soviet invasion (1980–1981) the refugees did not think much about education for children; the urgent problems were food, shelter, medical care and fighting. In some camps a few good *mullahs* started elementary religious and Koranic teaching for children. Later, international humanitarian organisations encouraged the Pakistani Commission for Afghan Refugees to build schools. Also the Afghan political organisations became aware of the importance of having educational institutions.

A small number of Afghan refugees living in cities such as Peshawar, Pindi, Islamabad or Karachi send their children to local private or government schools, in which Urdu is the medium of teaching, with English as second language. The Afghan children hear about the Quaid-e Azam (the Great Leader) Mohammad Al Jinnah, "the founding father of the nation", but never about Afghanistan or a nation called by that name. The national languages, Pashto or Persian Dari, are used by Afghan children at home or with other Afghans, becoming thus only an oral means of communication separated from the old literary tradition.

In the refugee camps, primary schools for Afghan children have been opened (but not yet covering a quarter of the refugee population). Teaching is carried on in Pashto or Dari; reading and writing are added to the religious subjects. Also a few secondary schools were

opened by the Afghan political organisations in Peshawar. But some strong negative factors are at work which prevent them from becoming a normal modern system of education. All the Afghan political leaders in exile have two basic attitudes in common: they emphasise the religious dimension of the struggle and ignore (even in some cases reject) the national character. Both the revolutionaries (or the modernists) and the moderates (or the traditionalists) have the same negative attitude towards the secular social and natural sciences which they consider to be too Western. None of the new political leaders who have emerged in the resistance period have been able to build a reputation on a national scale. The reason is that, because of their past and present social and political background (which is the subject of a separate study), they do not seem to have developed a clear national consiousness and awareness of a national interest transcending party lines or local and regional considerations. Consequently, education for the traditionalists is to re-open the old religious *madrassas*, and for the revolutionaries it is to build institutions in order to train militants for revolutionary Islam. In their eyes, skills in medical, engineering or in other secular knowledge are secondary, one can live without.

Their attitude to the teaching of Afghan history is most significant. The traditionalists consider it a secular subject, even an un-Islamic one as far as the pre-Islamic period is concerned; the revolutionaries are in principle against popular tradition, which in their view has corrupted the purity of Islam. Thus both despise the study of Afghan history. In the few secondary schools for refugees, history is not taught at all. Mathematics and some physics are more or less tolerated. Geography is avoided as much as possible. A teacher who talked about the earth being spheric and turning around the sun, was expelled by the religious school headmaster. Some Western well-wishers have given thought to the prospect of an Afghan university in exile. The project stumbled against the main obstacle: will it be an Islamic revolutionary university or a traditional one?

The host country, Pakistan, having been founded in the name of Islam, officially undergoing a process of islamisation and also having had trouble since its creation with Afghanistan, is therefore not much inclined to promote Afghan national education and thus strengthen the national feeling of the future generations. The present Afghan religious leadership is helping the host country in this policy.

If the situation remains as it is, Afghan children born in the refugee camps will not know who they are. They will have no knowledge about their country, which they will not have seen, they will have no feeling for their past and their culture, about which they will not have learned anything.

An example among many others of cultural deterioration is the changing pattern and quality of Afghan carpets. Uzbek and Turkmen families of northern Afghanistan are coming out in increasing numbers. The women made these well-known beautiful carpets in family workshops; weaving carpets at home was part of daily work. Now in the refugee camps around Peshawar, special workshops are built. They are working like slaves. In the past carpet weaving inside Afghanistan was entirely women's work. In the refugee camps in Pakistan, under the influence of local religious feeling, refugee women are more and more confined to their tents; a workshop outside the home is not considered a place for women. Now Afghan refugee men are trained by Pakistani carpet-makers to make Afghan carpets. A Pakistani trader, who has no idea of Afghan history and tradition and no feeling for genuine works of art, is showing the refugee workers how to change their traditional patterns and produce new types of carpets in large numbers for the market with artificial dye and cheap material. The same process of degradation is going on in other branches of traditional crafts such as embroidery, clothing, carpentry, etc.

IV. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The intention of the Soviet system concerning Afghan culture and history is clear. The aim is to destroy the collective memory, to make the Afghans forget their social history and their cultural identity. Thus up-rooted, free from socio-cultural ties with the past, a new man capable of being re-educated will be created. Men of the older generations, having too strong a memory to be easily erased, are in the process of physical elimination. The attention is now focused on the younger generations, especially the children.

From the past only events such as "the struggle of the Afghans against British Imperialism" in the 19th century, and King Amanullah's exchange of messages with Lenin and the establishment of friendly relations with the Bolshevik regime (1919) are retained. In Soviet eyes, the proper history of Afghanistan begins with the communist coup of April 1978; before that it is pre-history which does not extend farther than 1964, the foundation year of the Khalq party. A new subject introduced in the teaching programme is "the history of the Party" which is supposed to cover this pre-historic period.

Presently what is going on in Afghanistan is simply the physical devastation of a country and the cultural destruction of a nation. Still worse, the political leadership of the resistance does not seem to have

the capacity of launching an appropriate counter-offensive on the cultural front.

A free Afghanistan of the future is doomed to face a much more serious problem than that of the armed resistance, namely the enormous task of reconstruction. Education is one of the destroyed areas to be re-built.

An Afghan farmer, a refugee from Logar, said one day with deep sadness:

> The Russians, in order to deprive the freedom fighters of shelter, destroy the vegetation and even cut centuries-old plane trees. If we could re-plant them now, it would take at least a hundred years to reach the size of the old one.

This picture describes the whole economic, social and cultural situation of Afghanistan under the Soviet military invasion.

We conclude with a question, or more precisely three questions:

1. When Afghanistan is liberated, will all the educated Afghans come back in order to take an active part in the reconstruction of their country?
2. Will a genuine revival of traditional scholarship be possible?
3. Could a modern system of education, better adapted to the national character and in harmony with our traditions and history, be implemented?

In any case, the present destruction and the future liberation of the country will give us the chance to make a new start. It will be worthwhile trying.

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Iran's Left in its True Colours

A Review Article

KOSROE SHAKERI

S. Zabih, *The Left in Contemporary Iran.* London: Croom Helm, 1986, 239 pp. $25.00.

The role that the Left played in bringing about the fall of the Pahlavi monarchy has often been overlooked. Three factors account for this: first, lack of knowledge about the Left in Iran; second, the success of the Ayatollahs; and third, an underlying fear of admitting that the Left has been, if not a major, at least an effective political force. There seems to be a complacent assumption that, now that the Ayatollahs have crushed the Left, there is no need to study it further. This view, reminiscent of that taken after the 1953 *coup d'état*, is wrong and unhistorical. There is a great need to study the Left in Iran, and, moreover, to study it historically, if one is to understand why political democracy has not taken root in Iran and how its eventual realisation can be assisted.

It is indeed no exaggeration to say that the Left in Iran is seriously understudied; and the title of this book by Dr Zabih might raise the hope that this inadequacy was on its way to being removed. But, regrettably, a careful study of the book not only greatly disappoints the reader who is himself familiar with the Iranian Left but leaves him with a sense of dismay at the book's inadequate standard of scholarship. On the one hand the book contains wrong and misleading information; on the other, as the reviewer will seek to demonstrate, it offers an incorrect analysis of the conditions of and prospects for the Left in Iran.

