

"TEARS, BLOOD AND CRIES"  
Human Rights in  
Afghanistan Since the Invasion  
1979-1984

December 1984

A Helsinki Watch Report

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"When I was young I wrote poetry about  
love, beauty and peace in Afghanistan.  
Unfortunately, at this age, I write about  
the tears, blood and cries of the Afghan  
people."

Afghan poet, Ustad Khalilullah  
Khalili, 79. Interview with  
Jeri Laber and Barnett Rubin  
in Islamabad, October 1, 1984.

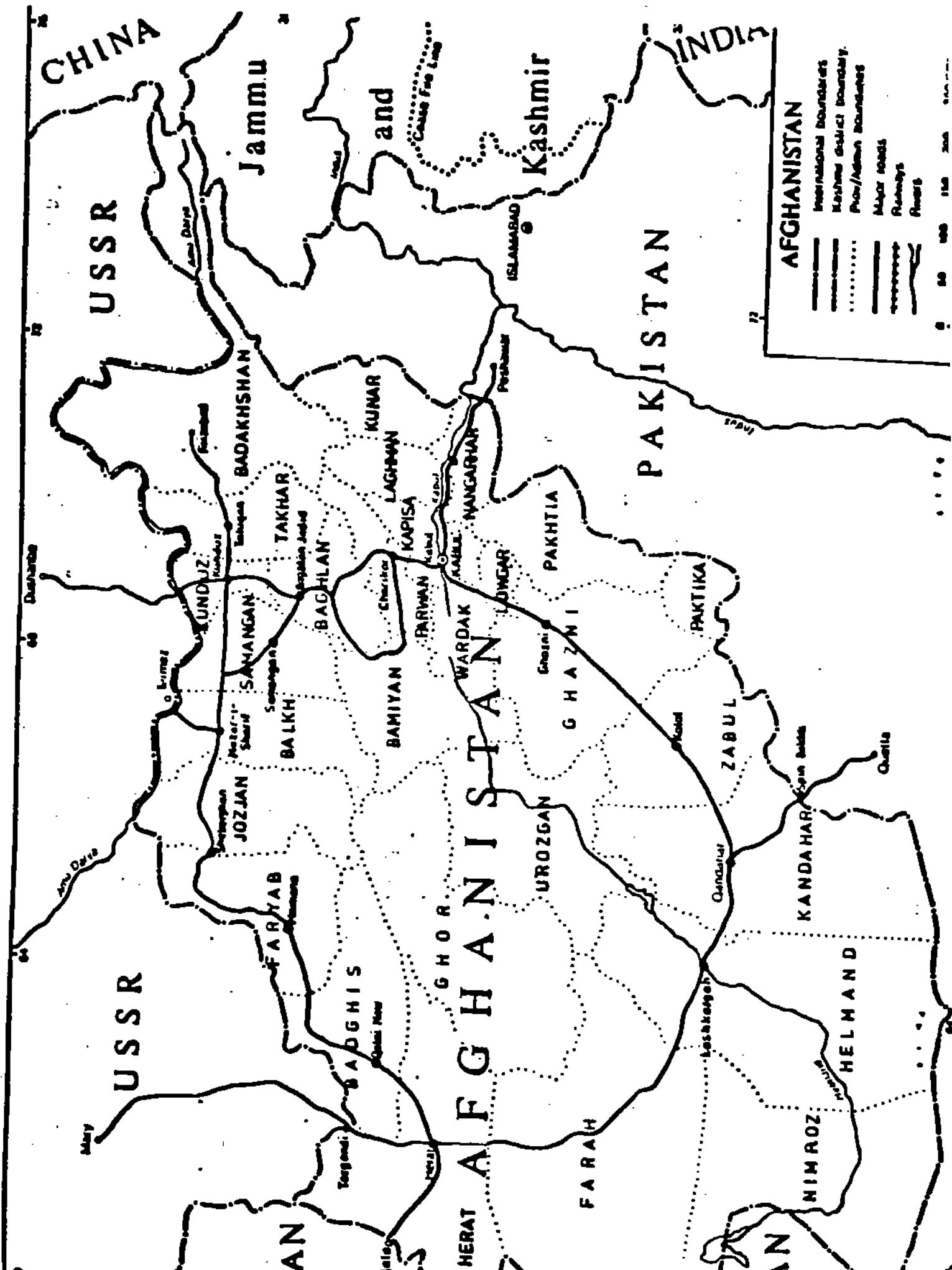


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\* \* \*

Knowing that refugees -- especially those from villages who have no experience in reporting and no context in which to understand what has happened to them -- are not always the most reliable witnesses, we took care in our interviews to let facts emerge by themselves. We asked for as many details as possible -- names, dates, descriptions. Most of the interviews were taped. Whenever possible, we cross-checked the information we received by conducting separate interviews with people from the same place. In interviewing groups of refugees, for example, one of us would interview the women and the other the men; later, we compared testimonies to see if they corresponded. We also cross-checked our information with other sources.

A word must be said about the many Afghans -- some of whom must go unnamed -- who freely shared with us their



nightmare experiences. It is their testimonies, above all, that make up the substance of this report. We were impressed with their unwavering dignity in adversity. Adrift in a foreign land, beset by recent traumas, their openness, stoicism, warmth and humor are truly remarkable. We were touched above all by the unexpected gentleness we found in these reputedly fierce people. It reinforces our conviction that they deserve to live their lives -- in whatever fashion they choose -- in peace and freedom.



## I. INTRODUCTION

"A whole nation is dying. People should know." This terse, direct statement befitted the speaker -- Engineer Mohammad Eshaq, a resistance leader from Afghanistan's Panjsher Valley, a man of strong convictions and determination. Yet his eyes clouded over with tears when he told us about the fate of two men from his ancestral village of Mata -- brothers, aged 90 and 95. Old and blind, they stayed behind when the rest of the villagers fled during last spring's offensive: "The Russians came, tied dynamite to their backs and blew them up." He paused to collect himself, then added simply: "They were very respected people."

For five years now, in their remote, mountainous land in the center of Asia, the people of Afghanistan have been defending their independence, their culture and their very existence in a desperate battle with one of the world's great superpowers. Yet the inherent drama of such a confrontation does not appear to have captured the world's imagination. News from Afghanistan has been scarce.

There are many reasons for this. The Afghan government has officially closed its doors to most of the major world media and to international humanitarian organizations, and the information it releases is dictated by the needs of official propaganda. The Pakistan-based Afghan resistance parties, on the other hand, are hardly objective sources of

information and are often at odds with each other as well. Independent investigation requires entering the country illegally from Pakistan, trekking for weeks over forbidding terrain and braving the dangers of a war without fronts. The largest group of victims consists of uneducated people, immersed in their own traditions, with no idea of how to tell their story to a foreign world.

What little news we receive comes from a handful of intrepid scholars, doctors and journalists who have taken the risk of "going inside," usually under the aegis of one of the resistance groups. Their reports, covering a variety of aspects of the Afghan conflict, have included numerous accounts of atrocities and other human rights abuses since the Soviet invasion of December 1979.

In September 1984, we went to the Afghan border -- to Peshawar in Pakistan's Northwest Frontier Province, and to Quetta in Baluchistan -- to collect information about human rights violations in Afghanistan by interviewing some of the Afghan people who have sought refuge there. We had already interviewed Afghan refugees in the United States and Paris and had read extensively in preparation for our trip. Nothing, however, prepared us for what we were to see and experience in Peshawar.

The vast scale of the exodus -- an estimated 4-5 million refugees in Pakistan and Iran, representing one quarter to one third of Afghanistan's prewar population -- is

immediately apparent in Peshawar, where the largest concentration of the more than 3 million Afghan refugees in Pakistan has settled. It is hard to imagine what Peshawar -- always a colorful frontier town at the entrance to the Khyber Pass into Afghanistan -- was like before this transfiguring, heartbreaking influx.

Everywhere there were Afghans, most of them Pashtuns who have the same language and appearance as the Pakistanis of the Northwest Frontier Province, but who are ill-suited to the passive life of the refugee. On the whole, they have not assimilated into Pakistani life. They are waiting -- the women and children seeking food and shelter, the men seeking arms and support. Their goal is to return to Afghanistan, the only country they have known.

The refugees arrive in a steady procession. They come on foot over the mountains on journeys that often take a month or more. Their children and possessions are carried by horses, mules or camels; their caravans are helpless targets for Soviet bombers and helicopter gunships. They come from every province in Afghanistan, every walk of life. Some have settled in the refugee camps around Peshawar. Others, wounded by bombs, mines, shellfire or gunshots, are being treated in hospitals. Some have found homes and a purpose in Peshawar, working with one of the many Afghan political parties based there or with one of the relief organizations that are trying

heroically to cope with the crisis. But most are just waiting, lost and unhappy, bewildered by the unexpected devastation of their lives and by what they have experienced.

We interviewed more than 100 Afghans representing a cross-section of Afghan society, old and young, men, women and children. We met with educated people from Kabul -- professors, doctors, teachers, students, lawyers, former government officials -- and with Afghanistan's leading poet in the Persian language, Ustad (master) Khalilullah Khalili. We spoke with villagers -- farmers, shepherds, nomads -- driven from their land. We visited hospitals where we met paraplegics and amputees, victims of anti-personnel mines left behind by retreating Soviet and Afghan forces or of the camouflaged plastic "butterfly" mines that are dropped from helicopters and intended to maim, not kill, the shepherd children and their flocks. We met with political leaders and resistance commanders, including the brother of the legendary Commander Ahmad Shah Massoud of the Panjsher Valley. We interviewed deserters -- Soviet soldiers barely out of their teens, themselves victims of an unnecessary war. We even met a defector from the Afghan secret police, who described to us the inner workings of the KHAD (the Afghan secret police).

From our interviews, it soon became clear that just about every conceivable human rights violation is occurring in Afghanistan, and on an enormous scale. The crimes of

indiscriminate warfare are combined with the worst excesses of unbridled state-sanctioned violence against civilians. The ruthless savagery in the countryside is matched by the subjection of a terrorized urban population to arbitrary arrest, torture, imprisonment and execution. Totalitarian controls are being imposed on institutions and the press. The universities and all other aspects of Afghan cultural life are being systematically "Sovietized."

It also became clear that Soviet personnel have been taking an increasingly active role in the Afghan government's oppression of its citizens. Soviet officers are not just serving as "advisors" to Afghan KHAD agents who administer torture -- routinely and savagely -- in detention centers and prisons; according to reports we received there are Soviets who participate directly in interrogation and torture. Moreover, the uncertain loyalties of the Afghans recruited into the army have apparently forced Soviet soldiers to take an aggressive military role. The Soviets have taken the lead in air and ground attacks on Afghan villages, looting, terrorizing and randomly killing Afghan civilians -- including women and children -- in a variety of unspeakable ways.

Just about every Afghan has a story to tell. Our interpreters, our guides, people we met accidentally, had personally experienced atrocities as great as those of the "victims" we interviewed. An Afghan doctor who had impressed us with his gentle kindness as he interpreted for us in a

hospital for war victims had a sudden outburst as we were leaving. "What's the point of all this? People should know by now. There are no human rights in Afghanistan. They burn people easier than wood!" He went on to tell us that he had lost 42 members of his family under the present regime and had just learned that two had been burned alive a few weeks before.

Stopping one day on an impulse, we talked to a group of refugees camped by the side of the road, peasants who had arrived that morning from Ningrahar and Kunduz Provinces. The stories they told were stories that we were to hear over and over again: "The Russians bombed our village. Then the soldiers came. They killed women and children. They burned the wheat. They killed animals -- cows, sheep, chickens. They took our food, put poison in the flour, stole our watches, jewelry and money." Two young women, encountered at random, had each lost five children in a recent attack. One of them, who had also lost her parents and sister, displayed the burns from bombings on the limbs of her remaining children, the three youngest, whom she had managed to take with her as she fled from her house when the troops arrived. "I don't know how the days become nights and the nights become days," she lamented, her eyes flashing in anger and desperation. "I've lost my five children. Russian soldiers do these things to me."



The strategy of the Soviets and the Afghan government has been to spread terror in the countryside so that villagers will either be afraid to assist the resistance fighters who depend on them for food and shelter or will be forced to leave. The hundreds of refugee families crossing the border daily are fleeing from this terror -- from wanton slayings, reprisal killings and the indiscriminate destruction of their homes, crops and possessions. We were told of brutal acts of violence by Soviet and Afghan forces: civilians burned alive, dynamited, beheaded; bound men forced to lie down on the road to be crushed by Soviet tanks; grenades thrown into rooms where women and children have been told to wait.

While the terror has indeed desolated much of the countryside, it has failed to crush the resistance. None of the villagers with whom we spoke blamed the mujahedin for their troubles. How could they? The mujahedin are their husbands, sons, fathers, brothers. The resistance and the civilian population are inextricably entwined. "We need our people," a resistance commander told us. "But we are also responsible for them."

During our visit we received evidence indicating that the Soviet and Afghan governments are changing their strategy and now seem intent upon ending the exodus to Pakistan. Perhaps they are alarmed by the huge refugee population in Pakistan and the international attention it must inevitably

attract. Certainly they are concerned by the support that the resistance finds in Pakistan -- a chance to rest, organize, rearm and reenter, sometimes with foreign press, for the Afghan resistance has grasped the importance of the press in enlisting public support. We received reports that refugees on their way to Pakistan have been arrested by the Afghan militia or the KHAD, who turn them back, herding them towards their devastated villages or to the cities, already swollen with more than a million internal refugees. Those who persist in the trek to Pakistan increasingly risk attacks by bombers or the dreaded helicopter gunships. Along the arduous mountain trails used by refugee caravans are many tattered flags flying over hastily dug mass graves. We also heard reports that Afghan citizens must now carry identity cards and obtain written permission to travel, and that the authorities are confiscating the homes of those believed to have gone to Pakistan. During our visit, the Afghan Air Force bombed the public market in a Pakistan border town, killing dozens of Afghan refugees and Pakistani civilians, one of an increasing number of such attacks, signaling that Pakistan is no longer a secure refuge.

This tightening of control over civilians remaining in the countryside mirrors the totality of the rule that has been established in the urban centers of Afghanistan. Professionals and academics have been killed, arrested, censored or dismissed. Most of the Afghan intelligentsia is

either in prison or in exile. University curriculums require study of the Russian language, Russian history and Marxist-Leninist philosophy. Book publishing and the press are under strict censorship. Tens of thousands of Afghan youths are being sent, sometimes against their will, to study in the USSR. Children of nine and ten are being trained in Pioneer groups to inform on their parents and infiltrate the resistance. State-controlled agents and informers watch every office and classroom. It is estimated that tens of thousands of people are now in Afghan prisons where they have been brutally tortured and subjected to vile conditions.

We interviewed a 21-year-old student who had been released from Pol-e Charkhi Prison in Kabul just two weeks before. His eyes were bloodshot, his body tense, as he nervously fingered his "worry beads" telling us that if we mention his name in print his father and brothers in Kabul "will be finished." After his arrest for distributing "night letters" protesting the Soviet invasion, he was subjected to routine torture -- hung by a belt until he almost strangled, beaten until his face was twice its normal size, his hands crushed under the leg of a chair. He described an overcrowded prison cell with no windows, crawling with lice and with only one pot for a toilet. Others told us about prison cells with one toilet serving 500 people. Still others described cells with no bathroom at all, in which prisoners were forced to defecate in the room. Former

prisoners told us about electric shocks, nail pulling, lengthy periods of sleep deprivation, standing in cold water and other punishments. Many prisoners have been summarily executed.

Nor are women spared, a source of special torment to Afghan men as well, whose code of honor requires them to shelter and protect their women from the outside world. We heard of mothers who were forced to watch their infants being given electric shocks, and of Afghan men who were held in torture chambers where women were being sexually molested. A young woman who had been tortured in prison described how she and others had been forced to stand in water that had been treated with chemicals that made the skin come off their feet.

We could feel his pain as an Afghan refugee, a former civil engineer from Kabul, described three women who were in the same prison as he: "In the night, many times, we could hear them crying. We did not know why -- probably they were tortured. We could hear them crying many times."

Many of the crimes already discussed are violations of the Geneva Conventions. There are others as well, such as the deliberate bombing of hospitals and the summary execution of prisoners of war. While we did not investigate persistent reports of chemical warfare and other illegal weapons, we encountered the belief that the Soviets, at least at the start of the Afghan conflict, may have used Afghanistan as a

convenient testing site for banned or experimental weapons.

Given the outrageous policies and practices of the Afghan government and its Soviet allies, it is no wonder that they have refused to allow any form of international inspection. A request by Helsinki Watch to send an official fact-finding mission to Kabul has not been granted. The International Committee of the Red Cross, after two unsuccessful visits to Kabul, has been forced to operate medical facilities from outside Afghanistan, taking wounded refugees from the border to Red Cross hospitals in Pakistan. As of this writing, the Afghan and Soviet governments have not agreed to cooperate with the Special Rapporteur on Afghanistan appointed by the U.N. Human Rights Commission. Only a few carefully selected foreign journalists have been permitted to visit Kabul and their visits have been strictly limited and controlled by the Afghan government. In September Afghan and Soviet authorities served notice on Western journalists investigating the war when Soviet troops seized in ambush a French television reporter, Jacques Abouchar, who had entered Afghanistan illegally from Quetta. Referring to those who have been entering Afghanistan from Pakistan, Vitaly S. Smirnov, the Soviet Ambassador to Pakistan, warned that "from now on, the bandits and the so-called journalists accompanying them will be killed. And our units in Afghanistan will help the Afghan forces to do it."

To close the mountainous Pakistan-Afghanistan border, if not altogether impossible, will be a monumental undertaking. Yet the Soviets have embarked on this course, not only to prevent the flow of arms to the resistance, but to impose a blackout on news from Afghanistan.

Some of the crimes that they are so desperate to conceal are revealed in this report.

Jeri Laber  
Barnett Rubin

December 1984

## II. BACKGROUND

Five years ago, on December 24, 1979, the Soviet Union began a massive airlift of troops into Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan. On December 27, after securing the main intersections and roads, they assaulted the Dar-ul-Aman Palace, killing President Hafezullah Amin of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan. Babrak Karmal, leader of an opposing faction of the Party, became President. As 50,000, then 85,000 Soviet troops took up positions around the country, a new stage opened in the centuries-long struggle for control of the strategically located territory of Afghanistan. Today perhaps 115,000 Soviet troops are still engaged in battle with a variety of indigenous resistance groups.

A mountainous country of 647,497 square kilometers, Afghanistan sits at the crossroads of the great civilizations and empires of the Middle East, Central Asia and the Indian subcontinent. The ethnic composition of the country's population reflects its geographic location. The largest group are the Pashtuns, or "Afghans," who made up roughly half of the country's estimated pre-war population of 15 to 17 million. They are Sunni Muslims and are divided into several tribes, which are the focus of strong loyalties. They are known as a warlike and independent people, who boast of never having been conquered. The Pashtuns predominate in eastern and southern Afghanistan, and they are also the major

ethnic group in the contiguous Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP) of Pakistan, where they are also known as Pathans. They speak a language called Pashto. The Pashtuns have been the politically dominant group in Afghanistan. Those living in Kabul have largely adopted Persian, which was the language of the Afghan royal court. (Afghan Persian is sometimes known as Dari.)

The second largest community in Afghanistan is Persian speaking. Those inhabiting the north and northeast parts of the country are Sunni Muslims and are sometimes known as Tajiks. They are ethnically related to the Tajiks just to the north in the Soviet Union. In the west, there are some Persian-speaking nomadic tribes known as Aimaqs and some Persian-speaking populations who are Shi'ite Muslims like the Iranians and are known as Farsiwan. In the far north are about 3 million Turkic inhabitants, Turkomans and Uzbeks, who, like the Tajiks, are related to their ethnic cousins across the Soviet border.

The remote and mountainous center of the country is inhabited by an ethnic group with Mongol features known as the Hazaras. Traditionally the group with the lowest status in the country, the Hazaras speak a type of Persian and are Shi'ite Muslims. In eastern Afghanistan live the Nuristanis, of very fair complexion, who practiced a form of Indo-European polytheism until they were converted to Sunni



Islam in the 1890s. They are related to the "kafirs" (unbelievers) of Chitral in Pakistan, who continue to practice the religion of their ancestors. In southwest Afghanistan live a small number of Baluch tribes, related to the Baluch of the contiguous areas of Iran and Pakistan.

This territory, lacking ethnic or geographic unity, became a single political unit as a result of its location in the border areas between empires: the Iranian Safavid and the Indian Mughal empires in the eighteenth century, and the Russian and British empires in the nineteenth and twentieth. In 1747, the momentary foundering of both the Safavids and the Mughals allowed the Durrani tribes of the Kandahar area to declare their independence and choose one of their own, 23-year-old Ahmad Shah, as "King of the Afghans." The Durrani monarchy lasted until 1973.

In the nineteenth century, as European empires replaced the Asian ones, Afghanistan became the focus of the "Great Game" played by Britain and Russia for control of the Central Asian approaches to India. Fearing that the continuing Czarist advance into Central Asia threatened to place the traditional invasion routes of the subcontinent under control of a hostile power, Britain attempted to bring Afghanistan into its sphere of influence. The British invaded Afghanistan twice. In the first Anglo-Afghan war (1839-1842) the Afghan resistance drove out the invader. After the Second Anglo-Afghan war (1878-1880), the country's

ruler was obliged to concede control over foreign affairs. In 1893 England forced the weakened country to sign the Durand Treaty, which demarcated a line between the area ruled by the British in India and the area subject to the administration of the Afghan monarchy. This demarcation left millions of Pashtuns outside Afghanistan, a situation that has caused tension with Britain's successor state, Pakistan.