Dr Zabih here seeks to give an account of the Left in contemporary Iran as an "integral part of the future development of Iranian poli-

tics". It is his claim that he has

> made sure that original source materials in Farsi [Persian] and other languages were utilised; that leaders and participants in a variety of Leftist groups and sub-groups were identified, and whenever possible, interviewed.

To achieve this end, he says in his Introduction,

> frequent visits to US cities with heavy concentration of Iranian exiles were made, and, on four occasions, research trips to Western European countries, East Berlin and Leipzig in search of Leftist source material and opportunities to meet Iranian Leftists of various shades and affiliations.

"Particularly rewarding" was his visit to Europe in October 1983, on learning that several "Tudeh Party defectors [exiles?] including some in the military" had arrived; they had "shed much new light on the most recent crisis in Soviet–Iranian relations".

ENDURING FASCINATIONS OF THE SOVIET LINE

It is regrettable that, despite the wealth of material now available from Western archives and elsewhere,[1] Dr Zabih makes no attempt to throw new light on the roots of Iranian Communism. Clinging to old clichés that are largely based on rumours and assumptions if not on outright falsifications which have been reported to him, he disregards hard evidence. Such disregard is most striking in his account of the first split in the Tudeh Party, in January 1948 (not in 1946 as he has it). He asserts (p. 15) that Maleki's breakaway resulted from his opposition to the Tudeh leadership's toeing the Soviet line. Maleki's own account, and A. Khameh'i's recent book (*Forsat-i Bozorgi-i Az Dast Rafteh*, Tehran, 1983), make it clear that the split was not motivated by Maleki's opposition to the Soviet line. They show that he gave up his opposition to the Tudeh once the Soviet authorities supported the Tudeh leadership and denounced him; and then he retired from politics until Mossadegh's oil nationalisation campaign was in full swing. It is also a mistake to state that Maleki's breakaway took place under the ideological influence of Tito's; Tito broke with Moscow after Maleki. The point at issue here is not simply incorrect chronology, but incorrect assessment of the degree of impact by the Soviet Union on an intelligentsia that was just emerging from the dark era of Reza Shah's dictatorship.

The rumour that Gen. Fardoust, the Shah's childhood friend and most trusted servant before the Shah left the country, was in fact a Soviet spy has now been confirmed by Gen Robert Huyser (*Mission to Tehran*, London, 1986, p. 64). This only further confirms the fact that many Iranians, while themselves non-Communist, can yet quite simply opt for the Soviet path of development — particularly if they

are persons of an authoritarian frame of mind. This particular one-time friend of the Shah, after defecting from the old regime and working for the present one, has since been arrested in Iran by his new masters and accused of having worked for the KGB for over 30 years.

Contrary to Mr Zabih's assertions, it cannot be argued that the Soviets enjoyed a lesser position on the Iranian political scene in 1979 than they did in 1941, following the occupation of Iran by the Allies. The Soviet position in 1941–49 was fundamentally based on the Tudeh's strength. In 1978–81 it was much stronger, but this was not from such support as the Tudeh could muster. While the Tudeh was not seen in a favourable light by many Iranians, the Soviet Union itself was benefiting from a loyalty afforded to it by such diverse groups as the Fedayin (Majority as well as Minority) and Rah-i Karegar (which Mr Zabih does not discuss in his book). In addition, the Soviets had the ideological backing of many smaller splinter groups of young Leftists who, if not directly breast-fed by the Tudeh, had been raised on Soviet (that is, Leninist) canned ideology.

LEADERS AND FACTIONS

There are other inaccuracies in this book. In Chapter III (p. 261) the author claims that the majority of Khomeini's Revolutionary Council recognized the need for cooperation with, and even co-option of, the Leftist groups. He adds that

> Western-educated personalities in the provisional government [of Bazargan] and the Revolutionary Council argued that Khomeini's appeal to the masses was strong enough to tolerate legitimate dissent from all groups with the exception of those who actively supported the Pahlavi regime.

Nothing could be further from the truth. Mr Zabih does not indicate the source for this assertion. In the absence of such indications your reviewer is inclined to think Mr Zabih may have misconstrued what your reviewer told Mr Zabih in a chat in Paris in October 1983 (which he cites as an "interview"; see p. 156, note 23). What I told Mr Zabih in Paris was that, in the summer of 1979, I had personally pleaded with Dr Chamran,[2] Bazargan's Defence Minister, that since the new regime was claiming to have the support of 99 per cent of Iranians there was no need to suppress the Left violently; the advisable course seemed to me to be that pursued by Mossadegh, which weakened the Tudeh Party more than any of the repressive measures of the Shah; experience had shown — and continues to show today — that under conditions of repression Soviet Communism grows stronger as a "contraband" ideology. I also told Dr Zabih that I had pleaded with Chamran not to embark on a war in Kurdistan but to try to negotiate

with the Democratic Party of Kurdistan, but that Chamran would not bend. There is not the slightest shred of evidence that any one close to Khomeini ever advanced the ideas and arguments that Mr Zabih here suggests they did.

Similarly in Chapter IV the author gives a seven-page account of the Mojahedin's position, without feeling the necessity of giving the slightest indication of where all his "facts" have come from (pp. 69–76); and, what is worse, the information given is wrong and one-sided. He also asserts (p. 71) that

> all the founding members of the Fedayin came from the remains of the outlawed Marxist-Leninist Party. . .

This is incorrect; indeed, he himself contradicts it further on, when (p. 113) he notes that the Fedayin "came into existence through the merging of two politically active groups, the Jazani-Zarifi and Ahmadzadeh-Pouyan" — the former being correctly identified by the author as erstwhile members of the Tudeh youth organisation, and the latter as having had "long records of political activity in the National Front" (p. 115). So, of these two versions, the concerned reader cannot deduce which is the correct one.

Again, the author affirms, quite wrongly, (p. 72) that Maleki's new group, the Socialist League, and Kashani's group, the Society of Muslim Warriors, were members of the National Resistance Movement (NRM), after the 1953 *coup d'état*. This again is incorrect. Maleki had been "expelled" from the Third Force Party by his younger lieutenants right after the coup for having "compromised himself" with the Shah. Maleki's new Socialist League group was formed much later, and was not and could not have been part of the NRM. Nor was Kashani's Society of Muslim Warriors part of the NRM; they had broken with Mossadegh nearly a year before the coup! Maleki's small group joined what came to be known as "the Third National Front" in the mid-1960s; the latter grouping, organised by Bazargan and Forouhar, opposed the "Second National Front" led by Saleh and Sanjabi, former Mossadegh collaborators. A further inaccuracy — apparently coming from sources close to Mr Banisadr — is the statement that Saleh had issued a manifesto for a strategy of "Patience and Anticipation" (pp. 73–74). The author would have done better not to depend on such simple sources which, particularly in the Iranian context, tend to be biased.

MOJAHEDIN AND FEDAYIN

Inaccuracies abound in this book. On page 83 the author claims, without offering a shred of evidence, that the Mojahedin differed in their

strategy from the Fedayin in that the latter accepted and followed the formula of surrounding the cities from the countryside, on the Maoist and Cuban models, whereas the Mojahedin adopted a formula based on their own socio-political analysis and opted for urban guerrilla warfare. This is inaccurate. The Fedayin never used the Maoist formula of the encirclement of cities from the countryside. The author is confusing the Sazman-i Eqelabi-yi Hezb-i Tudeh-yi Iran (The Revolutionary Organisation of the Tudeh Party) with the Fedayin. The latter was the major Maoist splinter group which broke with the Tudeh Party in 1964; it is not even discussed by Dr Zabih in his book. At any rate, to attribute the "encirclement strategy" to the Fedayin, as followers of the Tupamaros, is a gross historical error.

Mr Zabih on two occasions refers to the Peykar (Combat) as a "Trotskyist" organisation. Now, ask any Iranian citizen even in the remotest villages what Pekyar was, and you will be told that it was, professedly, Iran's arch Stalinist organisation! One can safely say that Mr Zabih never took the time to have a look at Paykar's publications. Where he does appear to have read the publication of an organisation, his analysis of it leaves much to be desired. An instance of this is his uncritical account of the programme and organisation of the Mojahedin (pp. 88–102); no actual assessment of this is provided. He quotes Mojahedin to the effect (p. 91) that there is no "blind obedience" in their organisation. He fails to explain that the Mojahedin is an organisation with super-hard iron discipline such as can hardly be matched by the most rigorous of Leninist organisations — to the extent that every member of it was obliged to give his approval for the marriage of its leader Mr Rajavi to the wife of one of his lieutenants, Mr Abrishamchi. This was a scandal which totally discredited the Mojahedin. As to the "absolute equality of men and women among the Mojahedin" (p. 93) one needs only to point to the veils which Mojahed girls are forced to wear in public. Also in the political realm, one notes the terms in which the Mojahedin leader assailed his republican critics, contemptuously referring to them as "liberals"; this is an epithet used by Iranian Stalinists to castigate their opponents.

Equally inaccurate is Mr Zabih's reference to alleged support by the Mojahedin for their Afghan namesakes in December 1979. In fact Mr Zabih cannot quote any source to back up this claim (p. 99). One is also at a loss to know what Mr Zabih's source is for the assertion that J. Farsi and Ayat, the most anti-Communist and fanatical leaders of the Islamic Republican Party, had favoured a tactical alliance with the Leftists. Facts simply do not sustain the "secrets" which Mr Zabih reveals so generously!

Worse yet are two claims that Mr Zabih makes on page 111 (note 16) regarding Soviet–Mojahedin connections (which, incidentally,

contradict his previous assertion of Mojahedin support for the Afghan Mujahids). Mr Zabih claims that Sa'adati, a Mojahedin leader, was arrested for having handed the Soviets Revolutionary Council documents. This is not so. Sa'adati was arrested, and later executed, for having wanted to exchange with the Soviets military documents concerning the US in Iran, against a list of US agents in Iran.

On Soviet–Iranian contacts, Mr Zabih retails some improbable information from Mr Mirfendereski, a former Iranian ambassador in Moscow and currently a collaborator of Mr Bakhtiyar. Mr Zabih quotes the former Iranian ambassador as saying:

> President Brezhnev asked the [Iranian] Embassy to intercede with the Shah so that Rajavi, who along with five other Mujahidin leaders had been convicted by a military tribunal, would not be executed (p. 111).

Apart from the unlikelihood of direct Soviet intervention in such cases — for the Soviets have never done so even in the case of their most loyal supporters and Communists — the Mirfendereski story has been differently given by Mr Bakhtiyar. In his book *Ma Fidelité* (Paris, 1982, p. 204) Bakhtiyar claims that Mirfendereski was summoned by Podgorny and told to return to Tehran and ask the Shah for clemency for Mr Rajavi. The first point here is that Rajavi came into prominence only after the fall of the Pahlavi dynasty; in 1970–71 he was only one of the 72 Mojaheds then arrested; it would seem very unlikely that Soviet leaders would wish to intercede so clumsily in favour of one out of 72. Doubts are raised by the fact that in one version it is Podgorny and in the other Brezhnev who interceded in favour of Rajavi. There is worse yet, however. At the time that Rajavi and his 71 colleagues were arrested, tried and condemned, Mirfendereski was no longer Ambassador in Moscow. He had already been replaced by Mr Kalali. The Mirfendereski story, both as told by Mr Bakhtiyar and as narrated by Mr Zabih, is an outright fabrication.

FEDAYIN AND TUDEH

In Chapter V Mr Zabih discusses the Fedayin organisation(s) originally formed in the early 1970s. On page 114 he incorrectly asserts that the Jazani group, of Tudeh background and one of the two currents that formed the Fedayin, rejected Moscow's leadership. This is incorrect. Although they may have been dissatisfied with the Soviets, especially during the Khrushchev era, they never condemned the Soviet line as the Maoists did. In fact, Zabih himself admits that the Jazani group adopted a neutral stance towards the Soviet–Chinese

dispute — a position that obviously benefited the Russians more than the Chinese. What is worse is that Mr Zabih takes his account (pp. 113–115) almost word for word from *Bahman 19th Teorik* (No. 4, 1975) published in London (and not clandestinely as Mr Zabih claims elsewhere) without acknowledging his source. As regards the Fedayin's official organs also, both before and after the fall of the Shah, Mr Zabih is inaccurate. *Bahman 19th Teorik* was not the Fedayin's organ; that was *Nabard-i Khalq*. Contrary to Mr Zabih's claim, *Kar* was published after the fall of the Shah, not before. On page 115 Mr Zabih speaks again of activities by the Fedayin in 1968, whereas a brochure which he himself quotes abundantly (*A Short Analysis* — see p. 124) gives the date of the Fedayin's foundation as 1971, after the assassination of Gen Farsiou, who was the military prosecutor held responsible for the execution of the survivors of the guerrillas' combat with army forces at Siahkal. As to the political characteristics of the Fedayin, the author uncritically repeats the Fedayin brochure, *A Short Analysis*, almost word for word: "The OIPFG was flexible and creative. Although it lacked practical experience, it did not fall into the trap of dogmatism. Organisational relations remained democratic and never led to a confrontation between the cadres and the leadership." This is far from the truth. One might argue that the Ahmadzadeh group were not dogmatic in their theoretical attitudes, and were innovative, so far as can be seen from their writings; but this is hardly true of the Fedayin once it was formed after 1971. Although little has been revealed of what went on within the organisation after it was formed, one can hardly call a Leninist organisation that is engaged in armed struggle "democratic". Nor does the little that has been related by dissidents who have left the organisation confirm this now hoary claim; the numerous splits in the organisation — there have been as many as 10 — should be sufficient proof that internal democracy in that organisation is not permitted. There is one particular case of criticism of lack of democracy levelled from within the Fedayin organisation which Mr Zabih has chosen to ignore or overlook. This is the case of Mostafa Shoa'iyan, the Marxist theoretician who was expelled and isolated from the underground movement by the Fedayin leadership in the mid-1970s — a situation which, in the end, led to his elimination by the Savak. He wrote an account of his disagreements with the post-Siahkal leadership of the Fedayin, which was published in Italy after his death.[3] His basic charge against the leadership was its lack of democracy and the impossibility of theoretical debate and criticism inside the organisation.