The period of British influence saw the beginning of modernization in Afghanistan. Amir Abd-ur-Rahman Khan (reigned 1880-1901) began to construct the institutions of the modern nation-state, such as a centralized army and bureaucracy. Modernization accelerated after Afghanistan regained its full independence in 1919 under King Amanullah Khan, after a brief battle with British troops.

King Amanullah, largely inspired by the example of Ataturk, invited foreign experts, improved the educational system and made a start toward the emancipation of women. Conservative forces rose in revolt in 1928, forcing Amanullah into exile in Italy. After a brief interlude of rule by the Tajik rebel Bacha-e Sogao (son of the water carrier), another branch of the royal family reasserted Durrani rule, culminating in the long reign of Mohammad Zaher Shah, 1933-1973.

That reign saw cautious efforts to modernize the country. In the 1950s Afghanistan asked for economic and military assistance from the U.S., but, afraid of alienating Pakistan, one of the pillars of CENTO (Central Treaty

Organization), the U.S. declined to furnish military aid. Afghanistan turned to the Soviet Union, and, since 1955, many of its military officers have been trained there.

This policy of close cooperation with the Soviet Union was engineered by Zaher Shah's cousin, Prince Daud Khan, a strong Prime Minister who in effect ruled Afghanistan from 1953 to 1963. Under Daud a moderately repressive government expanded education, including education for women, built roads and dams, developed agriculture, and began industrialization. (Many of these programs can trace their origins to the time of King Amanullah or earlier.) Daud took a militant line on the Pashtuns in Pakistan, and the international tensions this created enabled the monarch to dismiss him in 1963 and experiment with liberal constitutionalism.

Afghanistan received a new constitution in 1964 and held elections in 1965. These elections were relatively free, as evidenced by the election of five members of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (P.D.P.A.), a Marxist socialist party founded in that year by, among others, Nur Mohammad Taraki and Babrak Karmal. The new freedom benefitted the Marxists, who gained influence among the young and educated, who were frustrated with the lack of opportunity afforded to them in a country where economic growth had not kept pace with the expansion of education.

In 1967 the P.D.P.A. split into two wings. The larger "Khalq" (masses) faction, whose followers were largely first-generation educated youth from rural Pashtun

backgrounds, was led by Taraki and Hafezullah Amin, who had joined the P.D.P.A. soon after its founding. Babrak Karmal led the "Parcham" (flag) faction, whose membership was largely drawn from the Persian-speaking elite of Kabul. Babrak,<sup>\*</sup>/ the son of an army general, is married to a member of the royal family, and is a Kabuli of mixed Tajik and Pashtun origin. Taraki and Amin, as well as many members of Khalq, were members of the Ghilzai tribe, traditional rivals of the Durranis.

With the help of Parcham, whose members had key positions in the army and air force, Prince Daud staged a bloodless coup against his cousin in 1973 and proclaimed a republic with himself as President. He soon tried to get rid of his leftist allies and increasingly turned to the Shah of Iran for economic aid. He was himself ousted in a coup d'etat led by the P.D.P.A. on April 27, 1978.<sup>\*\*</sup>/ Daud was killed, along with most of his family. The April coup is known as the "Saur Revolution," after the month of the Persian calendar in which it occurred.

Nur Mohammad Taraki, Chairman of the P.D.P.A., became President of the Revolutionary Council and Prime Minister; Babrak Karmal and Hafezullah Amin became Deputy Prime

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<sup>\*</sup>/ "Karmal" is not a family name, but a sort of nickname Babrak took for himself, meaning "hard-working." His father's name is Mohammad Amin Husain.

<sup>\*\*</sup>/ The role of the Soviet Union in this coup is disputed.

Ministers. Prominent political leaders of the constitutionalist period were immediately arrested and executed. Large numbers of Soviet advisors arrived and moved into government offices and educational institutions. The Party undertook a series of "reforms," including land reform and changes in the status of women. It also launched an immediate campaign of terror against real and imagined opposition. The newly formed political police, AGSA, arrested thousands, mostly among the traditional elites of Afghan society: the educated, the religious leaders and the landowners.

The violent strategy of the Khalq created dissension within the administration: in August 1978 a group of Parchami army officers attempted a coup and were arrested. Taraki and Amin proceeded to purge members of Parcham from the administration. Babrak Karmal was appointed Ambassador to Czechoslovakia; others were arrested.

The spread of arrest, torture and mass executions, together with the sudden imposition of alien "reforms" on the traditional peasantry, soon led to the outbreak of revolt, beginning among the Nuristanis in eastern Afghanistan in October 1978.

Revolt gradually spread throughout the country. In March 1979 the city of Herat erupted in a spontaneous uprising that was crushed only after massive bombing by planes based in the Soviet Union. In August 1979 the Kabul military high command organized a revolt against the Taraki

regime, which was put down with Soviet assistance. In September, Taraki met with Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev on his way back from the meeting of nonaligned states in Havana. Available evidence indicates that Taraki and the Soviet leadership had agreed to remove Amin, an independent and personally ambitious leader. Upon Taraki's return, on September 16, 1979, in a confrontation the details of which are disputed, Taraki was instead replaced by Hafezullah Amin. Taraki disappeared from view, and Amin soon announced his death.

Amin denounced the atrocities of his predecessor, and said that he would publish a list of 15,000 people who had been executed since April 1978 at Pol-e Charkhi prison. Although the Soviet Union announced support for the new government, Amin was not its choice for President of Afghanistan. Soviet troops invaded the country on December 24, 1979. On December 27, Soviet commandos killed Amin, and Babrak Karmal soon arrived from the Soviet Union to assume the Presidency and form a government dominated by Parcham.

He and the Soviet Union denounced the reign of Amin, who they claimed was a C.I.A. agent. The new regime announced that 17,000 people had disappeared or been killed in Pol-e Charkhi Prison during Amin's reign. The new government promised to respect human rights. Taraki was posthumously rehabilitated, and Amin was blamed for all the offenses committed since April 1978.

Numerous witnesses have attested to the atrocities committed during the presidencies of Taraki and Amin, which include mass executions, such as the killing of 1,200 villagers in Kerala, Kunar Province, in March 1979; the burning alive or burial alive of some 300 Hazaras in Kabul in April 1979; the drowning of prisoners in cesspools; massive torture, and many other offenses.\*/

The Afghan army began to disintegrate due to desertions, falling from its high of 150,000 in April 1978 to somewhere in the vicinity of 30,000. The Soviet Army, which soon outnumbered the Afghan Army, increased its direct participation in military operations. At the same time internal security in the urban areas and intelligence was delegated to a new organization, the State Information Services, Khedamat-e Etela'at-e Dawlati, or KHAD.

Since that time, the new Afghan regime and its Soviet allies have been in conflict with large sectors of the population of Afghanistan, a conflict which has given rise to the violations of human rights that we document in this report.

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\*/ See, for example, the testimonies published by Michael Barry, "Repression et guerre sovietiques," Temps Modernes, special issue on Afghanistan, July-August 1980, pp. 171-233.

### III. MASS DESTRUCTION IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

"We went along the asphalt road from Iran to Herat. The desert on the Iranian side was absolutely covered in track marks, the hooves of horses, of donkeys, of camels, footmarks, bicycle marks, you name it. By the time it was about nine o'clock in the morning, there were people in droves; a man with a camel: he'd lost all his family, and all his possessions were on top of the camel. There were some young boys who'd been orphaned. Then there were numerous donkeys with women riding on them with their husbands next to them. All of these people were on their way to Iran. I stayed in a village where they claimed there had been 5,000 inhabitants. There remained one building intact in the whole village. I didn't see more than 10 inhabitants there. To destroy this place the bombers came from Russia. And there were craters everywhere, even where there were no buildings, so there was no pretense about, 'we're trying to hit the mujahedin.' It was a complete blitz. All the way from there on into Herat there was no one living there, absolutely no one. The town that I stayed in, Hauz Karbas, looks like Hiroshima. And there had been tremendous amounts of vineyards there, and they were just reduced to gray dust. It really sums up everything that exists in Afghanistan today."

Nicholas Danziger. Interview  
with Jeri Laber and Barnett  
Rubin in Peshawar,  
September 26, 1984.

Nicholas Danziger, a British lecturer in art history who created this image of Hiroshima in Herat, was only one of many who described such scenes of total devastation in the Afghan countryside. People coming from just about every area



of Afghanistan -- Western scholars, journalists, doctors and nurses, as well as the Afghan refugees and resistance fighters themselves -- tell of vast destruction: carefully constructed homes reduced to rubble, deserted towns, the charred remains of wheat fields, trees cut down by immense firepower or dropping their ripe fruit in silence, with no one to gather the harvest. From throughout the country come tales of death on every scale, from thousands of civilians buried in the rubble left by fleets of bombers to a young boy's throat being dispassionately slit by a Soviet soldier.\*/

This mass destruction is dictated by the political and military strategy of the Soviet Union and its Afghan allies. Unable to win the support or neutrality of most of the rural population that shelters and feeds the elusive guerrillas, Soviet and Afghan soldiers have turned their immense firepower on civilians. When the resistance attacks a military convoy, Soviet and Afghan forces attack the nearest village. If a region is a base area for the resistance,

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\*/ While we received some reports of killings of civilians by Afghan soldiers, most of the killings we documented involved Soviet soldiers, sometimes assisted by a few Afghans acting as guides or interpreters. In each interview clear distinctions were made among: Soviet troops (shurawi) or Russian troops (rus); government forces, sometimes called askar-e daulat, sometimes askar-e Babrak; and P.D.P.A. members, who were identified as Khalqi or Parchami. There is reason to believe that Soviet officers are distrustful of the Afghan soldiers, most of whom are reluctant draftees with a high rate of desertion or of defection to the resistance.

they bomb the villages repeatedly. If a region becomes too much of a threat, they bomb it intensively and then sweep through with ground troops, terrorizing the people and systematically destroying all the delicate, interrelated elements of the agricultural system. The aim is to force the people to abandon the resistance or, failing that, to drive them into exile. Four to five million Afghan refugees have sought shelter in Pakistan and Iran (about 1/4 to 1/3 of Afghanistan's prewar population). The major portion, about three million, are in Pakistan's border provinces where the resistance parties have established headquarters to which guerrillas come seeking weapons and support.

In recent months the Soviets seem to be changing their strategy and attempting to close the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Refugees on their way to Pakistan are arrested and tortured, their defenseless caravans bombed or strafed. But whatever the strategy, the violations of basic human rights and the laws of war continue.

## A. Crimes Against the Rural Population

### Indiscriminate Bombing

"Each village in Afghanistan has been bombed at least one time since four years. I went four times. I was in Nuristan, Panjsher, Badakhshan and Hazarajat. Everywhere that I have been, in all the villages, there was a story that it had been bombed, six months ago, two years ago, four years ago, even five or six years ago, at a time when we were not aware of the war, before the official invasion."

Dr. Juliette Fournot, Medecins sans Frontieres. Interview with Jeri Laber and Barnett Rubin in Peshawar, September 27, 1984.

Regardless of fluctuations in the conduct of the war, the bombardment of the rural villages has been almost constant. The MIG-25 jet fighter-bomber, the MI-24 Hind armored helicopter, and the Grad BM-13 mortar have become as familiar to the Afghan villager as the bullocks that pull his plow. The TU-16 "Badger" high altitude bomber, flying directly from bases in the Soviet Union, is well known in the Panjsher Valley.

Every time we asked an Afghan villager why he or she came to Pakistan, the answer began with the same two words: "shurawi bombard" ("Soviets bomb"). Most of these bombings, reported by Western observers as well as Afghan refugees, show a blatant disregard for the laws of war that require military action to be directed against military targets. In Afghanistan, the most common target is the peasant village:

the homes, fields, orchards, and, frequently, the mosque. In provincial towns the marketplace and residential areas often become targets. These attacks are responsible for the vast majority of the estimated hundreds of thousands of civilian deaths.

In some regions -- those controlled by the resistance but not of major strategic importance -- the bombing is random and desultory. Eric Valls, a French nurse working for Medecins sans Frontieres, saw this pattern during his stay in Badakhshan Province in northeast Afghanistan between April and November 1983. "All the villages were bombed," he told us in Paris on June 8, 1984: "Three or four helicopters would come, bomb very quickly -- for 15 or 20 minutes -- then go." In July 1983 in Dawa village, he saw craters left by three helicopters that killed two families (11 people) in their homes.

Dr. Ghazi Alam, an orthopedic surgeon trained in Afghanistan, India, and the United States, described a similar pattern in Logar Province during the winter of 1983-1984:

"First of all the Russians terrorize civilians by bombarding the villages indiscriminately. They are killing civilians, especially the children and the women who cannot run away from their houses. There was not any firing, but they have bombarded regularly, each day or three times a week or twice a week, this region of Baraki Barak District in Logar [south of Kabul]. They have sent

helicopters and MIGs. I have seen one case in Baraki Barak District that nine members of one family were killed by bombing. Only one was left alive. And this operation was just for psychological effect on people, that they should not feel security in their homes." [Interview with Barnett Rubin, New York City, March 30, 1984.]

Refugees we interviewed in Peshawar and Quetta in September and October 1984 had similar stories to tell.

- "One and a half months ago [mid-August 1984] there were 9 people in my village having breakfast, and a jet fighter bombed and killed them in their house. They were Nur Mohammad, 5 people from Musa Jan's family -- his wife and children, aged from 6 months or a year to 8 -- a woman and two children. They are flying and doing this all the time without reason!" [Testimony of Abdullah Jan, 22, a farmer from Delawar Khan village, Arghandab District, Kandahar Province.]
- Another refugee from Kandahar Province described how his two cousins, Shah Mohammad and Sardar Mohammad, sons of Mohammad Ismail of Kader Khel village, Arghistan District, were killed last August by rockets from a helicopter while airing out beds in the courtyard of their home.
- "I left because of the condition of my region. Not only days, but even at nights they attack from 3 or 4 directions with rockets and artillery. They are bombing since last autumn so often, continuously, 10 to 15 planes at a time. One type of airplane, the MIG-25, is coming every day with 5 to 10 bombs. They drop them on the residences, on the mosques, just to get rid of the people. Some of my

relatives were killed, including some women."  
[Testimony of Hafezullah, 24, a farmer from  
Harioki Ulya in Kapisa Province, north of  
Kabul.\*/]

- "The reason that I am here now is that in the region where I was there is great pressure from the Soviets. As an example, I had no place to put my family, because most of the region was destroyed. There were no more houses in Qarabagh-e Shomali. Ninety-nine percent of the houses are destroyed." [Testimony of Mohammad Amin Salim, 43, former professor of Islamic Law at Kabul University.]
- A woman from Chardara district, Kunduz Province, on the Soviet border, told us, "Six months ago the Russians surrounded our village. The airplanes bombed us, and four of my children died." The three boys were Najmuddin, Farwar, and Rahim, and the girl was Anisa.
- Sayed Azim, a former government official and graduate of the Faculty of Agriculture of Kabul University, told us that his home region in Wardak Province, southwest of Kabul, has been bombed for years, even in the time of Taraki. Most recently, on September 9, 12 helicopters bombed the town of Maidan Shahr. They destroyed 8 houses, killed 9, and injured 23.

Nicholas Danziger, whose description of the results of a massive offensive around Herat in June 1984 is quoted at the beginning of this chapter, went on to point out that the bombing continued in July and August:

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\*/ This is a strategic region which abuts the Salang highway connecting the Soviet Union to Kabul.

"Every day they came to bomb. I was there at least two weeks, and I would say there were only 5 days that the planes didn't come. Sometimes they came once, sometimes they came twice; the helicopters often came three times. And not only that, there's also the shelling, which can last anything up to half an hour. It seems much longer at the time. And the people don't know how to build shelters. Every day mujahedin die, but if a mujahed has died you know that the people have died. And every day you heard the list, and it was one, two, four, three, six, this was mujahedin, but then the count of the people dying was always equivalent or greater. There were few occasions when there were fewer civilians dying than mujahedin. The people come down to work on their fields at night, women wash their clothes at night, bake the bread at night, and, as there are no shelters, they hide under the trees, just waiting, waiting."

Other Western travellers have reported that much of the region around Kabul, including Paghman, has been completely levelled. The town of Jagdalak, between Kabul and Jalalabad, is completely demolished. Except during a truce in 1983, the Panjsher Valley has been regularly bombarded since 1980, culminating this spring in carpet bombing from high altitudes.

Another pattern described by many refugees is a sudden offensive combining intense airpower with a sweep by ground troops.

-- A shepherd from a district in Kunduz, who asked us not to give his name or district, said that he had arrived in Pakistan five days before with 24 families from his village: "The Russians bombed us. Then the soldiers came, took all the women and old men, and killed them."

-- Villagers who had just arrived in Peshawar from Batikot District of Ningrahar Province, east of Kabul, crowded around us as they told their story in overlapping voices: "Twenty days ago the Russians bombed our villages -- Bela, Mushwani, and Lachapur -- and 120 people died." They showed us a 6-year-old boy with shrapnel in his leg from the bombing: "On August 27 the Russians came at 4 a.m. When they reached the village they started killing people. After they finished in Lachapur and Mushwani, they went to Bela. There were 130 killed. They killed them with Kalashnikovs and with bombs from airplanes."

Patrick David and Francois Frey, French doctors working with Aide Medicale Internationale, witnessed a Soviet-Afghan offensive in Baraki Barak District of Logar Province, just south of Kabul, in September 1984. "They were bombing the houses and the people doing the harvest in the fields. They shot rockets at them and killed them." They reported that two boys, the 5- and 7-year-old sons of Gul Jan who were playing in a melon field in Chalozai, were wounded by rockets from a helicopter. Russian soldiers had come into the area and killed and looted. On September 15 the doctors saw a helicopter fly low over the village of Chehltañ:

"Our translator said, 'Watch, this helicopter is dangerous.' It dropped something that left some smoke. A few minutes later four jets came and bombed where the helicopter showed. The targets were the people's houses. We saw the people running into the fields. The next day there were 10 boys from Baraki Barak in the river, and a big shell exploded, a shell that had fallen in the river before. One boy died,



and four were wounded." [Interview with Jeri Laber and Barnett Rubin in Peshawar, September 22, 1984.]

Abdul Wahid, a Hazara student whom we met in Quetta, told us in an interview on October 3, 1984, of recent bombings and killings in Hazarajat:

"I came from Jalrez about 10 days ago. When I was there, many air attacks were taking place. Every day the airplanes were flying in the area. When they failed to hit the military points, they bombed the bazaars and homes and the places where there was agricultural production. There were two bombardments in our village. They wanted to bomb the mujahedin, but couldn't, so they bombed the populated areas like houses and the bazaar, which caused some casualties. This was in Rasana and Jaghori, and also the Valley of Tangi, about 20 days ago. Also in the center of Jaghori -- every day there are helicopters flying in the area. In Behsud there was a recent offensive which caused about 500 casualties, mostly women and children, about one and a half months ago. Ground forces came too, but most were killed by cannons."

Arielle Calemjane, a nurse working for Aide Medicale Internationale, returned in July 1984 from four months in the area around the Panjsher Valley. In a written account of her journey, she explained that it had been impossible to carry out a medical mission because of constant bombardments:

"At four o'clock, the day breaks, and at five come the helicopters and airplanes in the sky. There seems to be some traffic today . . . . On the road, entire families are climbing the sides of the valley. The children in the women's arms have such big, black eyes; they do not cry: The women covered in the chadri hide their faces; impossible to know what they think. The men go on foot, staring into the distance, searching for cover . . . . There were two dead this morning. Near the village where we found our bags . . . the grass is tempting in the cool shadows of the trees. To sit is to fall asleep. But there is a rumbling nearby, too near, that wrenches me out of sleep, suddenly: the helicopters! . . . There are bombs exploding around us -- what are they aiming at? There are a few houses nearby; the people are fleeing. I am seized by an uncontrollable trembling, prey to a feeling of total powerlessness against these black birds, these horrible black spots in the sky, these huge insects whose sound is the sound of hell and who sow destruction and death . . . . We are invited into the house where our bags are . . . . They tell us of a wounded man, . . . who is there, on the floor, his hand wrapped in a bandage from which blood is dripping . . . . The helicopter fired while he was on horseback, holding a child in front of him. The bullet went through his left hand, and the child died . . . . We have to amputate three fingers down to the knuckle."

## Reprisal Killings and Massacres

"If the mujahedin set fire to trucks on the road, they [the Soviets] carry out strikes against civilian houses. They don't bomb the mujahedin, they bomb the houses."

Red Army Pvt. Garik Muradovich Dzhambalbekov. Interview with Tim Cooper in the Financial Times, May 23, 1984.

"On July 23 or 24 [1983], near the village of Khojakalan, between Sheshgau and Rauza [on the Kabul-Ghazni highway] some mujahedin attacked [a Soviet convoy]. Immediately the Soviets bombed and partially destroyed the village of Khojakalan. Only one woman was killed this time, because the people saw that there was a battle, and they all fled the village. But at other times they do not have time to escape, and many are killed. And the mujahedin have a big problem, because they just cannot attack any more near the villages. If they do, the village is immediately destroyed."