The total dependence of the author on *19th Bahman Teorik* has had other results. He says that

> criticism of the Tudeh Party was confined to the OIPFG *leadership* because the

> ordinary members lacked sufficient contacts with the exiled [Party] leader [in Eastern Germany] or their active followers within Iran" (emphasis added).

This statement calls for extended comment. Firstly, any distinction between "leaders" and "members" of the guerrilla organisation, which according to the author had no more than 50 members (p. 117) is hard to draw. Secondly, the Fedayin's contact or lack of contact with the Tudeh's leadership was in itself no reason for that criticism of it being confined to their own leadership's inner circle. Since the Tudeh made its presence felt by its constant propaganda, and especially its radio "Peyk-i Iran", no revolutionary leadership that was critical of the Tudeh or of the Soviet line could ignore the Tudeh issue or forego critical evaluation of the Tudeh leadership. Any laxity in the matter could — and indeed did — play into the hands of the Tudeh and the supporters of the Soviet line. In fact, after the disappearance of the Ahmadzadeh-Pouyan leadership, the new Fedayin leaders failed to carry on with the criticism of the Tudeh and of the Soviet line.

There is more, indeed much more, to be said of this period of the Fedayin's life. At one point, just before the murder of Shoa'iyan, a tendency appeared among the new leadership towards modifying its previously anti-Tudeh stand and its critical posture towards the Soviet Union. In the month of Bahman 1354 (January 1976) Shoa'iyan, in a critique addressed to the Fedayin revealed that the latter was manifesting a weaker attitude towards the Tudeh: it was reassessing the Tudeh Party as having been "the proletarian party" of Iran before the 1953 *coup d'état*.[4] That is to say, the new leadership was backtracking on the former Ahmadzadeh-Pouyan position. Interestingly enough, about the same time a review published by the Iranian National Front allies of the Fedayin in the Middle East (which later became known as Vahdat-i Kommonisti, the Communist Unity Group) called *'Asr-i 'Amal*, "The epoch of action", No. 2, suddenly manifested a new and positive attitude towards the Tudeh Party, and one which was diametrically opposed to the traditional views about the Tudeh held by the progressive wing of the National Front. The new attitude was briefly this:

> Not only do we not consider the political work of the Tudeh Party and other anti-imperialist groups — no matter how insufficient and limited it may be — to be insignificant, but we even hold it to be really useful and necessary.

The publication of this and similar remarks in *Bakhtar Emrouz* created great unease among oppositionists abroad who were themselves mostly opposed to the Tudeh line.[5] This *volte-face* towards the Tudeh at a time when the Fedayin had been greatly weakened by the military regime in Iran may be explained by a recent revelation by

one of the founders of the Iranian National Front organisation in the Middle East, Hassan Massali. In a recent seminar organised by Massali himself he revealed that

> Hamid Ashraf [the virtual General Secretary of the Fedayin] and his colleagues while following a Maoist line asked Fedayin representatives abroad to get in touch with the Soviets in order to get military, financial and propaganda help. The contact was established on three occasions in Sofia, Rome and Beirut with two Soviet contact men, Viktor and Alexandre. The Soviet side suggested that the Fedayin, in addition to furnishing intelligence about the armed forces in Iran, should send a telegram of greetings to the CPSU so as to prepare the ground for a meeting in Moscow where aid could be arranged. But Ashraf, on receipt of this distasteful suggestion through his associates, flew into a rage and sent off the message: "Tell them we are not spies!"[6]

The softening of the Fedayin's attitude towards the Tudeh was only secondarily due to this need for Soviet support. The real fundamental reason was the one adumbrated, however inexplicitly, by Mr Zabih himself: that after Siahkal the new Fedayin leadership, because of its original sources of inspiration in the Tudeh youth movement, was averse to any open criticism of the Soviet Union. It adopted a neutral stand in the Sino-Soviet dispute; and it confined any "critical appraisals" to the leadership's "internal circle". It is clear that, given the lack of historical and theoretical preparation and commitment of its members and supporters, the Fedayin could always make a rapid *volte-face* without confronting major obstacles. In fact, in the post-Pahlavi era we can see how this lack of historical-theoretical preparedness *vis-à-vis* Soviet Communism easily led to an almost total recovery of the Fedayin movement by the Soviet trend, to the extent that the Majority wing began openly dancing to the Tudeh Party tune and preparing to merge with it. A final "union" was only impeded, or temporarily postponed, by the three-way split in the Tudeh Party itself.[7]

As a result, the failure to weed out the deeply rooted Soviet mode of thinking within the Fedayin in the 1970s led to the Sovietisation of the whole current of what Mr Zabih inappropriately calls "the New Left".[8] The author also reveals here his lack of familiarity even with new trends in Western Marxism. If Mr Zabih had undertaken serious research into the subject his readers could have been led to understand the reasons for the pro-Sovietism which has swept the "New Left" in Iran.

A VERY COMPLEX SOCIETY

Throughout the book Mr Zabih gives his reader the impression that he has benefited from much inside information concerning the

Fedayin. Yet nowhere in Chapter V is one told how and by whom the Fedayin group was organised, once the imprisoned and exiled cadres were back in Tehran at liberty after the fall of the Pahlavis. Had the author really searched, he would have known that Farrokh Negahdar, the present First Secretary of the Fedayin's Majority faction, was quick to set up its Setad (headquarters, or temporary leadership) and that he personally hand-picked the members of the future Central Committee to suit his pro-Soviet inclinations. The author would not have claimed (p. 135) that Negahdar "was not elected to represent the organisation" in the Turcoman affair. It may be added here that there was no such thing as an "elective process" within the Feyadin at that time. The Central Committee was set up from above, with no consultation with the rank and file.

The confusion grows with the author once the Fedayin begin to split, to Right and Left. At this stage the confusion is altogether too much to handle for a writer who is in a hurry to get his book out. On pages 139 and 156 he states that the journal *Jahan* was published by the students supporting the Majority faction in the United States. It is hard, if not impossible, for your reviewer to understand how one can make such a blunder. *Jahan*, as every Iranian even slightly familiar with exile politics knows, was, and still is a publication of the *Minority* faction, adamantly opposed to the Majority! Be that as it may, our author piles up his pages of analysis of "the position of the Majority" on the basis of what he finds in the journal *Jahan*. Imagine, for example, representing the positions taken up by Martov as if they were Lenin's own!

It has already been noted that the author thought the arch-Stalinist Peykar to be "a Trotskyist organisation". Other errors of the same order abound in regard to Toufan, Sazmi-i Enqelabi, Vahdat-i Kommonist, the journal *Socialism and Revolution* (which is wrongly attributed to Zahra'i of the Fourth International Minority faction instead of Rahimian of the Majority group). And when the author refers to *Porsesh va Pasokhs* (Questions and Answers) by Dr Kianouri, he does not give the issue number. Over 30 issues were published, over some four years.[9]

The author's most informative chapter is the sixth about the small group of Enqilabiyyoun-i Kommonist (EK). But, here too, the chapter is replete with errors. For instance *Haqiqat* was not the organ of the Iranian Social Democratic Party (1906–11) but of the Central Council of Iranian Trade Unions, in 1921–22.[10] Nor was the new journal *Haqiqat* published clandestinely in Iran; it was published in northern California, close to where Mr Zabih lives. Such mistakes lead one to think that he swallows everything that his willing interlocutors tell him. It is also regrettable that in referring to the EK, he chooses

to call it "militant". He ignores the fact that its members too, after their adventure in the forests of northern Iran, like the Tudeh leaders, broke under torture and recanted, before they were executed by the henchmen of the Islamic state.

Incorrect also is the exclusive link Zabih creates between this last group and the Confederation of Iranian Students, National Union. The latter organisation was not the monopoly of the EK group. CISNU was founded by a coalition of students, a majority of whom were members or sympathisers of the National Front, with only a minority belonging to the Tudeh Party. In time, with the growth of Maoism, ideological changes appeared within CISNU, to the point where it finally broke up before the fall of the Pahlavis.

The reader will presumably not expect that an author can draw, from a work based on wrong and incomplete and confused documentation, any conclusions that need to be taken seriously. The final chapter of this work will confirm such misgivings. The author misses the imminent split in the Tudeh Party that was going on right before his eyes at the time he was doing his research. Similarly, he is unable to tell his readers anything about the splits actually occurring within the ranks of the Fedayin; instead, he predicts a trend towards unity (p. 200).

As to the cause of the failure of the Left in Iran, Mr Zabih is again far wide of the mark. For all the literature which it is his boast to have studied, he has failed to realise that the most important factor in the defeat of the Left in Iran was not "the dogged determination of the present theocratic regime in retaining power" but rather the fact that the Left never understood the society in which it was working; it never studied its socio-economic and politico-cultural characteristics. Mr Zabih's analysis may be reassuring for some; but it will turn out to be a mirage, as the new developments in the Tudeh and among the Fedayin have already shown.

Mr Zabih's book has not only failed to provide new facts and information on a vital subject; it has muddled the picture by incomplete and erroneous information and consequent incorrect analysis. The reader of this book is not only left quite unable to understand the recent drive for the creation of a new Communist party out of the debris of the Tudeh and other Leftist organisations, he is even at a loss to know what has actually been happening during the last decade on the Left side of Iranian politics.

The least lesson one can learn from what has happened in Iran in the last decade is that Iran is a very complex society. It is certainly not one for whose analysis the dilettante approach is to be recommended.

NOTES

1. See, for instance, *La Social-Démocratie en Iran, Le Mouvement Communiste en Iran,* and *The Revolutionary Movement in Iran versus Great Britain and Soviet Russia*, all edited by Cosroe Chaqueri, (Florence: *Mazdak*, 1978–79); Sultanzade, Avetis, *Ecrits Economiques*, ed. C. Chaqueri, (Florence, 1980).
2. This writer knew Dr Chamran and Dr Yazdi within the framework of Mossedegh's National Front in the 1960s.
3. See Shoa'iyan M., *Sheshomin Nameh-yi Sar Goshadeh beh S.Ch.F.Kh.I.* (The Sixth Open letter to the OIPFC) (Florence: Mazdak, 1976), and *Panj Nameh-yi Sar Goshadeh beh S.Ch.F.Kh.I.* (Five Open Letters to the OIPFG) (Florence, 1980).
4. "At Least Let Us Not Kill Marxist Criticism!", in *Two Critiques of OIPFG* (in Persian) (Florence, 1976).
5. For a reply to 'Asr-i 'Amal, see "A Word About the History of the Communist Movement in Iran," *Problems of Revolution and Socialism*, Manifest 5 (1975), (in Persian).
6. *Natayej-i Seminar-i Wiesbaden dar bareh-yi Bohran-i Jonbesh-i Chap-i Iran* (The Conclusions of the Wiesbaden Seminar about the Crisis of the Leftist Movement in Iran) (Frankfurt/M, 1985), pp. 52–54.
7. For the latest development in the Tudeh Partly split, see our forthcoming article "The Red Prince and the end of the Tudeh: a study of I. Eskandary's 'Testament' and the possibilities of the formation of a new pro-Soviet Communist party in Iran".
8. We call it inappropriate simply because the term "New Left" was not applied in Western Europe to the younger groups merely founded after the traditional CPs but to those that radically differed from the Stalinist parties on fundamental theoretical grounds.
9. The present writer has more than 20 of them — a far from complete collection!
10. See *Historical Documents of the Workers', Social Democratic and Communist Movement in Iran*, Vol. VII, ed. C. Chaqueri (Florence, 1977).

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Book Reviews

IRAN'S NON-REVOLUTIONARIES

F. Diba, *Mossadegh, A Political Biography.* London: Croom Helm, 1986, 228 pp. $25.00.

Dr Mohammad Mossadegh, best known for his nationalisation of Iranian oil in 1951, is without doubt the most controversial personality in the modern history of Iran. He was intensely loved and hated by both Iranians and non-Iranians alike. He was the man who, next to Gandhi perhaps, did most to shake the foundations of the British Empire in the East. Yet he was systematically ignored outside Iran by those concerned with Iranian history, whether in the Soviet Union, Western Europe or the United States. In Pahlavi Iran, he was a non-person.

With the fall of the Pahlavis, interest revived in a man who had left his own lasting impact on Iranian society. Diba's book is the first expression of this new interest. His intention, as set in his Introduction, is:

> to show another face of Mossadegh . . . [for] certainly neither the primary nor the secondary literature so far published provides any satisfactory clue to his character or his political and historical importance. (p. ix)

This entailed many years of research — in the records of the British Foreign Office in London, the US National Archives in Washington, DC, and interviews with Americans and Iranians involved in the nationalisation of Iranian oil or with Mossadegh himself. He also had the good fortune of being able to consult Mossadegh's memoirs prior to their recent publication — one advantage of being related to Mossadegh.

What is unfortunate, however, is that he does not make the best use of the memoirs, or of the recorded interviews he was able to have with the former Iranian premier during his internal exile. This is not, however, the only shortcoming of this otherwise rich and useful study.

A deficiency in this biography is that some important conflicts which had direct bearing on the overthrow of the Mossadegh government are treated only cursorily — such as the policies of the Soviet Union, the Tudeh Party and the Kashani clerical group. Nor are the conflicts with the monarchy or the social bases on which the politics of that period were founded analysed. Thus, the reader is left in the dark as to the social background of the Mossadeghist movement.

As for the Tudeh and the Soviet Union, we see but a few brief remarks and allusions; even then they are not always exact. The author refers to cordial relations between Mossadegh and the first Soviet envoys in Iran in the 1920s, T. Rothstein and

Shumyatskii (pp. 34 and 39) whereas Mossadegh in his memoirs[1] offers a different picture. As regards the attitudes of the Tudeh and the Soviet Union, the author is completely wrong (pp. 110, 111, 151 and 152): they were opposed to Mossadegh. A cursory survey of the Soviet press or the Soviet historiography of Iran for the period would make this point very clear and beyond any doubt. The Tudeh Party's "self-criticism" at its Fourth plenum in 1957 with regard to policies towards Mossadegh is by now a well-known fact of Iranian history.[2] In this connection one should add that an analysis of Tudeh–Mossadegh confrontation would show that it was Mossadegh — and contrary to the conventional wisdom in the West, not the Shah — who undermined the pro-Soviet party.