Patrice Franceschi, journalist and field officer for Medecins du Monde. Interview with Barnett Rubin in Washington, D.C., March 23, 1984.

Pvt. Dzhambalbekov, a Soviet Tajik from Dushanbe who voluntarily deserted his unit, told us on September 21, 1984, about a massacre that he witnessed on the road between Tashqorghon (formerly Kholm) and Mazar-e Sharif in April 1982 while stationed in Balkh Province with the 122nd Brigade:

"Beside our brigade's garrison, there was a special commando unit. The brother of the commander of the unit was a captain in the same unit. It was the birthday of the commander. They drank too much vodka. The captain took three soldiers and went to the town of Tashqorghan to get grapes and apples. When they went to the town, they were captured by the mujahedin. They were killed and then cut up and dropped in the water. When the drunk commander found out that his brother and three soldiers were killed by mujahedin, he took the whole commando unit at night. He went to the village and butchered, slaughtered all the village. They cut off the heads and killed perhaps 2,000 people. The sun came out, and the mujahedin and others buried the people. I drove my APC [armored personnel carrier] there and saw the demolished houses. In the part destroyed by the commandos there was nobody living there. That's why I say it's a bad war, a dirty war."\*/

On June 30, 1983, in an incident widely reported in the French press and later raised with the Afghan government by Amnesty International, Soviet soldiers killed 24 people, including 23 unarmed civilians, in Rauza, a village on the outskirts of Ghazni. Patrice Franceschi, a freelance journalist who works with Medecins du Monde, was nearby at the time, and he was able to interview villagers in detail a week after the event:

"The Soviet sweeping operations that had begun several days before reached Rauza on June 30. About 2 a.m., APC's encircled the village. There was no unit of the Afghan army with them. At dawn,

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\*/ This incident was also reported at the time by the BBC. The actual number of deaths was probably closer to 200.

the Russian soldiers left their vehicles, protected by helicopters, and began to search the village, street by street.

An 18-year-old resistance fighter, Gholam Hazrat, was then at home with his weapon. The suddenness of the Russians' arrival had trapped him. Frightened, he hid himself at the bottom of the well in his family's courtyard. Around 10 a.m., a six-man patrol, including one officer, broke down the door and began to search.

The officer and one of his men soon leaned over the well. When he saw that he was discovered, the resistance fighter opened fire, killing the officer and wounding the soldier. He immediately died under the fire of the other Russian soldiers.

This became the occasion for blind reprisals. The four remaining soldiers shot all the men in the house, the father, a cousin, and two uncles of Gholam Hazrat. Then they went out and assembled all the men they could find in the neighborhood, passersby, shopkeepers, etc. They were first beaten and robbed of any valuables (watches, money) before being summarily executed in the street. Twenty-three people were killed in this way."\*/

Franceschi collected the name, age, and profession of each victim, and photographed the graves.

A number of sources\*\*/ have described a massive massacre of civilians by Soviet troops in October 1983 in

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\*/ Les Nouvelles d'Afghanistan 15, Edite par AFRANE (Amitie Franco-Afghane), Paris, December 1983, p. 5.

\*\*/ The New York Times, October 20, 1983; Les Nouvelles d'Afghanistan, op. cit., March-April 1984; Chicago Tribune, July 15, 1984.

three villages southwest of Kandahar on the branch road linking the city to the Soviet military base at Mandisar airport. On October 10 and 11, a local unit of the Jamiat-e Islami resistance organization had ambushed and destroyed several Soviet military columns. In retribution, on the morning of October 12, a largely Soviet force with a few Afghans acting as guides or interpreters arrived in the villages of Kolchabad, Moshkizai and Balakarez. Sardar Mohammad, 55, a farmer from Kolchabad, hid in a grain bin when he saw Russian soldiers shoot his neighbor, Issa Jan. That afternoon, when he emerged from hiding, he went to the house of a friend, Ahadar Mohammad:

"Everyone was dead. Ahadar, his wife, and his baby were lying on the floor covered with blood. His 9-year-old daughter was hanging over the window, half in the house, half out. It looked like she was shot as she tried to run away. The young son of 13 years lay crumpled in another corner with his head shot away. I threw up. Then I carried the males outside into the courtyard and covered the women with pieces of cloth where they lay. I did not want anyone to see the women exposed the way they were."

Tora, daughter of Haji Qader Jan of Kolchabad, an 11-year-old girl who survived the massacre by hiding under bedcovers, described how Soviet soldiers accompanied by an Afghan officer herded women and children into a room and killed them by lobbing grenades through the window and bayonetting the survivors. Other witnesses described similar scenes in

Moshkizai and Balakarez. The villagers who dug the mass graves for the victims estimated that there were 100 dead each in Moshkizai and Balakarez and 160 to 170 dead in Kolchabad.

Further suffering was in store for the survivors. In January 1984, after two tanks were destroyed in the same area, Soviet and Afghan military units reportedly returned to Kolchabad, executed some village elders, and shot many more civilians.\*/ Many of the villagers who had fled to refugee settlements around Kandahar had to flee again, to Pakistan, when the Soviet air force bombed their camps in June.

Tora's story of women and children being killed by grenades is consistent with testimony from two Soviet deserters, Pvt. Oleg Khlan and Sgt. Igor Rykov, who had served as mechanic/drivers with the First Infantry Carrying Armored Corps based in Kandahar. Khlan stated: "During punitive expeditions, we didn't kill women and children with bullets. We locked them in a room and threw grenades."\*\*/ In another interview, Rykov described the same procedure.\*\*\*/

Pvt. Vladislav Naumov, who served in a battalion specializing in punitive expeditions near Jalalabad,

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\*/ Afghan Information Centre Monthly Bulletin, January 1984, p. 5.

\*\*/ Le Monde, June 3-4, 1984.

\*\*\*/ The Times, London, June 28, 1984.

Ningrahar Province, described his training in the use of the bayonet to attack villagers:

"At Termez [Soviet Uzbekistan, just north of Mazar-e Sharif across the Amu Darya (Oxus River)] we built models of Afghan villages. Before every combat exercise, Major Makarov would constantly repeat: 'Look in the direction of the village: there are the dushmans. [Dushman, the Persian word for enemy, is used by the Soviet press to refer to the Afghan insurgents.] Forward! Kill them! They kill completely innocent people.' And then the truly punitive operations would start . . . . Under the cover of the infantry's combat vehicles we would raze the village to the ground. Then, working under the scorching sun, we would rebuild the model, all over again . . . . We had bayonets and silencers attached to our rifles, and we learned to use them pretty skillfully. The major often repeated Suvorov's words: 'The bullet is a fool, the bayonet -- a stalwart. Hit with the bayonet and try to turn it around in the body.'"\*/

While in Quetta in October 1984 we learned of another recent reprisal killing near Kandahar. Habibullah Karzai,\*\*/ a former diplomat who was Afghanistan's U.N. representative in 1972, told us he had received several independent reports of the killing of members of his Karzai tribe in Ghundaikan village, 7 kilometers west of Kandahar, on September 27. Karzai told us:

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\*/ Radio Liberty Research Bulletin, March 19, 1984.

\*\*/ Karzai was the first to report the massacres in Kolchabad, Moshkizai and Balakarez, the victims of which were also members of his tribe.



"The village is near the Kandahar-Herat road. On either side of the highway there are grapes. After 2 or 3 vineyards, you reach the village. The mujahedin had mined the grape gardens with anti-personnel mines. When the Soviets started to cross the gardens, they hit the mines, and 6 or 7 of them were killed. They rushed to the village and killed about 50 people, mostly children, old ladies, old people, and so on, because the young people ran away. They tried to escape. The Russians seized the area for 3 days. One lady was locked in a room with two children. The two children were killed -- we don't know why -- but the lady is still alive. I have the name of only one of the victims, Said Sikander. He was a poor man."

The French doctors Frey and David told us of a reprisal killing during the offensive in Logar in early September. On September 10, the Soviet units who had occupied Baraki Barak district since September 6 were supposed to be reinforced by a convoy of the Afghan army coming from Kabul. One of the Afghan army officers, however, defected to the resistance with much of the convoy. The next day, Soviet forces arrested 40 civilians, according to Dr. David:

"They tied them up and piled them like wood. Then they poured gasoline over them and burned them alive. They were old and young, men, women, and children. Many, many people were telling this story. They all said 40 people had been killed." [Interview with Jeri Laber and Barnett Rubin in Peshawar, September 22, 1984.]

This story was confirmed on September 23 by an Afghan doctor in Peshawar, who had recently learned by letter that two of

his relatives were among those burned to death in Logar. A gentle man who had patiently helped us interview patients in a hospital for war victims, he suddenly burst out: "What's the point of all this? People should know by now! There are no human rights in Afghanistan. They burn people easier than wood!"

#### Summary Executions and Random Killings

"So many things have happened in the past five years that we are confused. All of our innocent people have been killed in different ways. They took many people from their houses and killed them. They were bombed by jet fighters or thrown alive in wells and buried under the mud. They were thrown down from airplanes, and some were put under tanks alive, and the tanks crushed them. They were all unarmed people. Some of them were given electricity and killed that way. Some were cut into pieces alive. These are things we could not remember even from the reign of Genghis Khan."

Haji Mohammad Naim Ayubi, 60,  
former merchant. Interview  
with Barnett Rubin in Quetta,  
October 3, 1984.

"We were ordered by our officers that when we attack a village, not one person must be left alive to tell the tale. If we refuse to carry out these orders, we get it in the neck ourselves."

Pvt. Oleg Khlan, Soviet Army  
deserter, interviewed in The  
Christian Science Monitor,  
August 10, 1984.

According to the reports we received, when Soviet forces enter a village, they routinely conduct house-to-house searches. People are interrogated, after which they may be arrested or simply executed on the spot, especially if they resist interrogation. If evidence is found or if people are denounced by informers, they may be pulled from their houses and killed in front of their families. We received reports about the execution of groups of people at a time. We also heard frequently about ground troops that entered an area en masse after air and artillery attacks and shot wildly at anything that moved. Cases have been described of Afghan civilians who were killed by soldiers almost at random, not in the context of a military operation, but in the course of a robbery or simply as an expression of anger and frustration.

Groups of civilians have been killed from the air, by Soviet helicopters and jets that have, on a number of occasions, attacked weddings and funerals. In recent months there have been systematic attacks on refugee caravans moving toward the border.

Sgt. Igor Rykov, a defector from the Soviet army, described the searches conducted by his unit in Kandahar Province:

"The officer would decide to have the village searched, and if it was found it contained a single bullet, the officer would say: 'This is a bandit village; it must be destroyed.' The men and young boys would be shot, and the women and small children would be put in a separate room and killed with grenades."\*/

The Permanent People's Tribunal on Afghanistan's inquiry commission composed of Michael Barry, an American Afghanistan expert; Ricardo Fraile, a specialist in international law; Dr. Antoine Crouan; and Michel Baret, photographer, thoroughly documented a massacre of 105 persons in the village of Padkhwab-e Shana in Logar Province through on-site inspection and interviews with witnesses:

"Soviet armored vehicles, hunting down modjahedin surrounded the village at 8 a.m. on September 13, 1982. Some of the fighters and villagers, including children, found refuge in a 'karez' (covered irrigation canal). The Soviet soldiers asked two old persons to enter the canal and summon the people to come out. Faced with the latter's refusal, the old people came back up claiming there was nobody inside.

"According to an old person's eyewitness testimony, a tank truck was brought to pour a liquid, apparently oil, into the three openings of the karez. From another tank truck they poured a white-looking liquid to which they added the contents of a 100-pound bag of white powder. It was set on fire three times thanks to 'Kalashnikovs,' and each time there was a violent explosion.

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\*/ The Times, London, June 28, 1984. The Times added that Rykov said he had seen five villages of 100 to 200 people destroyed in this way.

"They protected their eyes and heads with helmets and shot their Kalashnikovs into the products, which exploded. Then they did the same thing at the other opening of the canal. When the fire and smoke had cleared, they started again with another hole. They stayed until 3 p.m. When they realized the operation had succeeded, they applauded and laughed as they left.

"The first day the population pulled out four bodies; the second day 30; the third, 68. Seven days later, the last three. When we touched the bodies, pieces would stay in our hands. The first day, when we wanted to pull out the victims, the unbearable stench made us feel sick. ... It is only with great difficulty that we were able to extract the maimed bodies: people could not even recognize their children or relatives. Whenever they were identified, it was thanks to watches, rings, and other objects they might be wearing."\*/

Summary executions were described by Mohammad Amin Salim, a former professor of Islamic law who had returned to his village in Shomali:

"When the Russians come into villages or places where there are unarmed people, they kill them with bayonets, even women and children. There are so many examples, and they are so atrocious, that it is difficult to speak of them. For example, last year I was in a village when the Soviets came to search the houses. In this village there were 7 elders, including me. When the Russians came into the village, they locked up all these elders. I was separated from the others. I was in another house, and I saw what happened. They asked the old men, 'Where

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\*/ "Afghanistan People's Tribunal, Stockholm: 1981 - Paris: 1982; Selected minutes from the Tribunal's meetings," Special issue of The Letter from the B.I.A. (Bureau International Afghanistan), Paris, 1983, p. 15.

are your sons?' The old men said they had no sons. Immediately, when they heard this, they fired on two of the men, killing them with automatic rifle blasts. The third person -- it was a very sad event -- they put him against a tree and with a big nail [apparently a detached bayonet] a soldier stabbed him in the chest and nailed him to the tree. What I am telling you is what I saw myself. The other Russian had a big nail in his hand, and he stabbed another old man in the mouth, unhinging his lower jaw. The next they put in a well, and then they threw an explosive in the well. Then, when they went into another house, I managed to escape. After my escape, I returned to the village about 12 or 13 hours later. I also saw two little boys who had been killed. This was last year in the month of Seratan [June-July 1983] in Karez village. That is one of thousands of examples. It would take hours and hours to tell you what I have seen with my own eyes." [Testimony of Mohammad Amin Salim. Interview with Jeri Laber and Barnett Rubin in Peshawar, September 29, 1984.]

Sufi Akhtar Mohammad, a 52-year-old farmer from Zamankhel village, Pol-e Khomri district, Baghlan Province, told us of an incident he witnessed in Wardak (Maidan) Province on his way to Peshawar, about 25 days before we interviewed him in Peshawar on September 30, 1984. The Soviets had come to Awalkhel village to search for guns:

"I was with a group of fighters on the way to Peshawar. When we reached Awalkhel in Maidan, there was a hustle and bustle. Russian soldiers were searching the houses. We hid ourselves. As soon as the Russians left, we went to ask the people what happened, and we noticed 8 dead bodies. They told us that after the

Russians searched the houses, they killed people of all ages, men, women and children. Of the 8 bodies, 2 were slaughtered [had their throats cut], and all of them were burned.\*/ The Russians had asked the relatives to watch while they killed the 8 people. The first 2 were slaughtered, and then the remaining ones were brought and shot with Kalashnikovs. They poured kerosene on them and set them on fire. The people said that the Russians were not alone. A few Khalqis and Parchamis were guiding them to the houses. When they were searching the houses, they found two Russian-made machine guns, captured from the Afghan Army in fighting in Ab-e Chakan. This was how they took their revenge."

Other farmers and villagers interviewed in Peshawar in September 1984 had similar stories to tell.

- Bibi Makhro, wife of Abdul Jalil, of Chardara District, Kunduz Province, showed Jeri Laber pieces of shrapnel in her left leg: "Nine months ago the Russian soldiers came to our village. The mujahedin escaped, but I was in the street with two other women. When the Russians saw us, they threw bombs [grenades]. The other two women were killed, but I survived."
- Lala Dad of Dasht-e Guhar, Baghlan Province, told us that when ground troops arrived in his area, they would kill anyone suspected of being a resistance fighter.
- A group of women nomads from Baghlan told Jeri Laber: "The government forces came and killed the people and took those they didn't kill to Kabul in tanks."

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\*/ Numerous reports tell of Soviet soldiers burning the bodies of the slain. This is an affront to Muslim religious practice, which places great emphasis on decent burial and respect for the dead.

- "The Russians came to my village three times looking for mujahedin. They killed people and animals. They killed women, children, and men for no reason. My neighbors were killed. They were asleep when the soldiers came, and the men tried to escape." [Testimony of a woman from Kohistan, Kapisa Province.]
  
- "After they bombed and shot from tanks, they came on foot. They killed people and took their money. I lost Afs. 2500 to the Russians. In one family headed by Mohammad Omar 15 people were killed outside their home at 4 a.m." [Testimony of Rahmatullah, a farmer from Bela village, Ningrahar Province.]
  
- "I lost my mother, father, and 5 children. The Russians came to the village, and the mujahedin were there. The fighting was hard. After the fighting the Russians came into the village and killed the people. They came into my house and wanted money. They accused us of being from America. My husband and I ran to the mountains, but I could not take 5 of my children with me, only these 3. We spent 5 days in the mountains without food and water. We went back to the village and saw the tents were burned. I found my five children dead in the house. There were 140 people killed, including my parents and sisters. I don't know how the days become nights and the nights become days. I've lost my five children. Russian soldiers do these things to me." [Testimony of wife of Mohammad Kabir of Bela village, Ningrahar Province. Her five dead children were Mohammad Shams, 7; Shams-ul-Haq, 8; Najibullah, 10; Naqibullah, 14; and Al-Hamula, 15.]

We heard numerous reports of summary executions by the Soviet troops that entered Baraki Barak District, Logar Province, on September 6, 1984. Dr. Ghazi Alam told us in an interview on September 22, 1984, about an old man,



Mohammad Rafiq, who was killed there in the village of Akhundkhel. The French doctors Patrick David and Francois Frey, who were in Logar Province in early September, gave us this report:

"Baraki Barak district is on the way to Pakistan for all of northern Afghanistan. There were 30 men on their way to Iran [via Pakistan] to find work. They were all killed by the Russians. There were 45 innocent people killed. Some were 'slaughtered' [had their throats slit], 2 in Baraki Barak [village] and 1 in the mountains of Saijawand. Some were burned with petrol. Some had dynamite put on their backs and were blown up. The Russians cut people's lips and ears and gouged out their eyes. We saw a man the Russians had shot in the foot after stealing his watch and money. Two boys escaped and hid themselves in a well. The Russians put some kind of gas in the well that exploded when it hit the water. One died, and the other, whom we treated, had a severe lung problem. A boy about 12 years old in Chalozai was shot in the elbow when he ran away from the Russians." [Interview in Peshawar, September 22, 1984.]

Patients in an amputee hospital in Peshawar that we visited on September 27, 1984, told us of summary executions by Russian soldiers in their villages.

-- "When the Russians came [in June 1982], they burned homes and destroyed the food. Two elders came back to the village, because they heard the food was burned. They asked the soldiers about it. The soldiers first shot them, then burned their bodies." [Testimony of Mohammad Sherdil, 23, from Khanez-e Bazarak village in the Panjsher Valley, Parwan Province.]

-- "After the Russians retreated from Bazarak [in autumn 1982], I found the bodies of 9 old men in the village. I found their bones on the ground. The bodies were completely burned. The only way we could recognize them was from their worry beads. I remember the names of 7 of them: Yar Mohammad, Haji Karim, Mirza Shah, Mohammad Yusuf, Zaheruddin, Mohammad Gul, Ghiasuddin."  
[Testimony of Mohammad Hashem, 26, of Bazarak, Panjsher Valley, Parwan Province.]

Dr. Sultan Satarzai, whom we interviewed at Al-Jehad Hospital in Quetta on October 3, 1984, told us of a report he had received from one of the graduates of his first aid course, who had recently returned from Kandahar Province:

"About one month ago [early September] during a battle in Panjwai District of Kandahar, some gardeners were working. The Russians went and strangled them. Those who buried the dead saw that they had no wounds, but they had blue necks."

A number of reported killings of Afghan civilians reflect the anger, frustration and lack of discipline of Soviet soldiers who had been told during training that they were being sent to Afghanistan to help the Afghans fight American, Pakistani, and Chinese mercenaries, but found, instead, that they were surrounded by a hostile population and were often mistreated by their own officers as well. The following incident was described to us by a former broadcaster for Radio Afghanistan:

"In 1981 I was hospitalized in Aliabad Hospital [in Kabul]. There I met a small boy, about 8 years old. He was injured by bullets of Russians. I talked to him sympathetically, but he was afraid of being put in jail and so on. He was not ready to talk to me. But after one or two days he found that I was a reliable person, sympathetic. Then he talked to me, and he said that he was living in Ghazni Province, and one day while Russians were passing by the village, he and some other children were playing and gazing at Russians, and suddenly a soldier turned to them and fired on them, and he was hit on his feet and injured and brought to the hospital in Kabul, and two other children were killed on the spot, and the others escaped."\*/

Another incident, reported by the Afghan Information Centre in its August 1984 Monthly Bulletin, is almost unbelievable. When we questioned the Centre's director, Prof. S.B. Majrooh, about it in Peshawar, he assured us that several witnesses had confirmed the truth of the report:

"Outside the village [of Lalma in Ningrahar, on August 2, 1984] a 10- to 12-year-old boy was watching his cows graze. He was playing with a toy -- a roughly made small, wooden gun, which with the help of a rubber device was making little 'tok-tok' noises like a machine gun. When the Russians arrived, the boy pointed his 'tok-toking' toy in the direction of the advancing tanks. The boy was encircled and brought to the village. He was interrogated in front of the terrified villagers. The eyewitness heard the following conversation:

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\*/ Interview with Barnett Rubin, Alexandria, Virginia, March 25, 1984. Name withheld on request.