As regards the Kashani/clergy issue, there is indeed need to elaborate on Mossadegh's views and relationships: for, as in the era of the late Pahlavi king, now also under the Islamic regime, Mossadegh remains, though to a lesser degree, a *persona non grata historica*, particularly because there is an attempt to attribute the oil nationalisation campaign more to Kashani than to Mossadegh.

Still another shortcoming of the book is the neglect of that part of Mossadegh's memoirs where he refutes assertions and falsifications by the Shah in his book *(Mission for My Country,* New York 1961) about the former patriotic premier of Iran. This is important, for Mossadegh's political philosophy and historical inclinations thereby come better to light, as they also manifest themselves very clearly through his long well argued rejection of the military prosecutor's indictment. When discussing Mossadegh's "failure" to fight his "allegiance" to the Shah (pp. 164–70) one needs to analyse Mossadegh's views on constitutional monarchy and his republican leanings. This analysis is lacking in the book. The same can be said about Mossadegh's economic policies, if his particular sense of social justice is to be well understood. One last criticism here. When the author refers to Mossadegh's concept of "negative equilibrium" as a "clumsy" appellation, he reveals his own lack of understanding of Mossadegh and his particular attachment to Iranian culture. To begin with, this concept is not the same as that which became prevalent among Third World leaders in the late 1950s and 1960s and was readily espoused by the Soviet Union as a tactical interlude; secondly, it was a concept forged basically on the particularities of Iranian diplomatic and geopolitical history. The author seems to have been influenced by antagonisms expressed against the notion by Mossadegh's detractors in Western Europe, particularly in Britain.

For all this, there can be no doubt that this is a useful book, and much can be learned from it. The author has the merit of adding a lot of evidence in support of the case which Mossadegh made in favour of Iran and against the Anglo-Iranian Oil Co. He correctly points out (p. 132) that the humiliation the British suffered at the hands of the Iranian leader was, in addition to economic interests, one of the important factors which impelled the British from the very outset to try to oust Mossadegh — the British having grown accustomed to moving Iranian politicians around like pawns on a chess board.

Although the book is not analytical, but rather descriptive — and full of digressions at that — it does shed light on the basic line of the British. This was best expressed by Churchill (p. 18) who said that Iran's continuity depended on the person of the monarch; just as Sullivan, the last US Ambassador in Tehran, thought that now Iran's continuity hinged upon Islam. Another point where Diba seems not to have understood Mossadegh is where he asserts:

> Yet his weakness lay in the fact that he did not recognize the frailty of his cause — national sovereignty — in the hands of a semi-literate nation. The demands which he made on the nation could only have been sustained in an educated society, and not by the masses, the civil service, or an army which, fickle and corruptible at best of times, during a period of economic distress and political confusion were all too easily persuaded that they were on the edge of nightmare. (p. 207)

He adds that it was after all the same popular support which finally let him down:

> The major obstacle to his success lay in the character of the masses, for selfless, responsible co-operative individuals were found to be rare. (p. 208)

The author modifies this by adding that some fault lay with Mossadegh for not educating the masses! The masses are always blamed — for the failure in August 1953, and also for a "revolution betrayed" by Khomaini — but never the intelligentsia, to whom all the above should be addressed. Was the success of National Socialism or Fascism due to the lack of literate masses too? Literacy is not — contrary to all deceiving apearances — a *sine qua non* of the success of democracy and national sovereignty. The reasons for Mossadegh's fall are multiple. One of his faults may indeed have been his over-reliance on the education of the masses through his speeches and his neglect of political organization — not Western-style political parties, but elevated and developed forms of traditional social organisations, tailored to the needs of the post-war period. In this connection it should be added that further study of Mossadegh is needed in order to show his understanding of, and selfless devotion to, Iran's progress on the basis of a synthetic blend of Western values, as reflected in the institutions of political democracy, with the humanitarian values of Iran's cultural history — an imperative which most Iranian intellectuals have tragically failed to comprehend.

Let us hope that this book can serve as a good start in reminding the world of Iranian scholars that further research is needed in this direction if Iran and Iranians are to be better understood. Further research into Mossadegh's life and policies may indeed throw light on the fact that Iran's long history of violence and oppression was equally matched by a history of resistance, humanitarian values and a great sense of Iranity. These were values and senses which Mossadegh strove to weave into an establishment of Western democratic institutions — an endeavour the West failed to understand, for it was led by men who were overwhelmed by the profit motive and by greed. Diba's work helps to throw light on the possibility of Iranian historical continuity at a transcendent level on the basis of a blend which Mossadegh tried to make of Iranian humanism and the democratic institutions of the West.

Kosroe Shakeri

NOTES

1. *Khaterat va Ta'alomat* (Teheran, 1986), pp. 151–156.
2. For the documents of this Plenum see: *Historical Documents of the Workers', Social Democratic, and Communist Movement in Iran*, Vol. I, 3rd Edn compiled and edited by C. Chaqueri (Teheran, 1980).

Habib Ladjevardi, *Labor Unions and Autocracy in Iran*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1985, 328 pp.

This is a most welcome addition to the corpus of works about modern Iran. The book, which deals primarily with the Iranian labour movement after World War I, consists of ten chapters and an epilogue. It can be divided thematically into five parts. Part one deals with the genesis of the labour movement under the last years of the Qajars and the early years of the Pahlavis. The second and major part of the book (Chapters 2 to 7 and a good part of Chapter 8) analyses the movement during the period between 1941 and early 1951. The third section (the rest of Chapter 8) very briefly discusses the labour unions during the years of oil nationalization and the accompanying political upheaval. Part four of the book surveys the years which followed the *coup d'etat* against the Mossadegh government and which culminated in the revolutionary upheavals that toppled the Pahlavis. The last part (the epilogue) deals very briefly with the labour situation in the Khomeini era.

This means that the Pahlavi period is treated in much greater detail than the other periods. This reflects the author's dominant concerns: to show how the Pahlavi autocracy strove to destroy an important centre of counter-power, that is, organized labour, and to demonstrate that the Pahlavis succeeded in this endeavour because of the encouragement and practical assistance they received from the two major Western powers, Britain and the United States, that were present in Iran.

The first part of the book (pp. 1–27) surveys the years between the Constitutional Revolution and the abdication of Reza Shah. The author's treatment is based partly on secondary sources and, to the extent that these sources have committed errors or suffer from ideological misrepresentation, the author's treatment too is subject to shortcomings. Had he depended more on primary historical documents he could certainly have avoided a number of minor factual errors. For instance, he refers to Avetis Sultanzade as "Ahmad" (p. 6) and the newspaper *Ettefagh-e Karagaran* as "*Ettehad*". He says that Dehgan attended the Fourth Congress of the Comintern (p. 17). In fact, Dehgan did not attend this congress; he may have attended a Profintern congress, but there is no documentary evidence that confirms this. As for the errors which seem to stem from the ideological biases of the secondary sources, one can take as an example the assertion that:

> As for the Soviets, they were covertly working to promote revolution, while overtly supporting Reza Khan. (p. 12)

Closer examination would not confirm this point of view, which is often, paradoxically, held by pro-Soviet and anti-Soviet writers alike. The fact of the matter is that after the failure of the revolution in Germany the Comintern, headed by Lenin, no longer promoted revolution outside the Soviet Union and was especially quiescent with regard to the countries of the Middle East and East Asia. Instead, the Soviet government supported nationalistic regimes such as those of Reza Khan, Ataturk and Chiang Kai-shek, while striving to use local Communist organizations as bargaining levers to obtain better treatment for their country and more favourable positions with those regimes. What Sultanzade, the Iranian Communist leader, said in 1930 bears out this claim:

> While reaction in Iran enjoys the constant backing of English Imperialism, revolution must count, for the moment, merely on its own forces.[1]

Dr Ladjevardi's treatment of this early period is inadequate in that he fails to take into account the flight of the Iranian jobless to the Caucasus, where they received their first proletarian and labour union experience, and where Iran's Social-Democracy took root. This background was essential for the developments in the later period (1921–1931), as the principal cadres of organized labour had been seasoned under the influence of the Communist Party of Iran in the Caucasus "class struggle". Thus it would seem difficult to agree with the author's assertion that:

> It was certainly in ways an accident of history that the development of the trade unions coincided with the growth of the Communist movement in Russia, Iran's northern neighbour. (p. 26)

Although this first chapter does not meet the need for a thorough history of the Iranian labour movement during the 1920s, it does serve as a useful introduction to Dr Ladjevardi's more important study, which comprises the second part of the book. In this section, which deals with the years 1941–1951, he discusses the rebirth of the labour movement, describing how it grew in leaps and bounds and drawing attention to the increasingly concerted efforts of the Pahlavi establishment to contain it. These efforts were part of the Pahlavis' quest to restore their autocratic house, which had been shattered by the entry of the allied forces into Iran in September 1941. The author surveys the establishment of labour unions, their unification, the advent of the Tudeh Party and its role in the labour movement. He further discusses in detail the efforts of the Iranian Right and its foreign allies to check the Tudeh Party's efforts in the labour field. Based on research in the United States National Archives and the Public Record Office in London, this part of the book throws ample light on a subject hardly ever studied in the West.

What merits attention and is much to the credit of the author is the comparative approach used for the study of the labour situation in various cities such as Tehran, Tabriz, Abadan and Isfahan. Through this detailed, amply documented and finely argued comparative analysis, Dr Lajevardi convincingly demonstrates that the labour movement in those years was not confined to a few isolated areas but had a genuinely national base. Furthermore, he shows that it represented the legitimate aspirations and demands of the workers far more efffectively and consistently than the American and British labour attaches in Iran were willing to admit. Iranian workers, far from being "submissive" (as American and British observers said) fought for their rights even in the most adverse situations without leadership from outside the movement, especially after the 1953 *putsch*.

The author's comparative study underlines another very important fact: that the British became interested in the labour situation in Iran only when a pro-Soviet leadership took over the Iranian labour movement. Dr Ladjevardi's research also reveals that the Russians were not ready to support workers or encourage them to organize themselves when such an attempt did not suit Russian interests. As for the Iranian ruling class, the author demonstrates more than amply that it created official labour unions solely for the purpose of destroying the Tudeh-dominated unions. Once it had achieved this goal, the Iranian ruling class showed its real reluctance to

ameliorate the plight of Iranian workers. The labour movement created by the ruling class, despite the full support it received from all sides — industrialists, the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, the Iranian government, the British Embassy, and even the International Labour Organization — failed to become a mass movement, for it simply failed to convince workers that it truly represented their aspirations and demands.

The test case for the official unions came when their leaders faced the Mossadegh government. They opposed Mossadegh, remained faithful to the ruling oligarchy and were backed by the British Embassy in Tehran against Mossadegh. The author throws light on this point by aptly quoting from a US Embassy report:

> Because of the popularity of the Mossadegh government with the poorest members of the Iranian social community there is no doubt but that these leaders [of the official unions] lost prestige with their own followers. (p. 191).

In their effort to undermine Mossadegh these union leaders were supported by the British Embassy. This fact is not reported by the author, merely because he depends for this period more on US Embassy dispatches than on British documents. A reading of Foreign Office files at the Public Records Office in London would make our claim very clear (see *inter alia* F.O. 317/91461, Foreign Office to Tehran, 5 July 1951). This major part of the study terminates with the period when Mossadegh became Premier, during which the government-controlled unions disintegrated. Although the author does not make it clear, their disintegration can only be attributed to the new wave of anti-imperialist sentiment and Mossadegh's refusal to support the "Yellow" unions because they did not represent the genuine aspirations of the workers.

Part three of the book (pp. 189–192) surveys the Mossadegh era very briefly. These few pages do not do justice to a historical period in which the labour movement had the greatest freedom of expression and action in Iranian history. The author is well disposed towards Mossadegh but does not pay much attention to him. His apparent indifference is no doubt due to his greater interest in the labour movement's struggle against the Pahlavi autocracy.

In part four of the book the author studies the labor situations after the 1953 coup and the attitude of the Pahlavi authorities and their foreign supporters towards this burning question. He proves that strikes did in fact take place and that workers did not fail to air their economic demands during those years despite the severe repression of the political opposition. He is correct, therefore, when he rejects the characterization of the Iranian workers by US Embassy observers as "submissive," "lethargic" and "fatalistic". One could add to the author's analysis and suggest that foreign experts on Iran have generally failed to understand the "*homo iranicus*" under repressive conditions. Their mode of behaviour, forged by successive centuries of despotism and insecurity, is one of *attentive resignation*, that is, withdrawal when worse comes to worst in order to strike hard when the despotic rule begins to crack. Understanding the Iranian worker in this light, one would not have been baffled by his behaviour in the year before the fall of the Shah.

It is to the credit of the author that he recognizes that Iranian workers "refused to be associated with any of those governmental creations" and holds this fact to be "a testimony to their political maturity" (p. 203). He convincingly argues these points.

In his epilogue, Dr Ladjevardi surveys the last years of the Pahlavi autocracy — the years during which the autocracy seemed to be at its strongest — and the post-"revolutionary" Iran. Although this section too is short and is not based on original research (but only on secondary sources) it completes the picture that the author has attempted to present of Iranian labour struggle against autocracy.

If one looks at the author's major themes one sees how he uses evidence from Iran to refute some common ideas about political mobilization and democracy. The author's first argument, contrary to the thesis so often declared by Western writers, is that

> . . . at least, in the case of Iran . . . capable and public-spirited men . . . did attempt to influence the course of events in their country. Their efforts failed to bear fruit, however, because they were removed by the autocracy from participation in political life. (p. xvii)

The author's third theme is that Great Britain and the United States played a negative role in the development of the labour movement in Iran. They decided

> . . . to support a strong anti-Communist government headed by a ruling rather than a reigning monarch instead of encouraging an interplay of competing political factions and using their considerable influence to promote the development of democratic institutions. Great Britain and the United States chose to encourage the elimination of all political contestants but one — the monarch. (p. 72–73)

Finally, I would like to point out one shortcoming of the book. The author fails to consider the specificities internal to Iranian society — a "semi-colonial" society, half-heartedly and superficially exposed to liberal or Marxist ideas originating in the West. In the study of the labour movement in Iran, one cannot neglect the internal factors of a society "disdeveloping" (undergoing pathological deformation from all sides). But such a study was not the aim of Dr Ladjevardi. This task remains to be done through the study of the internal dynamics of the labour movement itself.