A Russian asked: 'What is that in your hand?'

The boy answered: 'It's my gun.'

'What do you want to do with the gun?'

'To kill the enemies.'

'Who are the enemies?'

'The ones who are not leaving us in our homes.'

It was evident that by 'home' the boy did not mean Homeland, Country or such things, and by 'us' he was only referring to himself and his parents. 'Nothing serious,' said the man from Lalma and added: 'But still a Russian seized the boy and another one took a sickle from a villager and with a powerful and quick movement of the hand, he cut open the boy's throat and threw the sickle away. It all happened very fast. The parents were not present. Then one of the Russians did a strange thing: he dragged the dead boy to higher ground, covered him with a rug, and put a bed upside down on the body.'\*\*/

Robbery is sometimes the motive for killings:

"When the Russian forces come to a village, the mujahedin leave. The Russians search the houses. In each house they look everywhere. If they find carpets, radios, cassettes, watches, they take them for themselves. If the family resists, they kill them. For example, Inayatullah was killed last year in the fall of 1983. He was an old man. He had Afs. 5000 in his pocket. Some Russian soldiers wanted to take it, but he said no.

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\*/ A note in the Bulletin added:

"At first the editor was suspicious about the sickle and thought the reporter, by using the famous symbol, was perhaps looking for effect. But the eyewitness is a simple villager and does not seem to have any idea about the symbolism. The report was re-checked, and it appears that the deadly sickle does actually exist."

They shot him. Another case: they were searching houses and came to the house of a teacher, Azizullah. They took a radio and other things. But his small daughter did not permit them to take the radio. So they beat the daughter and threw bombs [grenades] at the whole family." Seven people were killed in the family. [Sayed Azim, former government official. Interview with Jeri Laber and Barnett Rubin in Peshawar, September 25, 1984.]

Even the mosques are not safe. Mullah Feda Mohammad of Pashmul village, Panjwai District of Kandahar Province described in a written interview<sup>\*/</sup> how he and about 15 other worshippers were captured by Soviet troops in the Pashmul mosque as they began the dawn prayer on August 25, 1984:

"Before taking us out of the mosque they searched us and the mosque for fear of any possible weapons. Then they took us to Zidanian mosque, where a dozen other villagers arrested by the Soviet troops were also waiting with their Soviet guards. In that mosque, the Soviets lined us up against the long wall, and we thought that they would shoot us (you know this is very common with the Russian pigs), so we started saying our Kalima (prayer). Then they ordered us to keep our hands up, and of course we did so. After that two Soviets started searching in our pockets and took away whatever cash we had together with our wristwatches. Stupid Obaidullah refused to hand over his cash, and immediately he was shot and died instantly; the rest of us knew what to do.

Question: Who was Obaidullah?

Answer: He was the young son of Haji Nematullah, a poor farmer in our village."

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<sup>\*/</sup> The written testimony was taken inside Afghanistan by Engineer Mohammad Yousof Ayubi, public relations officer of Jamiat-al-Ulama of Afghanistan, and given to us in Quetta on October 2, 1984.

Soviet forces have also killed large numbers of people at weddings and funerals. Dr. Jean Didier Bardy of Medecins sans Frontieres has described how he and his colleagues in the dispensary at Behsud, Wardak Province, were called to the village of Jalrez in August 1981 in order to treat the victims of a 2-hour attack by 4 helicopters on a wedding party. The attack left 30 dead and 75 wounded.\*/ Soviet aircraft also reportedly attacked a wedding near Sorkhakan in Laghman Province on April 14, 1983 (70 dead), and in Anbarkhana, Ningrahar Province on August 14, 1984 (dozens dead by one report, 563 by another).\*\*/

We also heard of attacks on funerals:

-- "Two days later, after the burial, when the people were coming to console the families, the Russians came again and killed 1 woman and 5 men. The people were escaping, and the Russians opened fire from tanks. This was in Jo-e Nau village. The men killed were Haji Zafar Khan, Amir, Zondai, Kapa, and Said Rahman, who was 14 years old. The woman was from another village, so I do not know her name." [Sufi Akhtar Mohammad, 52, a farmer from Baghlan. Interview with Jeri Laber and Barnett Rubin in Peshawar, September 25, 1984.]

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\*/ His account, entitled "Les 'vacances': Jalrez," is available from Medecins sans Frontieres in Paris.

\*\*/ Afghan Information Centre Monthly Bulletin, April 1983, p. 13; Agence France Presse, Peshawar, April 18, 1983; Afghan Information Centre Monthly Bulletin, August 1984, p. 9; Associated Press, Islamabad, August 21, 1984.

- "We have a custom, when someone is buried, to go to the grave for prayer. But while they were praying, the Russians came by helicopter. Two helicopters were flying overhead, and two landed Russian soldiers, who fired with Kalashnikovs. Those who were running away were shot by the flying helicopters, the rest by the Russians who landed. There were 41 killed, including Abdul Rahman and Abdul Sattar, sons of Abdul Khair; Abdul Mohammad, son of Faizullah; and Lala Akhundzada, son of Bahram Akhundzada. My other brother was there, and he brought back the dead. Thirty-five of the men had arms, but 6 of them didn't. They were just by the grave, burying him, but they were killed too." [Bakht Mohammad, 47, a landlord from Kalacha village, Kandahar. Interview with Barnett Rubin in Quetta, October 3, 1984.]

There are many reports of Soviet aircraft attacks on refugees fleeing to Pakistan:

- "Having reached the [Pashal] valley floor by early evening the day before, the nomads had pitched a sprawling camp by the side of the river [on August 18, 1984]. Shortly after first light, the Antonov [reconnaissance plane] appeared and made several passes over their distinctive black tents, smoking fires, and grazing animals before returning to base . . . . The MIGs took the refugees completely by surprise. Appearing at 10 in the morning, the swing-wing fighters first unloaded two bombs each, believed to be 500-pounders, and then made repeated runs firing rockets and strafing with their 23mm Gatling guns. Nine women and five children were killed instantly and more than 60 injured, many of them severely.

Overall, by the time the Soviets completed their attacks in the area, at least 40 refugees had died."\*/

- A nomad woman from Baghlan who had arrived in Pakistan five days before Jeri Laber interviewed her on September 25, 1984, said that on the way to Pakistan Soviet bombers had killed 6 people in her group. They killed almost all the animals -- sheep and camels -- and burned their tents and clothes. She pointed to burns from bombings on the limbs of her children.
- Azizullah, 17, had just arrived in Pakistan from Madrasa district of Kunduz with 23 other families. In the mountains around Jalalabad, Ningrahar, their caravan was bombed. Eight people were killed, including his mother, Jamal. In an interview on September 24, 1984, he showed us the burns from this bombing, which had occurred about three weeks before.

#### Anti-Personnel Mines

"The Russians know quite well that in this type of war, an injured person is much more trouble than a dead person . . . . In many cases, he will die several days or weeks later from gangrene or from staphylococcus or gram-negative septicemia, with atrocious suffering, which further depresses those who must watch him die. The MSF has also seen the damage caused by the explosion of booby-trapped toys, in most cases plastic pens or small red trucks, which are choice terror weapons. Their main targets are children whose hands and arms are blown

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\*/ Report by Edward Girardet, The Christian Science Monitor, October 10, 1984.



off. It is impossible to imagine any objective that is more removed from conventional military strategy, which forswears civilian targets."

Dr. Claude Malhuret, Medecins sans Frontieres, "Report from Afghanistan," Foreign Affairs 62, Winter 1983/1984, p. 430.

"It was horrible to see small children with their fingers and arms and legs blown off by anti-personnel mines."

Dr. Mohammad Bahadur Alikhel, Afghan doctor formerly at a children's hospital in Kabul, quoted in The Muslim, Rawalpindi, November 26, 1984.

We received reports about a variety of anti-personnel mines used in Afghanistan by Soviet forces. Often they are used, not for conventional military purposes, but against the civilian population. Some of these mines are powerful enough to kill, but most have charges that only maim.

Soviet soldiers leave minefields around their bases when they leave an area. Their helicopters drop camouflaged "butterfly" mines around populated areas, on roads and in grazing areas. During a sweep through villages, soldiers leave anti-personnel mines in foodbins and other parts of the houses of people who have fled. We even heard of mines left in mosques, of booby-trapped bodies that exploded when relatives attempted to move them, and of trip-wires placed in fruit trees that injure the harvester. There are also

persistent reports of mines disguised as toys, pens and watches.

Unmarked minefields around Soviet bases have caused many civilian deaths:

- Sgt. Nikolai Movchan, a Soviet soldier who was stationed at a post near Ghazni before his defection in 1983, described an incident that occurred while he was on guard duty: "The area around the post was all mined. I saw an Afghan man step on a mine. He was wounded, so I asked if we should send someone to help. They told me to forget it." [Interview with Catherine Fitzpatrick, Jeri Laber and Barnett Rubin, New York City, May 3, 1984.]

After the Soviet Army has left an area, the local population tries to remove the unmarked minefields that were established around their temporary military posts. This is difficult and dangerous work: the Afghans do not have the proper equipment, and many of the mines are plastic, rather than metal, and thus much more difficult to detect. Sometimes mines are laid in pairs, so that a person removing the first mine is injured or killed by the second. Dad-e Khuda, a 38-year-old farmer from Abdara in the Panjsher Valley, told us in a September 27, 1984, interview in Peshawar that he had lost his leg this way in the winter of 1982.

In addition to mines around their bases, Soviet forces systematically leave anti-personnel mines in areas where they are likely to kill civilians. One type of mine is oval or

disk-shaped, and is placed by hand. Another type, the so-called "butterfly" mine, has two plastic wings, enabling it to flutter to the ground when dropped by a helicopter. There is a detonator in one of the wings. The butterfly mines are dropped in canisters that explode in mid-air, scattering the mines over wide areas.<sup>\*</sup>/ The butterfly mines apparently come in two camouflage colors, green for grazing areas and sand for roads and mountain paths.

The French doctors working in Afghanistan have frequently testified to the use of anti-personnel mines against civilians. In some areas the most common medical procedure performed by the doctors is the amputation of limbs injured by mines. Children, who watch over the animals in the fields, are often the victims. Many have lost legs or feet by stepping on mines left in the mountains.

-- In her summary of the effects of the Soviet-Afghan offensive against Saijawand, Logar, which she witnessed in January 1983, Dr. Odile de Baillenx of Aide Medicale Internationale noted: "Anti-personnel mines were spread everywhere, inside houses, in the flour storage bins . . . . The people are now living 40 to a room out of fear of these mines."<sup>\*\*</sup>/

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<sup>\*</sup>/ Medecins sans Frontieres has a photograph of an unexploded canister, which holds about 60 mines.

<sup>\*\*</sup>/ Les Nouvelles d'Afghanistan, op. cit., October-November 1983, p. 16.

Mines are left in mosques:

- Sayed Azim of Maidan told us in a September 25, 1984, interview in Peshawar, about a mine left under the carpet of the mosque in his home village of Omarkhel in the autumn of 1983: "We took a long piece of wood and lifted up the carpet very carefully, so that the bomb underneath would not go off."

Dead bodies are mined:

- "Next to a place called Mustokhan nobody could touch or retrieve the body of the dead freedom fighter, because they were afraid of the body being booby-trapped. A 16-17-year-old sister went up to the body, and she was blown up with the body of her brother. We simply had to pick up the pieces and put them in a sack."\*/

Houses are mined:

- "When the Russians entered the houses, they put small bombs inside suitcases and briefcases. When children and women picked them up, they exploded. I had retreated from the village with the mujahedin. Then the Russian forces came. They entered the village and put the bombs. When we came back, we found the dead bodies and the bombs, on door frames, under couches. I saw it myself." [Mohammad Zaher, 35, farmer from Qala-e Shada, Jaghatu District, Ghazni Province. Interview with Barnett Rubin in Quetta, October 3, 1984.]

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\*/ Nasser Ahmad Faruqi, "International Afghanistan Hearing: Final Report, Oslo, March 13-16, 1983," published February 1984. The original tape recordings have been deposited with the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Almost from the start of the Afghan conflict there have been persistent reports of mines disguised as everyday objects, often objects likely to appeal to children. These reports are difficult to verify. No one has produced one of these mines for analysis, and those we questioned claimed that examples were impossible to produce because the mines exploded as soon as they were touched. Among some of the people we interviewed, including some active in the resistance, we encountered skepticism about these stories. Others who had spent time in battle areas said that they had heard stories of such mines, but had never encountered them. Still others expressed the view that the Soviets at the beginning of the war may have used Afghanistan as a testing site for such experimental weapons but had stopped when this practice appeared to be receiving some international attention. The reports we received were numerous enough to recount here, even though the evidence is not definitive.

-- Dr. Jacques David of Medecins sans Frontieres told Barnett Rubin on June 8, 1984, that, while he was working at the dispensary in Jaghori in 1981, he had to amputate two fingers of a five-year-old boy who had picked up what looked like a toy. The boy's parents showed Dr. David the twisted and charred remnants of a small, red, metal truck.

- Edward Girardet of The Christian Science Monitor reported that an Aide Medicale Internationale doctor saw the metallic fragments of a booby-trapped watch that severed the foot of one of her companions on the march into Panjsher in August 1981.\*/
- Dr. Gilles Albanel of Aide Medicale Internationale testified at the March 1983 Afghanistan Hearings in Oslo: "Prior to the offensive [of January 1983 in Logar] we were asked to see a person 60 years old who had picked up a fountain pen on the road and the next day wanted to see whether this fountain pen actually worked. It exploded in his hands. It was an anti-personnel mine. He had lost three fingers of his left hand."\*\*/
- Medecins sans Frontieres nurse Eric Valls was told by a nurse working in the Afghan government hospital in Faizabad, Badakhshan, that he regularly saw patients who had lost limbs due to mines disguised as pens, watches, cigarette lighters, and coins.
- Former Afghan Supreme Court Justice Omar Babrakzai says that he had brought a booby-trapped clock found in Paktia Province to Paris for the Permanent People's Tribunal's Hearing on Afghanistan, but that it was stolen from his car in Paris.

We also heard firsthand reports from refugees in Pakistan, who pointed to our pens and watches to show us what the mines looked like.

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\*/ Unpublished book manuscript.

\*\*/ "International Afghanistan Hearing," op. cit., p. 19.

- Kefayatullah, a farmer from Harioki Ulya, Kapisa Province, was describing the actions of the Soviet troops that invaded his village. "They put toy bombs in the food storage bins," he volunteered. "Some of them exploded. They were like toys, watches, pens."
- Hafezullah, of the same village, said: "There is a type of bomb like a radio. They leave it on a stand with a wire. If you touch it, or if your feet touch the wire, it goes off. If I had been there, I would have been killed. But I know people injured by mines left in the houses in my village. Some were killed, and others were handicapped."
- Another refugee from Bela in Ningrahar described similar mines, amid a chorus of affirmation from fellow villagers who had gathered around him during the following account: "They left small bombs like pens, knives, watches. When people picked them up, they lost their hand or leg. I saw it myself. The helicopters dropped pens, or something else that was a mine. The pens were red and green. Some were the colors of wheat fields, green and yellow. There were also combs. The pen looked just like the pen you are writing with. The watch was just like my watch."

In Quetta on October 3, a group of Hazara refugees volunteered without being asked that they had seen such mines. Abdul Wahid, an English-speaking former student from Jalrez, told us:

"They put some pens and watches on the road, children take them, and they explode." Mohammad Zaher added, "I once saw them. There were pens, small radios, and watches on the road, and Gen. Mohammad Hasan [of the Hazara resistance forces] told the mujahedin not to touch them, but to throw stones and explode them." What kind of pens were they? "They were just like American Parker pens," he answered.

"They were metal pens. I saw one explode, and it had a spring inside, and a button on the head of the pen." Another added: "I work at the ICRC [International Committee of the Red Cross] hospital, and there are some patients there who lost their fingers that way. One 25-year-old man from Dara-e Suf [in northern Hazarajat] told me: 'I picked up a pen, and I lost my fingers.' The same person also lost part of his leg. The surgeon is sending him to Peshawar for treatment."\*/

Our interpreter in Quetta, Shah Mahmud Baasir, a U.S. trained economist who had left his post in the Afghan Ministry of Education only a week before, commented after an interview:

"I know it is true. It happened to one of my relations in Kabul. About 18 months ago this 8-or 9-year-old child was playing in the street near his home, near Microrraion. He picked up something that looked like a toy, and it exploded."

#### Arrest, Forced Conscription and Torture

"Said Haider was arrested in 1981 when the Russians came to Hazarajat from Waras. He was arrested in Panjab. He was a civilian. We don't know what happened to him. Ahmad Hussain Khandan, a teacher, was arrested in Panjab at the same time. We don't know where he was taken -- maybe to Kabul. Others were arrested too, but no one who was arrested came back."

Abdul Wahid, former student.  
Interview with Barnett Rubin  
in Quetta, October 3, 1984.

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An ICRC policy precluding interviews of patients prevented us from investigating this story further.



During offensives or sweeping operations, Soviet and Afghan troops often arrest men of fighting age. They may be imprisoned in temporary detention camps in the field or turned over to the KHAD for interrogation about the resistance. Most of them are ultimately inducted into the Afghan army. Such forced conscription is necessary because of the high desertion rate in the army. It is often done without regard to age or previous military service. Men are forcibly enrolled in the army and even killed in action without their families knowing anything, other than that soldiers took them away one day.

Some prisoners are subjected to more thorough interrogation in KHAD jails in Kabul or in regional centers where they undergo intensive torture, followed by imprisonment or execution. (See Chapter IV.) Those who are released from prison may then be forcibly conscripted without notification of their families.

Torture is also used by Soviet forces during offensives, sometimes with the help of Afghan interpreters, in order to elicit information from villagers about the resistance.

Recently the Afghan militia and KHAD appear to be arresting refugees en route to Pakistan. They are imprisoned in KHAD detention centers and sometimes tortured. Those that are released (sometimes after paying large bribes) are sent back to their villages or forcibly resettled. We received reports that some internal refugees, including refugees from

the Panjsher Valley, have been imprisoned for resisting forced resettlement.

- "We received information that there were 'dushmans' or 'Islamic Committees' in a village. Usually we used a whole batallion. We drove in APCs [armored personnel carriers] to the village and the infantry would sweep the village in a house-to-house search, looking for weapons. If we found people with weapons, we took them. The second time we arrested four men in their 40s. The soldiers were pushing them and beating them, just because they were angry. We brought them to a post of the Afghan militia [run by KHAD]. We were told that the militia 'would know what to do with them.'" [Pvt. Sergei Zhigalin, Soviet Army defector. Interview with Catherine Fitzpatrick, Jeri Laber and Barnett Rubin, New York City, May 3, 1984.]
- "On 2 Saur 1362 [April 22, 1983] I was captured in a blockade by some Russian and Parchami soldiers. I was with the mujahedin, close to the road, but I didn't have a weapon. Some spies told where we were. After I was captured, I was beaten with Kalashnikovs, and they kept asking if I was a mujahed. The Russians pointed a gun at me and took Afs. 1000. Then they took me to KHAD in Pol-e Khomri. This KHAD was the center for the Russians in Pol-e Khomri. They were living there. They asked me more questions. They dug a hole in the ground and made me stand in cold water. There were 2 Russians and a 'Khalqi' translator. They asked me, 'Where did you put your weapons? How many people did you kill? What party do you belong to?' After a few days they brought me to Kabul, to the office where they put you in the army. They sent me to the army base in Moqor, Ghazni. One evening they called me in to dinner, and I said I had to relieve myself and found a way to escape." [Aziz Khan, 35, farmer from Dasht-e Guhar, Baghlan. Interview with Jeri Laber and Barnett Rubin in Peshawar, September 25, 1984.]

-- Qadratullah, 39, a farmer and mujahed from Qala-e Muradbek, a village just north of Kabul, was arrested by a mixed Soviet-Afghan army unit in his village in the summer of 1983 and taken in a Soviet armored vehicle to the Sedarat Palace in Kabul, the main KHAD interrogation center for the entire country. In an interview in Peshawar on September 29, 1984, Qadratullah told us how he was intensively tortured by a team of 2 Russians and a Parchami. He was sentenced to a year in prison. Upon his release from prison he was inducted into the army and sent to Kandahar, where, after 3 months, he escaped with a group of 26 soldiers.

-- "I knew a young man from my village, I know his mother, I know his wife and child. I treated his child several times. This boy was taken with other people during the searching of the houses by the Russians [in Logar province in September 1982]. He was taken to the area of Shikar Qala. They made a camp there for a few days. When they took the people -- hundreds, maybe -- they started to torture them there. This boy I knew was crying because of the beating. And there was someone else in another tent, and he heard his voice, he was crying, shouting in a very loud voice, 'Anyone who hears this should get a message to my family. I have an old mother and a wife and small child. I'm sure they are killing me. My small amount of money is with such-and-such a shopkeeper. Anyone who hears my voice should inform my family so my wife can get the money.' And so he was killed there. After they left the area, the people went and got his body. The man I knew was taken to Kabul and sent to the military, and he slipped back from the military. Then he brought this message." [Dr. Ghazi Alam. Interview with Barnett Rubin in New York City, March 30, 1984.]

The torture methods used in the countryside are sometimes quite sophisticated, not unlike those used in the cities (see Chapter IV). Mullah Feda Mohammad described his experience when he was taken to a temporary command center near Kandahar:

"After some beating the [Soviet] soldiers took me to a small container. There they put several straps around my ankles and wrists, then they put a small box on my head and tied it there. After that they put one string [wire] in one black box, and immediately I felt a strong shock. The shock was so huge that I shouted loudly, without any shame from my fellow villagers who were still outside in the Qila [small fort]. They repeated the shocks several times, then the translator came to the small room in the car and told me, if you do not cooperate with us, we will kill you in such a terrible way."

The Soviet soldiers also tied a noose around his neck, threw the rope over a mulberry tree and pretended they were about to hang him. This went on for 20 minutes.\*/

Women, children, and old people are tortured by troops in the field in order to get information.

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\*/ Engineer Ayubi, who interviewed Feda Mohammad, reported: "He showed the signs of blue scars and some bloodstained areas, and his ankles and wrists, which had scars like stripes due to electrification effects. He showed wounds on the head."

- Dr. Robert Simon, an American specialist in emergency medicine who ran a clinic in Kunar Province in May 1984, described an old man who had lost his toes: "He actually came for another complaint, but I asked him how he had lost his toes. He told me that Russian soldiers made him stand barefoot in the snow while they asked him where the mujahedin were." [Telephone interview with Barnett Rubin on July 23, 1984.]
- The parents of another patient, a 12-year-old boy whose right arm was so badly burned he could hardly move it, explained to Dr. Simon how the burn had occurred: "They told me that Russian soldiers came to their village and held their son's arm over a fire while they asked about the mujahedin."
- Mike Hoover, a CBS television producer whom we met in Peshawar, told us he had filmed an interview with an Afghan who had formerly worked as a translator for the Soviet Army: "He was extremely disturbed. He told how he translated questions the Russians were asking about the mujahedin while they held a child over a fire."
- A French doctor, Gilles Albanel, treated a victim of interrogation during the Logar offensive of January 1983: "The next night, January 23rd, in the village below our refuge in the mountains which I mentioned, we saw a man, fifty years old, who had three gunshot wounds which were over a week old, one in the wrist, the leg, and in the arm. We had to amputate in this case. The conditions of his accident of wounding: this man and three others had been interrogated by a Soviet officer -- he had been interrogated through an interpreter -- and he was asked where the French doctors were. After the questioning, these four old men did not reveal the information which was required, they were put up against the wall and executed."\*/

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\*/ International Afghanistan Hearing, op. cit., p. 17.

-- A woman from Dasht-e Kunduz whom Jeri Laber interviewed in Peshawar on September 25, 1984, said that she had been in jail for a month in Kabul: "They put us there because we had come to Kabul. The government soldiers and KHAD took money from us in jail and hurt us."

Bibi Makhro from Chardara, also interviewed in Peshawar on September 25, 1984, said that the six families in her group had been arrested by the government militia (part of KHAD) while they were on a bus near Jalalabad:

"The militia asked us why we had come there. The men said that they were poor and wanted to work. The KHAD said, 'No, you are going to Peshawar.' They arrested the men and kept them in jail in Jalalabad for one month. They hurt the men in jail, but they would not tell us [the women] what happened to them."

The militia ultimately put the refugees in a truck and sent them back to their villages, but the Afghan driver helped them escape. The refugee woman brought forth a young girl about 12 years old who was lying within a makeshift "tent," a blanket thrown over a rope. She had been "sick," they said, since Jalalabad, terrified that she would be put in jail.

## B. Destruction of the Rural Economy

"In this [column of tractors heading for Afghanistan] he saw the whole essence of the revolution sweeping the country: the tractors struck at the feudal structure, at the cooped-up potter's vessel baked in a thousand-year-old stove. And the people, turning their eyes away from the wooden ploughs, from the feudal fortresses and the mosques, would watch the big-eyed blue machines moving over the roads and would connect their appearance with their own rebirth from darkness."

Aleksandr Prokhanov, "A Tree in the Center of Kabul," Soviet Literature, 1983.

"Because everyone who is seen on the field is bombed, no one can go out to work on the fields."

Shah Mahmud Baasir, former Director General of Economic Analysis, Ministry of Planning. Interview with Barnett Rubin in Quetta, October 3, 1984.

The Soviet-Afghan forces have pursued a determined campaign of destroying agriculture in Afghanistan. Various tactics are employed, from the killing of individual farmers to the destruction of the delicate agricultural infrastructure in the Afghan countryside. These tactics are aimed, not only at spreading terror, but at destroying the food supplies in the villages, upon which the resistance depends for sustenance. Farmers are destroyed, food is destroyed, the means of food production is destroyed. Whole regions of

Afghanistan have become areas of barren waste where no one can survive.

### Killing of Farmers

Farmers working in the fields are frequently gunned down by Soviet helicopter gunships or jets. Those who do not flee have been forced to reverse the traditional working day, sleeping by day and working in the fields after dark.

- Lala Dad, a farmer from Dasht-e Guhar, Baghlan, told us in a September 25, 1984, interview in Peshawar that Soviet jets usually came between 10 and 12 in the morning when "the people are in the fields. They kill them whenever they find them, wherever they find them. Rostam was killed -- he was a farmer -- while he was trying to get rid of some weeds."
  
- Dr. Juliette Fournot of Medecins Sans Frontieres described what she saw during a July 1982 visit to the Panjsher Valley: "Because of the bombing, the people hid in caves during the day, and they only came out with their animals at night to work in the fields with kerosene lanterns." [Interview with Barnett Rubin in Paris, June 8, 1984.]
  
- Hafezullah, a farmer from Harioki Ulya, Kapisa, told us in Peshawar on September 23, 1984: "We have to do the agricultural work in secret. Whenever the people go to work in the fields, if the planes come, they are shot. Some have been killed working in the fields, about 10 to 12 in my district."



- Dr. Patrick David of Aide Medicale Internationale told us how, during the Logar offensive in early September 1984, Soviet helicopters killed harvesters in the fields with rockets. [Interview in Peshawar, September 22, 1984.]
- Sayed Azim of Maidan told us, "The mujahedin try to cultivate the earth, but the Soviets don't let them plow. The Soviets shoot the farmers in the fields." [Interview in Peshawar, September 25, 1984.]
- "The people come to work the fields at night, they wash the clothes at night, they bake the bread at night. And they ask, 'What are we going to do this winter when the snow comes?'" [Nicholas Danziger, British art historian. Interview with Jeri Laber and Barnett Rubin in Peshawar, September 28, 1984.]

#### Destruction of Food Supplies

Wheat -- the staple food of the Afghans -- has traditionally been grown on 50 percent of the irrigated land and most of the dry-farmed land in Afghanistan. It is also the crop that has been most heavily destroyed by Soviet attacks since the invasion. As early as March 17, 1980, an old woman from Sorkh Rud, near Jalalabad, Ningrahar Province, told Michael Barry, an American specialist in Afghanistan:

The wheat! The harvest is all burnt! And they killed our children! And on our fruit trees they threw something like containers of gasoline, and all of the trees burned down!\*/

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\*/ Liberation, April 19-20, 1980, p. 12.

An economist now working with one of the relief committees in Peshawar told us in a September 1984 interview that he had seen the early stages of this strategy in November 1980 in northern Afghanistan, when he travelled from Kabul to his parents' home in Mazar-e Sharif:\*/

"Between Kabul and Mazar was a fertile green area with a lot of gardens. They had levelled everything -- buildings, trees -- and there were mines by the road. They started the hunger tactic at that time. I saw one harvest burnt. There were only ashes left by the highway. This was near Rabatak. Later I took refuge in a tea house, while the Soviet post was firing with dashakas [machine guns]. Five kilometers from the post was a big harvest, and they burned the harvest. It belonged to a very rich man named Khoja Kabuli. It was burning all through the night, until morning. It was four kilometers from the highway -- the mujahedin couldn't ambush the convoys from there. It was just to produce scarcity of foodstuffs."

Since then the burning of wheat fields has become part of virtually every offensive and reprisal operation. Every month there are a number of reports in the Afghan Information Centre Monthly Bulletin, each repeating the same story: a village was bombed, people were killed, the wheat was burned. Refugees tell of wheat being burned in the field, on threshing floors, in houses and on trucks. We were also told of wheat being poisoned in Maidan:

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\*/ This witness requested anonymity to protect family members still in Afghanistan.

"In houses of famous [resistance] commanders, they put poison in the wheat flour. This September they did it in Mirza Khan's house. One year ago they did the same thing. Last year some people died -- Abdullah and his family. Now we tell the people, if the Russians have been in the house, to throw away the wheat flour." [Sayed Azim, former government official. Interview with Jeri Laber and Barnett Rubin in Peshawar, September 25, 1984.]

Initially the Soviets appear to have used a form of napalm to destroy the wheat. Hafezullah, a farmer from Harioki Ulya, told us about a special type of bomb that "hits the ground and starts a fire." Some farmers, he said, dig ditches around stacks of wheat gathered for threshing and keep them filled with water, so that they can put out such fires quickly.

Prof. Louis Dupree, an anthropologist who lived in Afghanistan for 15 years before the coup in 1978, has investigated the specialized weapons used to destroy crops in Afghanistan. He has described two types of bombs which, when exploded, scatter pellets of phosphorus over a wide area, increasing the amount that can be burnt. One type of bomb explodes and scatters incendiary material on contact with the ground; it is used to destroy wheat that has been gathered for threshing, drying or milling. The other type of bomb is dropped by parachute and explodes in mid-air, scattering pellets over a wider area; this type of bomb is used to burn crops standing in the field.

We also received reports of how Soviet soldiers, during offensives, destroy other kinds of food -- sheep, chickens,\*/ eggs, oil, and sugar. Dr. Ghazi Alam described an incident in Baraki Barak in 1982:

"There was an old woman, who had no son in the house. There was only this old woman in the house, and she had to take care of the house as well as do all the agricultural work. She had a watermelon yard. And when the Russians came to the area, they didn't pick up 1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5 or 10 watermelons from the ground. They took some, and the rest of the watermelons they hit with their bayonets, just to destroy them." [Interview with Barnett Rubin in New York, March 30, 1984.]

#### Destruction of the Agricultural Infrastructure

In addition to the destruction of food -- a short-term policy that has caused great suffering -- Soviet-Afghan forces are intent on destroying every part of the delicate system of food production. Some peasants, unable to work their land, find themselves on the brink of starvation.\*\*/

Like all peasant agriculture, Afghan agriculture depends on a complex system of balances involving nature and technology. The land requires constant maintenance to

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\*/ Several villagers told us with ridicule and amusement how Soviet soldiers had gunned down chickens with automatic rifles.

\*\*/ This appeared to be the case in 1983, at least in Badakhshan Province, according to Francis D'Souza, "Threat of Famine in Afghanistan: A Report on Current Economic and Nutritional Conditions," London, May 1984.

preserve proper drainage and prevent erosion; in some areas, it is carefully terraced.

Even before 1978, only about 55 percent of the arable land was cultivated in any given year, mainly because of the lack of infrastructure for water management. In those areas with plentiful water, such as the plains of the far north and around the dams on the Helmand and Kunar Rivers, open ditches are used to irrigate the fields. In most of the country, however, an underground channel called a karez in Pashto (ganat in Persian) is more common. The karez brings water from nearby hills to cultivated flatlands through a series of underground wells connected by tunnels reinforced with ceramic hoops.\*/ It requires constant maintenance against silting and cave-ins and is extremely vulnerable to bombing.

Before the 1978 coup there had been some mechanization of agriculture, but most plowing, threshing and transport was done with the aid of beasts of burden, including oxen, cows, camels, horses, donkeys and mules. Animals play an even more important role in the economy of the nomads, thought to constitute about 10 percent of Afghanistan's population. Livestock is an important element -- extensive herds of sheep and goats produce milk and meat and the wool that is used for clothing, carpets and tents. They are also a major way of

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\*/ Louis Dupree, Afghanistan, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1973, p. 40.

storing wealth. Fruit trees and vines are another major part of Afghan agriculture, requiring years to reach maturity and careful watering and pruning to survive and keep yields high. Finally, there are the homes, social institutions and possessions of the villagers themselves: a roof to shelter them, a mosque for prayer, a blanket for winter, a Koran for study, a pot to boil water for rice and tea, and a stove to bake bread.

"The Russians killed the animals, stole our watches and money, and burned the wheat with BM-13s." "They bombed the residences and mosques, shot whoever was working in the fields from planes, burned the harvest, destroyed gardens of grapes and peaches with bombs, killed animals, even the chickens, took all our expensive possessions like watches and tape recorders, and tore up the Holy Koran." [Refugees from Ningrahar and Kapisa, interviewed by Jeri Laber and Barnett Rubin in Peshawar, September 23 and 24, 1984.]

The Soviet-Afghan forces have systematically attacked every portion of the agricultural system.

#### Irrigation and Terracing:

- Pal Hougen of the Norwegian Afghanistan Committee saw the destruction of terracing during his July-August 1982 visit to the Bashgul Valley of Kunar Province: "The irrigation system was disturbed by rockets, and so were the terraces, built through 100 generations to make this landscape fitted for men to live in."\*/

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\*/ "International Afghanistan Hearing," op. cit., p. 174.

- A recent article in the Afghan Information Centre Monthly Bulletin described extensive damage to irrigation systems from bombing, as well as a number of cases where Soviet ground troops destroyed karezes with grenades.\*/
- People from Maiwand and Sangsar Districts of Kandahar reported that the Soviets had established military posts along the irrigation canals, preventing the residents from repairing or using them.\*\*/
- "When the Russians came last year, they destroyed the karezes. They put bombs in them to destroy them. This year they are doing the same thing, for instance, in Busragh Village." [Sayed Azim, former government official. Interview with Jeri Laber and Barnett Rubin in Peshawar, September 25, 1984.]

Animals:

- When we passed Salang, at Kilagai, there were gunships, fuel reserves, tanks, and troops. Just before we reached there, a flock was grazing. Two APCs came and started firing, and the sheep of the flock were falling on the ground. One of them, I remember, had two bullets in the neck, and the blood was gushing out.\*\*\*/
- French journalist Alain Chevalieras saw cattle destroyed by helicopters in the Sholgarah Valley of Balkh Province. [Interview with Jeri Laber and Barnett Rubin in Peshawar, September 22, 1984.]

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\*/ July 1984, pp. 3-6.

\*\*/ Ibid.

\*\*\*/ Economist previously quoted (name withheld on request).

- Lala Dad, a farmer from Baghlan, showed us documentation of a recent bombing raid in which 118 horses and mules were killed in his village. [Interview in Peshawar, September 25, 1984.]
- Hafezullah and Kefayatullah, of Kapisa, women from Kohistan, and refugees from Batikot District of Ningrahar described how Soviet soldiers during raids had killed sheep, cows, and other animals. [Interviews with Jeri Laber and Barnett Rubin in Peshawar, September 23 and 25, 1984.]
- Sayed Azim told us that in Maidan, whenever Soviet-Afghan convoys come through on the road to Ghazni and Kandahar, helicopters accompany them and shoot at the animals, whether there is fighting or not. [Interview in Peshawar, September 25, 1984.]
- "Soviet armored helicopters systematically machine-gun the villages and herds within a radius of 30 to 50 kilometers of the Soviet base at Chaghcharan, especially in the winter, when the flocks are concentrated in the stables."\*/

Fruit Trees: A grim photograph of the Afghan war shows a turbaned man holding an antique rifle, surrounded by an arid field filled with the cut-off stumps of apricot and almond trees. It was taken north of Kandahar in the fall of 1982, where a representative of Amitie Franco-Afghane (AFRANE) was told that government troops had cut off the trees at a height of 30 centimeters in the autumn of 1980.\*\*/

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\*/ Olivier Roy, Les Nouvelles d'Afghanistan, op. cit., October-November 1983, p. 12.

\*\*/ Les Nouvelles d'Afghanistan, op. cit., December 1982, cover and p. 16.



- Refugees from Shomali, told us on September 23, 1984, how bombing had destroyed vineyards and fruit orchards in that region.
- Sayed Azim described the destruction of the apple orchards of Maidan: "All the fruit trees are cut down. They cut them down when they shoot everywhere with bullets or BM-13s." [Interview with Jeri Laber and Barnett Rubin in Peshawar, September 25, 1984.]
- "The Soviets are cutting down fruit trees in Kandahar. In the very place where the prison is located they cut 5 or 6 very good fruit trees -- apples, pomegranates, apricots -- just because the mujahedin may hide behind trees and attack them." [Shah Mahmud Baasir, economist. Interview with Barnett Rubin in Quetta, October 3, 1984.]
- The Afghan Information Centre in its July 1984 Monthly Bulletin described how the famous vines and fruit trees of Kandahar Province are dying for lack of water, as a result of damage to the irrigation systems.

### Theft of Property

Perhaps the most direct method of forcing peasants off their land is simply to take away whatever they have.

Michael Barry told the Afghanistan Hearings in Oslo of a village in Logar:

"[In November 1982] I saw an enormous village by moonlight which had not been bombed, and yet there is not a single human being left alive in it. It was already snowing, and you could tell that there were no footsteps in the snow. It was a freezing night, and with my companions I explored the village, and all we found living in the village was a single dog. One month later I was able to track down the people who had originally lived in this village in a Pakistan refugee camp, and

they explained their story . . . . On August 30, 1982, the village was surrounded in the classical way by tanks, helicopters flying above. Young men of military age had been able to run away into the mountains on time, so all the people who were collected by the Soviet troops were elderly villagers, farmers, women, and children. The soldiers did not kill anybody this time, they simply stripped every single person in the village that they could lay their hands on of anything valuable he had on, whether jewelry or wristwatches. Houses were searched, and all transistor radios were confiscated. The granaries were emptied, all sacks of grain reloaded onto the military vehicles, and finally all the sheep, all the goats, all the cattle were loaded onto military lorries and taken away. By nightfall the population of Aochakan [Ab-e Chakan in standard Persian] had to take stock of the fact that they had nothing left with which to survive the coming winter. An assembly was held that evening. It was feared that the Soviets could come back this time to pressgang the young men into service, and it was decided that the best thing for the villagers to do would be to abandon everything and go to Pakistan."\*/

Afghan villagers we interviewed in Peshawar in September 1984 described systematic theft and destruction of property by Soviet soldiers sweeping through their villages.

- Bibi Makhro of Chardara, Kunduz, told how Soviet soldiers had stolen sewing machines, watches and money.
- Lala Dad of Baghlan said that Soviet soldiers "broke china and all expensive possessions."

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\*/ "International Afghanistan Hearing," op. cit., p. 195.

- Kefayatullah of Kapisa said the Russians "took all the expensive things, tapes, watches, cash money, and fruits. They walked up to old men and said, 'Give us bakhshish [alms or a bribe].'" He added, "They also burned the mosque and tore apart the Holy Koran. They tore up my own copy of the Holy Koran! I found the torn pages in my house."<sup>\*</sup>/
- A woman from Kapisa told us: "The Russians came while I was cooking dinner. They asked, 'Where is your husband?' They broke dishes and glasses, killed animals, and burned the rugs."

This is not the first time an invader has used these tactics in Afghanistan. In the thirteenth century Genghis Khan swept through the country, leaving silted irrigation canals and devastated cities as his monuments.<sup>\*\*</sup>/ There is an ominous resemblance between the devastation of Genghis Khan and what we are hearing today in descriptions such as one we received from Dr. Juliette Fournot of a village in the Panjsher Valley:

In the village you could not find one house intact. No doors, nothing left; just walls were standing. It was smelling horrible, of dead bodies. It was smelling of death. It was the season of the apricots. Apricots were all falling down, and there was nobody to pick them. And everywhere there was . . . putrefaction.

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<sup>\*</sup>/ There are other accounts of the deliberate profanation of Muslim symbols. Edward Girardet reported seeing a mosque in Dasht-e Rawat, Panjsher, that Soviet soldiers had used as a latrine. U.S. News and World Report, October 15, 1984, p. 44.

<sup>\*\*</sup>/ Dupree, Afghanistan, op. cit., p. 316.

#### IV. MASS REPRESSION IN THE CITIES

"Kabul is a prison; the secret police are everywhere." This sentence returns like a leitmotif in the Afghan capital."

Yves Heller, Agence France  
Presse, Kabul, May 9, 1983.

The Afghan Communists and their Soviet allies are constructing a new Afghan society in the cities, especially in Kabul. It is a society in which all sources of information are directly controlled by the government and ruling People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (P.D.P.A.), which, in turn, are under the close supervision of Soviet "advisors." All books, newspapers, and radio and television broadcasts must conform to the official line. Criticism of the government is not allowed. Private conversations are monitored by an extensive network of spies. Meetings and gatherings must have governmental approval. Under these circumstances, it is, of course, impossible for Afghan citizens to collect or disseminate information about human rights violations.

All educational institutions are under total control of the P.D.P.A. The curriculum has been transformed to reflect Soviet ideology. Marxist studies and the Russian language are required courses in the university. Religious instruction in the high schools has been replaced with "politics" classes in which students are pressured to join

the Party. Teachers who do not conform to the ideological line are reprimanded or arrested. Students who speak up in class risk arrest.

The Afghan government's cultural policy aims at destroying traditional Afghan cultural ties to the Islamic world and the West and at instituting a Sovietized, Russified culture. While the Afghan administration does not openly proclaim hostility to Islam, religious institutions operate under strict limitations. The Sufi orders that played such an important role in the religious life of the nation can no longer function openly. Many religious schools remain closed.