In sum, Dr Ladjevardi is most successful in the task that he has set for himself: to show the negative and destructive influence of the Pahlavi autocracy on the Iranian labour movement, which otherwise could have been an important pillar of political democracy.

Kosroe Shaqeri

NOTES

1. Sultanzade, *Ekonomiceskoe Razvitie Persii i Anglijski Imperializm (Iran's Economic Development and British Imperialism)* (Moscow, 1930); French translation in *Ecrits Economiques*, edited by C. Chaqueri (Florence: Mazdak, 1980) p. 169.

THE US AND IRAN: NADIR OF A RELATIONSHIP

Gary Sick. *All Fall Down: America's Fateful Encounter with Iran.* London: I. B. Tauris 1985. 366 + xiii pp. Cloth, £16.50 ISBN 85043-009-8

"America's encounter with the Iranian revolution", writes Gary Sick in his preface, is "a fascinating case study in international politics. It is also a raring good story. I hope this book will do justice to both." It does.

The US Embassy hostages held by Iran for 444 days were released, and airborne from Mehrabad airport, a few minutes after 12 noon on 20 January 1981. Captain Gary Sick, after writing his final report on Iranian affairs for the now ex-President Carter, and transmitting it, put down the telephone. "I asked myself what should be done next . . . The realization dawned on me that for the first time in 14 months there was really nothing else that needed to be done. The job was over." He was released — and must surely have felt airborne. He was in fact released from one of the most exacting civilian posts than can ever have been entrusted to an officer of the US Navy — that of principal White House aide for Iran on the National Security Council during the first years of Iran's Islamic revolution. As such he had observed — and it often became a 24-hour watch — every turn in the course of revolutionary Iran's gathering defiance of the United States in 1978–1980; and his post placed him at the epicentre of each corresponding and successive convulsion in US thinking about the most sensitive, intricate and baffling foreign policy problem of modern times. If he had the good fortune to be released from it in January 1981, we have the good fortune that he was enabled to remain at the NSC to complete the initial research necessary for the book which he already had in mind to write about those momentous years; and that, thereafter, he had available to him the resources of the School of International Affairs at Columbia University while he was completing this remarkable work, which is at the same time a story and a study.

Iran, President Carter felt able to affirm at the state dinner given for him by the Shah in Tehran on 31 December 1977, was "an island of stability in a turbulent corner of the world". Yet by November 1978 Ambassador Sullivan in Tehran was sending to Washington a long telegram in which, in Gary Sick's words, "he noted that the authority of the shah had shrunk considerably, to the point where his support among the general population had become almost invisible". It is this reversal, in the tide of events and in the opinions of those who hung on them, which sets the scene for all the rest of this book.

In the same telegram to Washington, which he called "Thinking the Unthinkable", Ambassador Sullivan said that, as regards Iran's armed forces, he "felt that the Iranian military ought to be able to preserve its integrity and not evaporate". He accordingly adumbrated a scenario in which, following a mullah–military accomodation, Khomeini would himself hold a "Gandhi-like" position and would choose as political leader a candidate acceptable to the army, who would be a non-anti-Western "moderate". But of course, as Gary Sick has no difficulty in showing, "the widespread perception of Khomeini as a benign figure — the 'Gandhi' of Iran, to adopt Ambassador Sullivan's simile — was from the beginning more the product of wishful thinking than of dispassionate analysis". Future historians, says Gary Sick, will put to themselves

the question whether the kind of outcome envisaged by Sullivan was ever feasible. Sick himself makes it quite clear that, at that juncture at any rate, it certainly was not.

"There is never a definitive answer to any historical question that begins 'What if . . .'", the author writes (p. 83). But the "What if" questions are most acutely and painfully asked in the nearer aftermath of such events as these. The abiding questions of history are how, and why. Gary Sick has conclusively shown how the US–Iran relationship broke down: it was because it had become a US–Shah relationship, in which the Shah increasingly called the tune (for arms, above all else). The biggest "why" of the whole matter, perhaps, was why the US and indeed the West in general (not to mention the Soviet Union)* was caught unawares by the Iranian events. The short answer to this was, poor intelligence; how poor it had been the author makes perfectly clear. But there were some who knew what was going on. The author mentions in a footnote:

> I had, in preparation for the president's trip to Iran, sought the views of several US specialists on Iran. I particularly remember a long telephone conversation with Professor James Bill at the University of Texas, who gave me an excellent description of the role of the clergy in organizing opposition to the shah, and who offered his personal estimate that the shah would not survive on the throne for more than two years. (pp. 344–45.)

Well and good; but that was at the end of 1977. By December 1978 "the US scholar James Bill could assert without qualification that the clerics 'would never participate directly in the formal government structure'" (p. 165).

"More the product of wishful thinking than of dispassionate analysis": Gary Sick's comment on Ambassador Sullivan's "Thinking the Unthinkable" telegram of November 1978 can be applied to so many of the sadly erroneous judgments not only of professors but of senior statesmen, and many others.

> There were errors of perception and judgment in abundance, but they were distributed among the various actors about equally. No one in this crisis had a monopoly on wisdom. No one had it right consistently, and there were more than enough failures to go around. (p. 168.)

The alternation of fast-moving narrative and calm but stimulating reflection on the unfolding events is one of the felicitous merits of this book. Unwise though it is to make predictions on any subject even remotely connected with Iran, it is perhaps safe to say that, well before the present century is out, this work will take its place on that rather select shelf of histories of their own times which have been written by ex-officio note-takers who from their privileged positions have "seen most of the game".

David Morison

*Gary Sick says (p.95): "The Soviet leadership had cultivated a very satisfactory relationship with the Shah, and there was evidence that the Soviets were surprised — perhaps as surprised as the Americans — at the rapid deterioration of the Shah's position." Soviet unawareness of any clouds on the shah's horizon is illustrated by a 1976 Moscow discussion about Iran and its "white revolution", held between Soviet international relations experts in the Soviet Academy of Sciences. This discussion was reported in the journal *Mirovaya ekonomika i mezhdunarodnyye otnosheniya* No.6, 1976, pp. 121–131. The general feeling of the discussants seemed to be that the Shah's own "revolution from on top" was one which had come to stay; agrarian re-

forms had won the regime support in the countryside, profit sharing and government control of the trade unions had kept the proletariat quiescent, and "only a small group from the most conservative section of the ruling strata of pre-reform Iran — certain religious figures, the tribal khans and the landlords" tried to oppose the Shah's reforms and innovations.

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Central Asian Survey is devoted to the study of the history, politics, cultures and economics of the peoples of the Central Asian region, which includes those territories and populations from western China to western Anatolia sharing a common historical, ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic heritage. Foremost of these is Soviet Central Asia and its related Turko-Muslim territories in the Caucasus and the Middle Volga, but includes as well Eastern Turkestan (Chinese Xinjiang), Afghanistan, Iran and Turkey. The historical importance of these lands with their unique and beautiful cultures and the recent unfolding of significant political, demographic, economic and military events in the region, which have precipitated new strategic linkages and raise the spectre of important local and regional change, make Central Asian studies an area of distinct and separate interest.

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2. *Ibid.*, p. 26.
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4. R. N. Frye, "The Meaning of Central Asia," in: D. Nalle (ed.) *The Study of Central Asia*, New York: Macmillan, 1981, pp. 13–15.

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