All political parties except the P.D.P.A. -- from Maoists to Social Democrats to Islamic revolutionaries -- have been outlawed. Membership in the Party confers privilege in every area of life. Employees of public institutions who refuse to join Party organizations risk dismissal, demotion or arrest.

The system is enforced by the largest agency of the Afghan state, the State Information Services, known as KHAD.\*/ The KHAD has a larger budget than even the military and is directly financed by the Soviet Union.\*\*/ Organized

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\*/ KHAD is an acronym for Khedamat-e Etela'at-e Daulati, Persian for State Information Services.

\*\*/ French ethnologist Bernard Dupaigne learned this from high level contacts in Kabul during 1980, as he told us in an October 19, 1984, letter.

in 1980 under the guidance of KGB advisors, it remains under close Soviet supervision. KHAD informers sit in virtually every office and classroom in Kabul. A former high official of the KHAD told us in Peshawar on September 30 that the KHAD aimed to have "a spy in every family."\*/

The KHAD's Soviet-trained cadres continually arrest those suspected of opposition. Grounds for arrest may be statements obtained from another prisoner under torture, the report of a paid spy, or the desire to find another member of the victim's family. Once arrested, the victim is subjected to a system of interrogation where carefully calibrated tortures ranging from the most sophisticated to the most brutal are administered with almost scientific precision. Those who survive (and many do not) are transferred to prisons where they are crowded into filthy rooms with dozens, sometimes even hundreds, of others, some of whom have gone mad from torture and others of whom are paid informers. After a time, the prisoner may be given a secret "trial" by the revolutionary court, in which those who try to defend themselves are silenced. Some receive long prison sentences,

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\*/ During a May 1983 visit to Kabul, Agence France Presse correspondent Yves Heller was told by a P.D.P.A. official that the KHAD had 10,000 employees in Kabul. Taking the maximum population figures for Kabul, including close to a million new internal refugees, this would mean that 1 out of every 150 residents of Kabul (including children) was an employee of the KHAD. Agence France Presse, Kabul, May 9, 1983.

while others receive the death sentence, which is then often carried out in secret.

A. Suppression of Civil Liberties and Independent Institutions

"Once the Soviets entered our country, they demolished everything. They wanted to change our way of writing. They introduced their writing and alphabet. Each year they send students to the Soviet Union for brainwashing. They want to introduce a new culture to a new community."

Ustad Khalilullah Khalili, 79, Afghan poet. Interview with Jeri Laber and Barnett Rubin in Islamabad, October 1, 1984.

Freedom of Expression

You couldn't talk to someone in your office unless you knew him very well, that he was a good person, not a member of KGB or was not a member of Communist Party. If a visitor was coming to the office for work, then no one could talk. Everybody was silent."

Anwar, an office worker, arrested for a remark to his co-workers. Interview with Patricia Gossman and Hans Wahl in Chicago, April 15, 1984.

Human Rights Monitoring: Because all forms of written or spoken expression are subject to strict government control in Afghanistan, human rights monitoring is impossible for those still living there. Those who have tried have been arrested and either forced to make public confessions or

sentenced to long prison terms.

In early 1982 a group of professors at Kabul University founded the Organization for the Defence of Human Rights and Academic Freedom. The organization planned to distribute pamphlets protesting the lack of freedom at Kabul University and the arrests of students and teachers. The group did not last long. Five of its members were arrested in April 1982.

A leading member of the group was Professor Hasan Kakar, an historian trained at London University, who was also a Research Associate at Harvard. His best known book is Government and Society in Afghanistan: The Reign of Amir Abd al-Rahman Khan, published in 1979 by the University of Texas Press. Those who know him describe his work as a natural extension of his love for his country. Rasool Amin, former Professor of Political Science at Kabul University, told us in Peshawar on September 28, 1984, how Professor Kakar had wept when he saw Soviet soldiers in Kabul after the 1979 invasion:

"On the day of the invasion [Hakim] Taniwal and [Sayd Bahauddin] Majrooh and Hasan Kakar came to my house. [All were professors at Kabul University.] And Kakar suggested that we go see Kabul. He said, 'We have lived to see the Red Army in Kabul, and we may start hating our Kabul, because when you see the army, you won't remember the sweet Kabul from before.' And we took a car and just went to see all the soldiers. They were standing on both sides from the Premier's office to Salang and those places. And Hasan Kakar was very emotional. He started to weep. I said,



'But Kakar, it is not a question of weeping. It is a question, a big question, what should be done.' He talked to the Russians, 'Why have you invaded?' And I said, 'O.K., you may be shot dead, he does not know your language, he is a soldier.' But he was really very emotional, and when we went back, he was the only person to whom we disclosed that we are leaving. And Majrooh came after three months. But Kakar was not willing at that time to leave."

According to Professor Majrooh, "Kakar was a most politically innocent man." At Kabul University he openly opposed attempts by Soviet advisors to eliminate Islamic influences from the curriculum. These efforts, combined with his activities in the short-lived human rights group, led to his arrest, along with four other group members, some of whom were severely tortured. Professor Kakar was kept in solitary confinement and denied reading or writing material for 15 months, during which he was allowed only one half-hour visit from his 14-year-old son in the presence of a soldier:

"In the interview in April of this year [1983] Professor Kakar declared, 'My conscience is clear, and I sleep well,' expressing, however, great concern about the future of his family. As tokens of his anxiety and love for his family, he passed on two stones -- each laboriously carved with their names. One stone had the name of his wife and five children, the other only the name of his eldest daughter, 24-year-old Palwaz, seriously ill with a disease of the arteries, which has worsened since her father's arrest. Each stone had

been carved out by a means of a nail,  
after endless pains."<sup>\*</sup>/

One of the professors arrested with Professor Kakar was released. The other four were sentenced to long prison terms for "distributing anti-state literature": Professor Hasan Kakar (history), 8 years; Professor Osman Rostar (law and political science), 12 years; Professor Habiburrahman Halah (journalism), 10 years; Professor Shukrullah Kohgaday (history), 7 years. Amnesty International has adopted Rostar, Kohgaday, Halah and Kakar as prisoners of conscience.

A former student<sup>\*\*</sup>/ had seen these four men in Pol-e Charkhi Prison during the first week of September 1984, just two weeks before we interviewed him in Peshawar on September 24:

"I met all the professors. I saw Shukrullah Kohgaday. I saw Osman Rostar. I saw Kakar. I saw Halah. Osman Rostar's hair has turned all white, and he has lost his mind. Halah is entirely deaf from the beating. Kakar's hair is entirely white, but he is still surviving."

In Peshawar in September 1984 we met with representatives of the National Committee for Human Rights in

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<sup>\*</sup>/ Anthony Hyman, "Afghan 'Justice': Professor Hasan Kakar," The Letter from the Bureau International Afghanistan 7, October 1983, p. 20.

<sup>\*\*</sup>/ Name withheld on request.

Afghanistan, an organization that operates clandestinely within Afghanistan collecting information on human rights violations. The group claims that 958 of its members or supporters (including the members of the Kabul University professors' group) are in prison in Afghanistan. Its members have documented over 8,000 cases of human rights violations in Afghanistan since 1978, a selection of which was recently published under the title: "Russia's Barbarism in Afghanistan" (Peshawar, 1984).

Press: Newspapers and magazines had already been taken over by the government during the rule of Taraki and, under Babrak Karmal, attacks against independent journalists have continued. In 1982 a number of sources, including Amnesty International, reported the death under torture of Ghulam Shah Sarshar-e Shomali, a well known poet and former editor of the daily Anis.\*/ He was reportedly arrested in February 1982, together with about 40 writers and artists working for Afghan Radio-Television or the Ministry of Culture, including Azam Rahnaward, Latif Nazemi, and Wassef Bakhtari.\*\*/ Later, in an effort to bring communications under even stricter

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\*/ Amnesty International Report 1984, p. 207. We also heard of his death from his former teacher, Professor Sayed M. Yusuf Elmi, in an interview in Peshawar on September 21, 1984.

\*\*/ Les Nouvelles d'Afghanistan, op. cit., May 1982, p. 10.

control, President Babrak Karmal dismissed the Minister of Information and placed radio and television, the press and the cinema under the direct control of Prime Minister Sultan Ali Keshtmand.\*/

Soviet advisors enforce this control:

"There are many Russian advisors at Bakhtar News Agency, the government news agency, and the Kabul New Times [the English language daily newspaper]. They are all run by Russian advisors. According to their advice they publish certain articles. It is difficult to write an article that would express the ideas of the people. It is not possible. And in Radio Kabul sometimes the broadcast is written by the Russians and then sent there. Because many of my students were from the department of journalism, and they are working there now. They were telling me that there is no question of press anymore. Everything is under the Russians' control." [Professor Sayed M. Yusuf Elmi, formerly of the Faculty of Social Sciences at Kabul University. Interview with Jeri Laber and Barnett Rubin in Peshawar, September 21, 1984.]

Publishing: All forms of publication, including literature, are subject to strict censorship. Works that do not agree with the policies of the Soviet-Afghan regime are not published or sold. In addition, the regime actively promotes publications from the Soviet Union:

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\*/ Agence France Presse, Islamabad, September 12, 1982.

"There is a bookstore in Kabul called Baihaqi Bookstore. Baihaqi was a famous scholar of the tenth century. This bookstore is the main bookstore of Kabul, in the center of Kabul, in a big building. Before the coup it was meant for Islamic publications or other sorts of books, from Europe, or from America, from Iran, India. Every sort of books, Islamic, un-Islamic, all sorts of books were there. But after the coup it was changed. All Islamic works were removed from there. Now all the whole bookstore is filled with Russian books, with Russian pamphlets and periodicals." [Professor Elmi, September 21, 1984.]

Some writers have become non-persons, because of their opposition to the regime. The poet Ustad Khalilullah Khalili, 79, widely regarded as the leading writer in Afghanistan, had been Ambassador to Iraq at the time of the 1978 coup and did not return to Afghanistan. His books, which were regularly published by the government printing house, are no longer available in Afghanistan:

"Many of our writers now must be published in foreign countries, and we send their works into Afghanistan . . . . There are two kinds of literature: free literature and compulsory literature. The poets living outside of Afghanistan or at the fronts try to keep the people's real literature and religion, which is Islam." [Ustad Khalilullah Khalili, 79, poet. Interview with Jeri Laber and Barnett Rubin in Islamabad, October 1, 1984.]

The Afghan regime has begun to organize "engineers of the human soul" in a Soviet-style Writers' Union that will safeguard the ideological purity of Afghan literature. The

chairman of the Union is Ghulam Dastagiri Panjsheri, Minister of Higher Education and a member of the Politburo. Other leading "writers" are Suleiman Layeq, Minister of Tribes and Nationalities; Barak Shafi, president of the Fatherland Front; and Assadullah Habib, the rector of Kabul University.

Because all legal channels for publishing literature of protest are closed off, the residents of Kabul and other cities in Afghanistan have turned to clandestine literature. The most common form is the pamphlet or "night letter" (shab nameh), mimeographed or copied by hand and secretly left in public places. Distribution or even possession of anti-regime "night letters" is a crime in Afghanistan. Many high school and college students have been arrested, tortured and sentenced to prison terms of several years for possession or distribution of such pamphlets.

- Mohammad Nabi Omar Khel, a civil engineer and member of Afghan Mellat (the Pashtun nationalist and social democratic party), told us in a September 27, 1984, interview in Peshawar, that he was arrested after a team of about 20 KHAD agents found a single pamphlet during a search of his house.
- A student we interviewed, who asked that his name be withheld, had served a sentence of four years in prison after being found in possession of a single leaflet.
- The interpreter during our visit with the poet Ustad Khalili in Islamabad told us that he had left Kabul three months before because some friends with whom he had been distributing "night letters" had been arrested, and he was afraid that they would give his name under torture.

Speech: The spoken word, as well as the written word, is strictly controlled. Even private conversation is monitored by the KHAD through its network of spies.

-- "When Russians come, they trained more young girls as typists, and they sent these girls to offices. These girls were trained by the government. They were sent to Russia, but when they come back, they don't say that they were trained in Russia. The KHAD also had courses in Kabul, and they trained girls, but they didn't know how to type. But they send them with a letter, she must work there. When we saw that they cannot type, nobody can say something to them, that you are not a good typist. For example in my office they sent me two 'typists.' but they cannot type! When I learned that they were from KHAD, and they have pistols, I did more and more work by myself. I typed it. Sometimes when they came to the office, they were very tired and sleepy. And I asked 'Why are you sleepy?' They said, 'We had a job last night. We checked some houses.' After we knew each other for a year, they said some things to me. They checked what I was doing, what my friends say. Before that in the office some friends talked to each other about government, about Russia. When they sent these girls to the offices, all Muslim people were quiet. They could not speak." [Jahadyar Aminullah Wardak, former civil servant and Cabinet Secretary. Interview with Jeri Laber and Barnett Rubin in Peshawar, September 24, 1984.]

-- Anwar, a former office worker now in the United States, was arrested from his office in September 1980. On the third day of his interrogation, a Soviet interrogator and an Afghan interpreter played a tape of private remarks Anwar had made in his office and asked him to confess to ties with the C.I.A. [Interview with Patricia Gossman and Hans Wahl, Chicago, April 15, 1984.]

Freedom of Association, Assembly and Movement

Association with foreigners, especially with Americans, is considered prima facie evidence of criminality.

- Anwar, the former government employee now in the United States, was questioned under torture by Soviet officers about his friendship with an American Peace Corps worker who had been his English teacher when he was 15 years old.
- In May 1982 the KHAD arrested all Afghan clerical employees at the U.S. Embassy. Anwar-ul-Haq, a former physics student from Kabul whom we interviewed on September 29, 1984, in Peshawar, told us that he had met two of them in jail and that they were being interrogated under torture by Soviet officers who accused them of being C.I.A. agents.
- Fr. Serge de Beaurecueil, a French Dominican monk who taught at a lycee in Kabul until he returned to France in August 1983, had educated many abandoned children in his home over the years. In June 1983, six of these boys and two of their friends were arrested by KHAD agents and accused under torture of being spies for Fr. de Beaurecueil. One, who was found with a resistance party membership card, was sentenced to ten years in prison, the others to several months.\*/

Many of the former prisoners we interviewed had been sentenced because of their association with other Afghan citizens:

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\*/ In Peshawar we were able to confirm this report, originally sent to us in a September 1984 letter from Etienne Gille, Professor of Mathematics at the University of Dijon.



"In my room was a woman, Rahima. She was tortured for one month. She had been in jail before me, and she had harder torture than I did. Her story was, she was working in the Ministry of Agriculture, and in this Ministry one man tried to kill one of the Party members there. Then they took this man, and they were torturing him, and he said, 'Rahima is my friend.' So they took her too." [Testimony of Razia, former student from Kabul, in interview with Jeri Laber and Barnett Rubin in Peshawar, September 23, 1984.]

The Afghan government prohibits all forms of public demonstration against the government. Demonstrators are fired upon and killed or wounded; they are also arrested and interrogated to elicit information about organizations responsible for the demonstrations. In 1980 and, to a lesser extent, in 1981, hundreds were killed and many thousands arrested as the Kabul government suppressed mass public demonstrations with Soviet help.

-- A major demonstration that began with a strike on February 21, 1980, led to a week of mass demonstrations in which hundreds of thousands of people participated. Afghan Army troops fired on the crowds with machine guns and tanks as Soviet helicopters hovered overhead. The Afghan government officially acknowledged a death toll of 500. A number of Shi'ite religious dignitaries were reportedly arrested and summarily executed, including the scholar Maulana Zabibullah. Thousands of others were arrested as well.\*/

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\*/ Le Monde, February 23, 24, 26, 27, 28 and 29, 1980, and March 1, 1980.

- In March 1980 demonstrations continued, mainly organized by Kabul University students. A former student, Qader, whom we met in Peshawar on September 29, 1984, described the government's suppression of a demonstration by surrounding students with horsemen and tanks, while helicopters flew overhead. Several students died of gunshot wounds and hundreds were arrested.
  
- On March 23, 1984, Omar, a former student at the Agricultural Faculty of Kabul University, told Barnett Rubin and Patricia Gossman in Alexandria, Virginia how he had helped write and distribute the leaflets that called for the March demonstrations. He was arrested and tortured, with demands that he reveal the names of his associates.
  
- In April 1980, on the second anniversary of the coup, hundreds of high school girls organized their own demonstrations, and were soon joined by other students. Throughout April and May, troops fired on these demonstrations and arrested participants by the thousands. About 50 students were killed, more than half of them schoolgirls.\*/
  
- Schoolgirls called anti-Soviet demonstrations again in September 1981, to protest the mobilization of reserves. At Pol-e Bagh-e Amoni in central Kabul, they were met by a line of Soviet and Afghan tanks, telling the girls to stop:

"It was coming from inside a tank like a tape through loudspeakers, announcing, 'Stop the demonstration, don't go ahead, go back to your classes, otherwise you'll be shot.' There was a small speech like 'You are the property of the country, and you young girls don't know that this

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\*/ Anthony Hyman, Afghanistan under Soviet Domination, 1964-81, St. Martin's Press: New York, 1982, p. 81; Edward Girardet, "Afghanistan" V:19-21, unpublished manuscripts; Nancy Hatch Dupree, "Revolutionary Rhetoric and Afghan Women," in Revolutions and Rebellions in Afghanistan: Anthropological Perspectives, M. Nazif Shahrani and R.L. Canfield, eds., Institute of International Studies (Research Series No. 57), University of California, Berkeley, 1984.

is the hand of imperialism, and imperialism is never happy for you to have a communist life, and you shouldn't be fooled to listen to imperialism, and Russians are here to help us, and Russians are here to support revolution,' and stuff like this. The girls continued shouting, 'We know you Russians! We know you, sons of Lenin! We know you are murderers, and we don't want to go back! We'd rather prefer to be killed than to go back to our classes. We want you Russians to get out of Afghanistan.' That's what they were shouting. Then there was firing from the Russian tanks. Six girls were killed. The six bodies, I saw that they were not able to move. Their hands and legs stopped moving, and they put them in a Russian jeep." [Testimony of Anwar, former office worker. Interview with Patricia Gossman and Hans Wahl, Chicago, April 15, 1984.]

The Afghan government has recently enacted new regulations, restricting private gatherings and travel within Afghanistan:

"The inhabitants must have new identity cards.

"If they want to leave the city, the security office of the party must be informed as to where they are going and how long they intend to stay. Only after receiving written permission will they be allowed to travel.

"If they receive guests, the party office must be informed about their identities. The guests must not stay more than three days.

"Any large gatherings such as funeral processions or wedding parties must be announced in advance to the party office, and the gatherings must be kept as small as possible."\*/

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\*/ Afghan Information Centre Monthly Bulletin, September and October, 1984.

## Academic Freedom

"Another time in the politics class we were talking about Sabra and Shatila in Palestine. One of the students said that he would rather learn about our own country, where there were hundreds of Sabras and Shatilas that no one was talking about. He said he would be more interested to talk about our own country than about others. After the class he was arrested by two guards, two students who were members of the [Party] organization. He was imprisoned for 4 months, and after 4 months he signed a paper saying he would no longer speak in class."

Mohammad Gul, former student at the Mechanics High School in Kabul. Interview with Jeri Laber and Barnett Rubin in Peshawar, September 29, 1984.

"It was difficult for me to live in Afghanistan, because I taught History of Islamic Civilization. So I was under great pressure. They were telling me, 'You should teach scientifically, according to Marxist theory.' The Dean of the Faculty told me this. He was always calling me, and asking me, 'Why are you doing like this?' He was telling me that our Faculty belonged to the Central Committee: 'Do you know what you are doing in the class?' I said, 'Yes.' He said a report had been sent to the Central Committee and that they were asking, 'Who is this teacher? Why is he teaching like this?' I said, 'What can I do? I can't change my subject. I can't change history. I can't fabricate history. This is the truth. How can I teach wrong ideas?' So we were always in conflict. I was under police escort. After the coup police were always following me everywhere."

Professor Sayed M. Yusuf Elmi.  
Interview with Jeri Laber and Barnett Rubin in Peshawar, September 21, 1984.

The Soviets have made the schools -- both high schools and universities -- a major focus in establishing control in Afghanistan.

"There are Russian advisors in every office of every ministry, including the Ministry of Education. They were controlling all the curriculum and teaching materials. They also brought a lot of changes in the texts." [Shah Mahmud Baasir, formerly with the Ministry of Education. Interview with Jeri Laber and Barnett Rubin in Quetta, October 2, 1984.]

High Schools: New history textbooks, written by Soviet scholars, praise not only the Soviet Union, but even Czarist Russia as the only true friend of the Afghan people.\*/  
Russian has replaced English as the required foreign language, and each school has a "Friendship Room." There is constant pressure to join the Party.

-- "There was a room called the 'Friendship Room,' where there were Soviet newspapers, Soviet books. This 'Friendship Room,' among other things, distributed certain books and newspapers, sometimes newspapers of the day before, which were translated into Persian so we could use them in class. We used to make book covers out of the

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\*/ Rasool Amin, "The Sovietization of Afghanistan," unpublished manuscript. See also the interview with Abdul Majid Mangal, former charge d'affaires in the Afghan government's Moscow Embassy, Afghan Realities, May 15-31, 1984; and two articles by Olivier Roy, "L'Afghanistan un an apres," Esprit, June 1981, and "La politique de pacification sovietique en Afghanistan," forthcoming in La Guerre d'Afghanistan, Andre Brigot, ed., Paris: La Documentation Francaise, 1985.

newspapers." [Mohammad Gul, former student at Kabul's Technical High School. Interview with Jeri Laber and Barnett Rubin in Peshawar, September 29, 1984.]

- "Their main activity is that they have a subject called politics. In that subject they described all the Communist terms and activities. We were asked, 'Why are you not joining the Party?' Every day during the politics period they were asking, 'Why don't you join?'" [Taher, former student at a commercial high school in Kabul. Interview with Jeri Laber and Barnett Rubin in Peshawar, September 25, 1984.]
- "I had a car accident. [He showed a large scar on his forehead.] They were saying, 'If you come join us, we will send you to Russia for medical treatment.' They asked me, 'What have you seen in this revolution that you haven't joined yet?' This was the secretary of the Party Organization, a teacher, Shamsuddin Baghrami." [Aziz, former student at Afghan Institute of Technology. Interview with Jeri Laber and Barnett Rubin, Peshawar, September 25, 1984.]
- "If you join the Party, then you will succeed in school, and your conditions of living will be good. Those who were ranked as first or second in the class were always members of the Party, even though they were not really the first and second. Every year there were scholarships to go to Russia. Only those who belonged to the Party got these scholarships." [Taher, also quoted above.]
- "In Ahmad Shah Baba Academic High School there was a lot of political pressure on the students. They were pressing us to become members of the Party. They were threatening us. We were called to the principal's office, and the principal would tell us that we should join the Party, or else they would take us to KHAD." [Mohammad Ashraf, former student at Ahmad Shah Baba Academic High School in Kandahar. Interview with Barnett Rubin in Quetta, October 3, 1984.]

The Party brings this pressure against teachers as well.

-- "There are very few left of the teachers we had before. All the rest of the teachers are new. And some of them are completely unqualified. Often they are simple high school graduates. They don't have the education to be teachers. But the former teachers, some of them are in prison, some of them have fled, and some have been killed." [Mohammad Gul, former student, also quoted above.]

-- "One time the Party members came to him [a high school teacher in Kabul], and they asked him to join the Party. Only he refused because he was a Muslim, he was a very religious man. Then for some time they were not bothering him, but afterwards they came and asked him again. But he would not join them. Then at night some of the people from KHAD, they took him away. And after two days his wife and children, when they opened the door in the morning, they saw his body in front of the door." [Testimony of his brother-in-law, a doctor now living in Atlanta, Georgia, to Barnett Rubin, May 10, 1984.]

The Democratic Organization of the Youth of Afghanistan is said to claim 125,000 members.\*/ The main function of the student members of the Party organization is to act as the eyes and ears of the KHAD in the high school, by spying on students, interrogating them, and even arresting them.

-- "There was a youth organization in the school. Its main work was that in each class there were 1, 2, or 3 students who reported on the students' talking with each other. In addition to this youth organization, there was

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\*/ Komsomoli Tadzhikistan, (USSR), September 28, 1984.

also a unit of KHAD in the school, among the students, and we knew it. Every time there were discussions or something against the government there would be arrests of the students. Simply because they had talked about something. We knew who was a member of the youth organization, but we didn't know who was in the second one, the KHAD unit. It worked in secret. We knew about this secret organization, because it happened several times that when we had discussions among friends, which normally no one should hear about, when we got to the youth organization, they asked us about it. The secretary of the organization interrogated us." [Testimony of Mohammad Gul, also quoted above.]

-- "There were about 400 students left. Many had left school. Out of those 400 about 50 were arrested by the KHAD. For instance [name deleted] is still in prison in Kandahar. He was one of the mujahedin, and he refused to join the Party. He was arrested in school. People came from the KHAD, surrounded the school, and took him to the jail in a jeep. This was about a year ago." [Testimony of Mohammad Ashraf, also quoted above.]

Teachers cannot be trusted:

"Another thing that put pressure on the students was that we couldn't discuss things too much with our teachers, even technical things, because if the teacher ever got angry with us, he could take away our high school registration and send us to the army." [Mohammad Gul, also quoted above.]

Universities: Before the coup there were two universities functioning in Afghanistan, in Kabul and Jalalabad. It is estimated that 70 percent of Kabul University's staff have left, been arrested or been killed since 1978:\*/

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\*/ See for example, "Afghanistan: Hassan Kakar," Index on Censorship, February 1984, p. 43.



"When I was in Afghanistan, in Zaher Shah's time, we had 1,000 staff in the University. Now at present there are about 200 or 300 in Kabul. But what happened to the 700? Probably 100 were killed or executed in prison. The rest, most of them defected, they disappeared, finished. They are in different parts of the world." [Professor Sayed M. Yusuf Elmi, interview with Jeri Laber and Barnett Rubin in Peshawar, September 21, 1984.]

The student body has also shrunk, although reports differ on its size and composition. Most recent observers agree that the student body is now over half female. Young men of university age do not receive exemption from military service for attending the university unless they are also involved in some kind of security work for the Party. Working for the KHAD, for instance, is one of the few means of obtaining a legal exemption from conscription. Studying in the Soviet Union is another way, and more Afghans are now undertaking higher studies there than in Afghanistan.\*

Kabul University is composed of 12 faculties, each led by a dean. Since 1978 the government has appointed new deans to each faculty, all of them young and without academic qualifications. Professor Elmi identified the new dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences as Inayat Sharif, a Parchami whose academic background consists of an M.A. in journalism

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\*/ Olivier Roy, "La politique de pacification soviétique en Afghanistan," op. cit.

from Cairo University. Previously he had worked in the broadcasting unit of the Ministry of Information. The others, he said, are "similar or worse."\*/ The new dean of the Faculty of Literature, Abdul Rashid, is a former broadcaster for Radio Afghanistan and the brother-in-law of Suleiman Layeq, Minister of Tribes and Nationalities.\*\*/ The new dean of the Faculty of Law and Political Science is a former high school teacher, Sameh Qarar, who was elevated to Professor of Education after the coup, and later to the position of dean.\*\*\*/

Faculties are increasingly dominated by Soviet staff. In 1983, according to Kabul New Times, 60 percent of the teachers at Kabul University were from the "socialist countries:"\*\*\*\*/

"Our Afghan professors, as I told you, some of them were killed and defected, most of them defected, and so they were replaced by Parchamis, Khalqis, and of course Russians were there, advisors. Sometimes they were called professor, but they were not professors, they were illiterate, some of them. They were going to the classes and teaching in

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\*/ Interview in Peshawar, September 21, 1984.

\*\*/ Information given by a former colleague in an interview with Barnett Rubin in Alexandria, Virginia, March 25, 1984.

\*\*\*/ Testimony of a former rector of Kabul University interviewed by Jeri Laber and Barnett Rubin in Peshawar, September 24, 1984.

\*\*\*\*/ Edition of May 22, 1983; cited by Olivier Roy, "La politique de pacification sovietique en Afghanistan, op. cit.

Farsi [Persian]. Some of them had Persian interpreters. They taught in Russian and had interpreters. In different faculties the number varied. For instance in our faculty there were 12 Russian advisors and lecturers and teachers. The bulk of the Russians were in the philosophy department. They taught, of course, philosophy of Marx, Engels, that sort of job." [Professor Elmi, also quoted above.]

Like the high schools, the University distributes materials from the Soviet Union and socialist bloc:

"In every Faculty there is a 'Friendship Room.' In this room they put the pictures of Lenin, Marx, Engels, and all Communist works, periodicals, magazines from Russia, from Eastern European countries, from Cuba." [Professor Elmi, also quoted above.]

There have been many changes in the curriculum, despite the resistance of some of the Afghan professors.

-- "I taught in Kabul University in the faculty of Social Sciences for about 25 years. I am the most senior professor of that faculty. After the coup of April [1978] the Russian advisors came to the different faculties, and they came to our faculty, and they changed the whole curriculum. They dropped some subjects and they introduced new subjects. Particularly, they dropped History of Islamic Art. This subject was taught by me for the last 12 years. They said these subjects are not very important, they are not 'scientific.' Particularly History of Islamic Art and History of Islamic Civilization. I am the Professor of History of Islamic Civilization. So they dropped History of Islamic Art. I told them that this is not good. We are Muslims, and students like to learn and understand something about Islamic art. It should not be removed from the curriculum. But they didn't

listen. They said, 'No, no, this is not important. Anyhow, we will teach this subject as part of the other subjects. For instance archeology, ancient and modern. We will teach Islamic Art in these subjects. There is no question of a separate subject for Islamic Art.' ...

"New subjects were introduced. For instance dialectical materialism, history of the worker's movement, history of Russia, Spanish language, and Russian language. A lady and a gentleman from Cuba taught Spanish language, history of Cuba, and history of Latin American literature." [Professor Elmi, also quoted above.]

-- "Before the coup we hired people just like everywhere else, in particular our system was similar to the French. But after the Communist coup, they would give preference to hiring professors who were Marxists. It was very clear. The rector, the council of the professors, the Ministry of Higher Education, they said it openly. Since, during the time I stayed there [after the coup] the number of former professors, the staff that we had built up over a long time, kept diminishing, the Faculty was being emptied out of professors, they recruited new professors, young students, who were not the best, but who were faithful to Marxist ideas. They hired them as lecturers, teachers. But they were not the best." [A former rector of Kabul University. Interview with Jeri Laber and Barnett Rubin in Peshawar, September 24, 1984.]

The professors who remain are continually watched and pressured to conform ideologically in their teaching:

"Before the coup, under the monarchy and also under the Daoud regime, the professors could express different points of view about different matters of law and political

science. But after the coup the professors could defend only one point of view, the Marxist explanation of social phenomena. What they call 'scientific.' They enforced it by very subtle means. In each faculty, in each class we had some stooge, some Communist spy. When he heard that a professor was teaching something that did not conform to the official ideology, he would sabotage the professor, protest to the secret police that this professor is anti-progressive, anti-national, he is in the pay of the C.I.A. I tried my best to conform, but I felt that they didn't believe me." [Former rector of Kabul University, also quoted above.]

Students in the Party organization at the university spy on their professors and also on other students. During 1980 and 1981, students who were organizing public demonstrations and circulating "night letters" were often called out of classes, dormitories or the library to find the KHAD waiting for them with a jeep to take them away for interrogation. Open protest is no longer possible:

"At the University, other problems await young Afghans . . . Students recounted them in a few words, whispered quickly, out of the presence of our official 'guide.' 'Blackmail, spying, lack of freedom.' Thanks to constant surveillance, the regime seems to have gained control of the University."\*/

As in the high schools, Party members enjoy various privileges.

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\*/ Yves Heller, Agence France Presse, Kabul, May 10, 1983.

-- "In admission preference is given to the students who have Party cards. The Party students can choose to go to whatever faculty they wish. ... Of course he may be illiterate. He can't study. He doesn't know a word about science, botany, chemistry. But he can be admitted to the Faculty of Science. And he will be promoted. Because the teachers know he is Parchami. And moreover, these students are absent from the class for 3 or 4 months. For instance in my case, my students were absent. Five or six students were absent for 4 months. When they returned, I asked, 'Where have you been? How will you take the examination?' Then he showed a letter from the [Party] Committee that he was doing 'social work,' he was on duty, so please give him a passing grade. So he will pass the exam!" [Professor Elmi, also quoted above.]

-- "When the civil war intensified, most of the Party cadres were students, and they had to go to the countryside to fight against the resistance. So they proclaimed a decree according to which students who spent 3 months at the front would be promoted automatically. That is the term: automatic promotion. They didn't have to take the exams." [Former rector of Kabul University, also quoted above.]

The Minister of Higher Education of the Kabul government announced at an official meeting in August 1983 that 12,000 Afghan university students were in the USSR. This is over twice the number of students now at Kabul University. Some of the students are forced to go against their will:

"In 1980 I participated in some student demonstrations and a student strike at Kabul University . . . . Some of the Soviet officials noticed my participation at these events. They reported them to my father. It was decided that my

behavior and appearance at these functions were becoming an embarrassment to my father's political position. As such, the Soviets applied a great amount of pressure to have me sent out of the country. As a result, I was offered a scholarship to attend the Second Medical Institute in Moscow. I was forced to accept this scholarship. In March of 1982 I became ill, and I returned home. I was only able to leave the Soviet Union and return home to Afghanistan because I had a doctor's letter describing the nature of my illness."\*/

High school and even primary school students have also been sent to the Soviet Union by the thousands for a variety of programs.

- Aminullah Sepahizadeh, a former state's attorney, told us in Peshawar on September 30, 1984, that he knew of small children being sent to programs in Termez, Uzbekistan, against their parents' wishes.
- According to an Associated Press report of April 16, 1984, Radio Kabul has stated that 1,500 Afghan students will be sent each year to the Soviet Union.
- The Associated Press, in a November 13, 1984, dispatch, cited Western diplomatic reports that Soviet authorities in Afghanistan were sending thousands of primary-school Afghan children to the Soviet Union for "at least ten years of indoctrination into Communism and the Soviet way of life." They reported the departure on November 5, 1984, of 870 Afghan children between the ages of 7 and 9, with weeping parents seeing them off at Kabul Airport.

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\*/ Affidavit submitted by a young woman from Kabul in support of her application for political asylum in the U.S. Her father was a government official later forced to resign because of differences with Soviet advisors. Agence France Presse, Peshawar, June 8, 1980, reported that 400 women students who had participated in demonstrations had been forced to go to the Soviet Union.

All aspects of cultural policy have been Sovietized. French Afghanistan expert Olivier Roy claims that cultural policy for Afghanistan is formulated in Tashkent, and points out that the Director Azimov of the Academy of Sciences in Tashkent visits Kabul twice a month to supervise policy. Roy points out, as an example:

"A Swiss architect (Mr. Bucherer de Liestal), who proposed in 1974 the construction of an ethnological museum in Kabul, received a positive response in the spring of 1983 from ... the Academy of Sciences of Tashkent."<sup>\*</sup>/

Only Russian (and a few Indian) films are now shown in Kabul, and schoolchildren are bussed to see the Russian ones.<sup>\*\*</sup>/ One of our interpreters, who had returned to Kabul to see his family a little more than a year ago, told us that it was becoming increasingly difficult to live in Kabul without some knowledge of the Russian language.

#### Political Parties

Formally organized political parties never became fully institutionalized in Afghanistan before the coup. The parties that had grown up were largely centered around

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<sup>\*</sup>/ Olivier Roy, "La politique de pacification soviétique en Afghanistan," op. cit.

<sup>\*\*</sup>/ Afghan Information Centre Monthly Bulletin, July 1984.



publications such as Parcham, Khalq and Afghan Mellat and enjoyed varying degrees of toleration, depending on the political situation.

Today, however, there is one official political party, the ruling People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (P.D.P.A.), while all others are outlawed. Membership in the P.D.P.A. is required for a wide variety of jobs, while membership in other parties is a crime.

Anyone possessing a membership card in any of the Islamic parties based in Peshawar is, of course, subject to arrest, regardless of whether a specific unlawful act has been committed.\*

- One of the young men who had formerly lived with Fr. de Beaurecueil received a 10-year sentence for possession of a card of the Hezb-e Islami.
- Farid, who had studied nursing at a vocational school in Kabul, told us in Peshawar on September 23, 1984: "They arrested one guy in my school. They found he had a card of the Hezb-e Islami. I have no idea what happened to him. He was arrested about 15 months ago, and he is still in prison."

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\*/ Many Afghans carry membership cards in the resistance parties, even in Kabul. A former high school biology and chemistry teacher, Dad Mohammad, who was carrying a party card when he was arrested in 1980, explained to us in Peshawar on September 26, 1984, that the resistance also runs checks on people's identities, so that it is sometimes worth the risk to carry such a card.

The largest leftist party in the armed resistance, which also organized many of the student demonstrations in Kabul, was SAMA,<sup>\*/</sup> led and founded by Abdul Majid Kalakhani. Kalakhani was captured and executed in June 1980. In July 1982 the KHAD succeeded in arresting 19 members of SAMA's central committee. The family of one, Engineer Zamari Sadiq, subsequently learned of his execution; the fate of the others is unknown.<sup>\*\*/</sup>

A campaign of arrests directed against the "extreme" left beginning in August 1981 led to the arrest of several hundred people. Among those arrested was Osman Landai, leader of the Maoist Shola-e Javed (Eternal Flame), which advocated armed resistance, although it is unclear to what extent this tiny group managed to practice it. Agence France Presse reported from Islamabad on August 12, 1981, that 17 members of this group had been sentenced to 16 years in prison the week before. The KHAD has also arrested members of Rahai (Liberation), a splinter from Shola-e Javed. In May 1984 Bakhtar News Agency announced that two members of this group had been tried for "subversive activities."

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<sup>\*/</sup> SAMA is an acronym for Sazman-e Azadbakhsh-e Mardom-e Afghanistan, the Liberation Organization of the People of Afghanistan. It is often described as Maoist. There are other more orthodox anti-Soviet Marxist-Leninist parties, such as Shola-e Javed and Rahai.

<sup>\*\*/</sup> "Democratic Republic of Afghanistan: Background Briefing on Amnesty International's Concerns," October 1983.

Afghan Mellat (Afghan nation) is a Pashtun nationalist party that describes itself as social democratic. It was founded by Ghulam Ahmad Farhad, former mayor of Kabul. In December 1982 a number of members of Afghan Mellat were arrested. In May 1983 the Afghan news agency announced that all members of the "core" of Afghan Mellat had been arrested. Amnesty International has published the names of 18 members arrested at that time. Mohammad Nabi Omar Khel, a civil engineer and member of Afghan Mellat whom we interviewed in Peshawar on September 27, 1984, described a special section of KHAD, run by Russian advisors, that was in charge of interrogating him and other Afghan Mellat prisoners.\*/

The KHAD also arrests members of the Khalq faction of the Party suspected of anti-Parcham or anti-Soviet sentiments. Amnesty International published the names of two government officials, Pal Mohammad and Mohammad Hashem, arrested together with 20 schoolteachers in May 1983, reportedly for Khalqi activities or sympathies.\*\*/

Membership in the P.D.P.A., on the other hand, is virtually compulsory for those in positions considered important. We have already described the pressures on students and teachers. In government offices, too, civil

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\*/ See also Afghan Information Centre Monthly Bulletin, August 1984.

\*\*/ Amnesty International, "Background Briefing ...," op. cit., p. 10.

servants are subjected to pressures. Shah Mahmud Baasir was Director General of Economic Analysis in the Ministry of Planning when the coup occurred, but he lost his job:

"Many times I was asked to join the Party. I was deprived of my rights. I had a good job. They made me a school inspector in the Ministry of Education with a much lower rank than before." [Interview with Jeri Laber and Barnett Rubin in Quetta, October 2, 1984.]

Sometimes even seemingly insignificant jobs require Party membership. One of our interpreters told us that she had been working in a new computer center, learning to use an IBM under the guidance of an Indian engineer. Six months before we met her in Peshawar on September 23, 1984, she had lost her job in Kabul because of her refusal to join the Party.

### Religion

The most important Islamic religious institutions in Afghanistan are the educational institutions (madrasas), whose teachers are generally known as maulawis; the mosques, where the prayer leader is known as a mullah; and the Sufi orders. The principal Sufi orders in Afghanistan are the Qaderiya and the Naqshbandiya. The Cheshtiya order has a significant following in western Afghanistan. Under Taraki and Amin, religious dignitaries were arrested, tortured and killed along with other members of Afghanistan's traditional elite. During this period madrasas were closed and the two

Sufi orders with influence in the capital (Qaderiya and Naqshbandiya) were closed down and much of their leadership killed. The leader of the Qaderiya order fled to Pakistan, where he founded one of the traditionalist resistance parties; the leader of the Naqshbandiya order was killed, and one of his nephews now heads another traditionalist resistance party in Pakistan.

The regime of Babrak Karmal has proclaimed its fidelity to Islam and has not continued the open, massive persecution of religious figures. Some madrasas are still operating in Kabul, with the government's financial support. The government pays salaries to mullahs and supports the mosques. The Shiite madrasas of the Hazaras, however, remain closed.\*

The government has organized an association of "progressive" religious scholars, but we have not been able to determine how it operates. There are reports that the KHAD works among religious teachers to pressure them to interpret the Koran and other texts in a way favorable to the regime:

"The P.D.P.A. employs Islam in attempts to gain credibility both internally and externally. The Religious Affairs Directorate is funded by the KHAD and a special liaison committee, known as

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\* / Testimony of Abdul Samad Akbari, a religious scholar who serves on the Council of Unity of the Islamic Revolution in Hazarajat (the Shura). Interview with Barnett Rubin in Quetta, October 3, 1984.

"KHAD-66," has been established to supervise the progress of religious manipulation. Three Soviet advisers specialize in this work in Kabul. All the directorate's religious tracts are vetted by these advisers, while an association with the KHAD is a condition of membership of the Afghans' Supreme Council of Ulema in Kabul. The KHAD has also created the Society of Islamic Scholars and the Promotion of Islamic Traditions, headed by Maulavi Abdul Aziz ...."\*/

The Sufi orders cannot operate openly. The headquarters of the Qaderiya and the Naqshbandiya in Kabul are closed. The Cheshtiya order, which had lost 300 members under Taraki, and whose madrasas had been closed, finally abandoned its headquarters in Chesht-e Sharif in western Afghanistan in 1981. The Sufis took their libraries to the mountains, where they now run schools and sessions of religious devotion (zehr) under the protection of their own mujahedin.\*\*/

#### Medicine

Since 1978, most of Afghanistan's doctors have been arrested, killed or pressured into leaving the country. Many of them were under suspicion because they had been educated abroad or had contacts with foreigners.

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\*/ John Fullerton, The Soviet Occupation of Afghanistan, Hong Kong: Far Eastern Economic Review, 1983, p. 121.

\*\*/ Olivier Roy reported in Les Nouvelles d'Afghanistan, op. cit., March 1983, that he had visited the new headquarters of the Chestiya order in the summer of 1982.

- Richard Reeves, in an article in The New Yorker, October 1, 1984, quotes Dr. Mohammad Mohmand, a Kabul surgeon now directing a hospital in Peshawar, as saying that of 1,200 physicians in Afghanistan before 1978, only 200 now remain.
- Abdul Wahid, a former student from Jaghori, told us in Quetta on October 3, 1984, that all the doctors in Jaghori had been arrested.
- General Naik Mohammad Azizi, former head physician of the Military Medical School in Kabul, who defected in early 1983, said that two thirds of the military doctors had left the country since 1978 and that of 20 military doctors trained in the Soviet Union in the previous two years, 8 were in Pakistan, 3 were in West Germany, and 3 had been killed. [Agence France Presse, Peshawar, January 18, 1983.]

Some doctors leave because of impossible working conditions due to the war.

"Alikhel said he could not tolerate conditions at the Afghan children's institute in Kabul where he worked. Because of fighting and mortar attacks in and around the city, he said, the hospital frequently was without electricity. 'There was no way to sterilize instruments,' he said, claiming that operations sometimes were performed with unclean instruments. 'It was horrible to see small children with their fingers and arms and legs blown off by anti-personnel mines' in Kabul, he said." [Testimony of Dr. Mohammad Bahadur Alikhel, The Muslim, Rawalpindi, September 26, 1984.]

Civilians wounded in the countryside, unless they are fortunate enough to be near one of the rare clinics run by Afghan or French doctors in resistance-held areas, must go to

Kabul or a regional center for medical attention. Often, however, they are afraid that they will be arrested or interrogated there. Dr. Patrick David told us in an interview in Peshawar on September 22, 1984, that the parents of 4 boys wounded by an exploding shell in Baraki Barak were afraid to send them to Kabul.

Some doctors have placed their skills in the service of torture.

- "They sent me to a doctor. So six months after the torture they were checking me, is there any mark of the torture on my body. There was a doctor in Pol-e Charkhi in the jail hospital. But he didn't check anything. He just wrote, 'He was not tortured. There is no mark of torture.' So I showed some places, but he said that, 'You maybe fell from a tree. This does not prove.'" [Testimony of Mohammad Nabi Omar Khel, engineer and torture victim. Interview with Jeri Laber and Barnett Rubin in Peshawar, September 27, 1984.]
  
- "They would follow these tortures until they nearly die. Then a doctor would come and give an injection to make them feel better. Then they would start again." [Testimony of Razia, former university student and torture victim. Interview with Jeri Laber and Barnett Rubin in Peshawar, September 23, 1984.]



Law\*/

"To me it seems very strange to talk about the legal system or the law in Afghanistan, because everything is done in service of Russia's strategic interest. There are courts in Afghanistan, but we cannot say there is any justice. Everything is in the hands of the KHAD."

M.N. Zalmy, lawyer, Executive Councillor of the National Committee for Human Rights in Afghanistan. Interview with Jeri Laber and Barnett Rubin in Peshawar, September 29, 1984.

Before the coup the Afghan legal system was a combination of Islamic and secular law. There were simple religious courts operating in the countryside and a number of levels of appeals courts. Lawyers, judges and other legal officials were trained abroad -- in the West, especially France, for secular law, and in Pakistan, India and Egypt for religious law -- or in the Faculties of Shariah (Islamic law) and Law and Political Science at Kabul University. In response to complaints of corruption, efforts were underway to improve the training of gazis (Islamic judges) and to introduce a number of reforms.\*\*/

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\*/ See also, Chapter IV (Trials, Sentences, Executions).

\*\*/ See Louis Dupree, Afghanistan, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971, and, for the Daoud period, Dupree, "Toward Representative Government in Afghanistan: Part I: The First Five Steps" and "Part II: Steps Six through Nine -- and Beyond," American Universities Field Staff Reports, 1978, nos. 1 and 14.

Like members of other professional groups, lawyers were subjected to arrest, torture and killing under Taraki and Amin. M.N. Zalmy, a U.S. trained lawyer who is now working in Peshawar as Executive Councillor of the National Committee for Human Rights in Afghanistan, told us that the Bar Association was destroyed under Taraki, and that since then the legal system has been completely politicized. Professor Majrooh of the Afghan Information Centre noted that many lawyers had been arrested at that time.

After the invasion, members of the legal profession who remained found themselves with little to do. Laws are enacted by Decree of the Revolutionary Council. Professor Abdul Salam Azimi, head of the Ministry of Justice's legislation and research institute, who defected in 1982, said on October 27 of that year in an interview on Karachi Radio that laws being enacted in Afghanistan were translated from Soviet texts, and that the Afghan Cabinet had no power to reject them.\*/

The administration of the system of justice has been brought under Soviet influence.

-- Sayed Gharib Nawaz, formerly a chief justice of the Kabul Civil Court, says that the country's Supreme Court has been taken over by Soviet advisers and that only about 50 of Afghanistan's 250 courts are functioning.\*\*/

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\*/ U.S.S.R. and the Third World, November 7, 1982-March 6, 1983.

\*\*/ United Press International, May 15, 1984.

-- "At the beginning, there were no Russian advisors, but when Babrak came to power, the advisors came not only to the State Attorney's Office but to all the departments all over the country. One man, Dzhabarov, was the advisor in charge of the whole Ministry of Justice. He was hiring all the different officers based on their party membership, not their talent. Then we got a letter from the Ministry of Justice saying that we would have to follow new procedures, based on a book written by a Russian judge. I asked, 'What happened to Islam?' Based on their philosophy, they did not consider as criminals those who acted against society. They could use these criminals to do their spying. For them the only crime is to be anti-Communist and anti-government. I decided to leave." [Testimony of Aminullah Sepahizadeh, former state's attorney. Interview with Jeri Laber and Barnett Rubin in Peshawar, September 30, 1984.]

Col. Mohammad Ayoub Assil, a professor of criminology at the Kabul police academy who defected in 1982, described changes in the legal system:

"After the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan the structure of the police was changed, and the nature of police duties as well . . . Punishment, torture, insulting citizens, searching homes, shadowing and harrassing people and the confiscation of their properties were all the order of the day. The different legal guarantees and the practice of the penal code has practically disappeared. The authority of judges and the public prosecutor has been transferred to the police . . . . The famous principle that 'no act can be considered a crime unless it is proven in a court of law' has disappeared from our system. The fact that a crime is an individual act has also disappeared, and members of families and close relatives of the accused, contrary to legal procedures,

were also involved in the crimes. The legal definition of crime lost its meaning and importance; instead any act against the interest of the Russians was considered a crime."\*/

B. Repression of the Individual

"The city is in the grip of fear, which was visible in all the Afghans we managed to meet. This fear, they said, is methodically maintained by the secret police of the Afghan regime, the KHAD, 'a veritable octopus which is continually spreading its tentacles' over the capital . . . Stories of disappearances, arrests, spying are plentiful in Kabul, . . . where the KHAD has become not just a state within a state, but the state itself."

Yves Heller, Agence France  
Presse, Kabul, May 9, 1983.

The Afghan regime and its Soviet allies maintain and enforce control in the cities through fear instilled in a terrorized population, aware of the ever present possibility of arbitrary arrest, torture, imprisonment and execution.

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\*/ International Afghanistan Hearings, op. cit., p. 109-110.

## House Searches and Arrests

"My neighbors, everyone was afraid in their homes. They were putting two locks instead of one, and they were afraid that tonight maybe Russians will take me. Usually we could hear kids crying from all neighborhoods, especially when it was dark at night, and we could hear them more clearly. Then the following day we learned that a neighbor was taken from his house."

Anwar, former office worker  
from Kabul, interview with  
Patricia Gossman and Hans  
Wahl, Chicago, April 15,  
1984.

The KHAD continually arrests people and in a variety of ways. Sometimes the militia surrounds a house at night and proceeds to search it before making arrests, ripping apart pillows, tearing clothes and going through all books and papers. In another common procedure, young men are stopped by street blockades and whisked away to join the army. Troops have been known to blockade an entire neighborhood while KHAD agents search the houses. Students are called from libraries or classrooms only to find themselves in a jeep on the way to a torture center.

Most arrests in central Kabul are made by KHAD agents in plain clothes, sometimes assisted by the militia or Afghan soldiers. In some cases, Soviet agents are also present:

"There was a Russian-made car called Volga. I got to the car, and I saw two armed Russians sitting there in the back seat. They were wearing just very normal clothes,

not in military dress, just ordinary suits, with ties." [Anwar, former office worker from Kabul, arrested in November 1980. Also quoted above.]

In outlying areas or in massive searches, Soviet troops themselves may conduct house-to-house searches, as they do in the countryside.

There is no due process:

"Arrests take place for the most part without warrant or even identification of the arresting officer. These arrests usually take place at night. No reasons are given for the person's arrest, and the family is not informed of where the prisoner is taken."\*/

When people are arrested outside their homes, their families do not even know that they have been arrested.

- The elder brother of Razia, a university student who was arrested in 1981, told us in Peshawar in a September 23, 1984, interview, that "nobody in the house knew where she was. Finally a friend in her class came to the house and said the KGB had taken her. Then we tried to find her, and after five days we finally learned that she was in the women's prison in Sedarat."
- "The following summer [1982] a husband had to take his wife to the maternity hospital to give birth. Since he had no one to leave them with, he locked his 3 children (1, 3, and 4 years old) in the house. At the

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\*/ Amnesty International, Torture in the Eighties, p. 182.

hospital, when complications arose during the birth, the doctors asked the husband for certain medicines, which he had to go to the pharmacy to buy. Between the hospital and the pharmacy the husband was arrested by soldiers who demanded his papers. The soldiers did not listen to any explanation or plea, and he was sent off. After three days, he had the good fortune to find an understanding officer, who let him go. When he returned to the hospital, the poor man found that his wife and newborn child had died, for lack of the medicines. At home the one-year-old had died, and the other two children were in comas from lack of food. I must stop; I do not have the courage to go on."\*/

Arrests are based on "evidence" received from spies and informers, from suspects interrogated under torture, or, occasionally, from electronic eavesdropping.

-- Anwar-ul-Haq, a physics student at an advanced institute, was arrested while driving his car early in the morning. During interrogation, KHAD agents told him they had received a report from an informer that he was a member of the Hezb-e Islami. [Interview with Jeri Laber and Barnett Rubin in Peshawar, September 29, 1984.]

-- A former employee of the Pashtuni Tejarati Bank told how he and his brother were arrested in September 1982 after others gave their names under torture: "One of my brothers was active in the Hezb-e Islami, distributing night letters. Some of his friends were arrested while they were distributing night letters, and after a week about 15 to 20 KHAD agents came to

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\*/ Letter from an Afghan woman in Kabul to a friend in France. Reprinted in Les Nouvelles d'Afghanistan, op. cit., June-August, 1983, p. 6.

the house in the early morning. They arrested my elder brother and also me. I had thought about joining the Hezb-e Islami, but actually I had not, because I was afraid of getting caught. But I had discussed it with my brother's friends. During the interrogation, some of them said that I was going to join them." [Interview with Jeri Laber and Barnett Rubin in Peshawar, September 25, 1984.]

-- "They said I had said in front of people that I hate the government, and my Afghan people lacked freedom, and Afghanistan would be a free country soon, and Afghan people are freedom lovers, and they would never come under Russian yoke. I said I hadn't spoken these words. They said, 'We have your tape, and we have it with us.' I said, 'Why don't you turn it on so I can listen?' They turned on the tape, but after I heard the tape I denied I had spoke, because the tape seemed to be a Russian tape and did not catch the sound very well; you could hardly tell that it was my voice." [Interview with Anwar, also quoted above.]

-- "We have some kind of instruments. We would park the car and we would drop something like a microphone to listen from a distance. But it was difficult to put the microphones, because in Afghanistan the houses are very close together. Anyway, we had a lot of other programs." [Testimony of a former officer of the KHAD. Interview with Jeri Laber and Barnett Rubin in Peshawar, September 30, 1984.]

Sometimes the KHAD arrests people for the sole purpose of obtaining information from them about another member of their family. Torture is used to get them to talk:

"Shahnaz and Natila Ulumi, believed to be 21 and 18 years old respectively, were arrested with 11 other members of their family in the first week of June 1983. The 13 members of the family were taken to



the KHAD interrogation center in the Sedarat (the former official residence of the Prime Minister) in Kabul. The family is said to have been closely questioned about the activities and whereabouts of Khozhman Ulumi, the brother of Shahnaz and Natila, who is reputed to be a leader of Rahayee, a Maoist group that is active in the resistance to the government of President Babrak Karmal ... Amnesty International has received allegations that Shahnaz and Natila Ulumi were ill-treated and tortured with electric shocks whilst they were detained at the Sedarat."\*/

House searches accompanying arrests are thorough and vindictive:

"They did not say who they were, but we knew they were KHAD, because we saw they had a Volga car with a double antenna and a license plate 22000 ... They sent someone to search every room, but they could not find anything. Then they called with a radio to their central office. They waited at the house, and after some time a second group of men came, all in some uniform, and they made a more precise investigation. They tore open everything in the house, pillows, cushions, mattresses. They took all these things off the beds and cut them open. They tore all of the clothes hanging in the closets. They made a complete search of the kitchen. They looked in the sink, the chimney, the well. And they went over the whole inside and courtyard of the house with some electric machines [apparently metal detectors]. They were doing this for

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\*/ Amnesty International, "Background Briefing: Afghanistan," pp. 7-8.

four hours, until 3 o'clock in the afternoon." [Testimony of a former accountant from Kabul whose brother was arrested in August 1982. Interview with Patricia Gossman and Barnett Rubin in Alexandria, Virginia, March 22, 1984.]

When the resistance carries out an assassination or some other operation, the security forces often respond by searching houses or shops in the area and arresting people, who are sent to jail or, in the case of young men, to the army. In other cases mass searches are conducted at random.

-- "During Ramazan [June-July 1984] the mujahedin killed an Afghan soldier in Topkhana Bazaar in the old city [of Kandahar]. His body was lying there for an hour or so. ... For this reason, about 5 or 6 shops away from where he was killed, the militia ... took a small boy and an old man and imprisoned them. Nobody knows what happened to them. I saw it myself." [Shah Mahmud Baasir, economist. Interview with Barnett Rubin in Quetta, October 3, 1984.]

-- "There is much fear of attacks by mujahedin. Whenever there is an attack, they encircle a whole neighborhood. They start to search the houses. That is a time when they can catch the young men for military service. And in the streets there are systematic searches. Every five or ten minutes you are stopped by people who ask to see your papers. My own house was searched several times." [Mohammad Gul, former student at the Mechanics High School in Kabul. Interview with Jeri Laber and Barnett Rubin in Peshawar, September 30, 1984.]

-- "With all of its doors flung open, the antediluvian yellow Volga is blocked up against the sidewalk: its occupants are pulled out by 3 armed soldiers who check their identity papers. A few meters away, in a military truck, two young Afghans

are prostrated. Captured several hours earlier in a taxi that resembled the old Volga, they will end up in an army barracks that same day. These blockades are daily occurrences in Kabul, where every young man is treated as a suspect." [Yves Heller, Agence France Presse, Kabul, May 10, 1983.]

-- "They took us to Kandahar Jail in the Sarpuza quarter. Inside the prison they had a separate place for those arrested for military service. There were about 150 people there. Then they took us to another room, with about 40 to 45 other people. There was no carpet, and the floor was wet. It was Ramazan; we were fasting and could eat only at night, but they did not give us any food. For about 20 days we were just given a piece of bread in the evening, nothing else. Then some Russian advisors along with Afghan soldiers registered us for military service. We were sent to Mazar-e Sharif. We spent 4 days there, and then 12 of us escaped. We came back to Kandahar -- it took us 24 days." [Mohammad Ashraf, 18, former high school student from Kandahar. Interview with Barnett Rubin in Quetta, October 3, 1984.]

### Torture

"The day of freedom and rebirth of all the brother peoples of Afghanistan has finally come after terrible suffering and torment. The torture machine of Amin and his lieutenants, those savage butchers, imposters and killers of tens of thousands of our compatriots -- fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, sons and daughters, children and old folk -- has been smashed

today. This bloodthirsty machine is falling apart, down to its last blood-stained cog."

Babrak Karmal, radio message to the Afghan people, December 27, 1979, quoted in The Truth About Afghanistan: Documents, Facts, Eyewitness Reports, Novosti Press Agency: Moscow, 1980, p. 83.

"Amnesty International has received persistent reports of widespread and systematic torture of political suspects in Afghanistan under the government of President Babrak Karmal, who came to power in December 1979. Testimonies and other information received by the organization indicate that torture is inflicted in detention centres throughout the country which are administered by the State Information Services, Khedamat-e Etela'at-e Dawlati, known as the KHAD .... Although Amnesty International has received reports of torture under all three governments since the 'Sawr' revolution of April 1978 ..., it was only after the formation of the KHAD in late 1979 that the practice was reported to have become systematic."

Amnesty International, "File on Torture," December 12, 1984.

After the April 1978 coup, during the governments of Taraki and Amin, torture of political prisoners was brutal and widespread. Since the December 1979 Soviet invasion and the installation of the government of President Babrak Karmal, however, torture has been fully integrated into an interrogation process that is part of a sophisticated intelligence apparatus. As Amnesty International notes in the citation above, torture is now "systematic:"

"I was arrested three times, once under Taraki, once under Amin, and once under Babrak and the Russians. Before, they were killing a lot of people without any investigation. Many of them just disappeared. But the third time they did a really deep investigation. It is much better organized, because of the Russians." [Mohammad Nabi Omar Khel, civil engineer. Interview with Jeri Laber and Barnett Rubin in Peshawar, September 27, 1984.]

All political prisoners, after arrest, are subjected to lengthy interrogation by the KHAD and its KGB advisors. Interrogation procedures invariably involve torture. Amnesty International has described the pattern of torture as follows:

"Numerous reports have indicated that the treatment meted out to suspects by KHAD agents has followed a pattern: they are arrested and taken to one of many KHAD detention centres -- Amnesty International knows of eight in Kabul alone -- where they are first subjected to various forms of deprivation and then soon afterwards intensively tortured.

"Suspects are reportedly deprived of all contact with family, lawyers or doctors, or even other prisoners, by being held incommunicado and in solitary confinement. During this period they may be continuously interrogated, threatened, and deprived of sleep or rest; cases have also been reported of detainees having been deprived of food.

"Former detainees have told Amnesty International that suspects who fail to cooperate with the KHAD are then tortured -- the methods reported have included electric shocks, beatings, burning with cigarette ends, and dousing with water.

"Detainees are also known to have been kept in shackles or bound hand and foot for prolonged periods. In some cases prisoners are reported to have been forced to watch their relatives being tortured."<sup>\*</sup>/<sub>u</sub>

The largest KHAD detention center in the country is in the Sedarat Palace in Kabul.<sup>\*\*</sup>/<sub>u</sub> Sedarat contains the central interrogation office. The KHAD headquarters is in the Sheshdarak district. The Khalqi-dominated Ministry of the Interior has its own branch of the KHAD. Besides these three, Amnesty International lists five other detention centers in Kabul where prisoners are reported to have been tortured: the office of the military branch of KHAD, KHAD-e Nezami; KHAD "Office Number Five," responsible for counter-insurgency, in Dar-ul-Aman; two private houses near the Sedarat, the Ahmad Shah Khan house and one in the Wazir Akbar Khan district; and the KHAD office in Hauzai Barikat district.<sup>\*\*\*</sup>/<sub>u</sub> Former prisoners we interviewed had been tortured in various places: Sedarat, Sheshdarak, KHAD Office Number Five and the house in Wazir Akbar Khan.

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<sup>\*</sup>/<sub>u</sub> Amnesty International, "File on Torture," December 12, 1984.

<sup>\*\*</sup>/<sub>u</sub> The Sedarat is also the site of the office of the Prime Minister. KHAD is formally part of the Prime Minister's office. Hence, whenever the KHAD takes over a new house or apartment for use as a detention center, the site is "somewhat prudishly called a 'dependency of the Prime Ministry.'" [Yves Heller, Agence France Presse, Kabul, May 9, 1983.]

<sup>\*\*\*</sup>/<sub>u</sub> "File on Torture," op. cit.

There are other centers in Kabul as well. A former bank employee whom we interviewed in Peshawar on September 25, 1984, reported being taken to a KHAD center in Kart-e Seh. A former KHAD agent described a new detention center: "In Shahrara there is a hill, and they have made rooms inside by digging tunnels. There is an underground jail there."<sup>\*</sup>/ We also interviewed a number of former prisoners who had been tortured in Pol-e Charkhi prison.

Amnesty International reports that each provincial center has its own KHAD office and detention center:

"In the city of Kandahar, there are reported to be five KHAD detention centres: its headquarters in the former offices of the Morrison-Knudsen Construction Company in Manzel Bagh; the Vilayat, formerly the office of the central government in Kandahar; the detention centre of the Khad-e Nezami (military KHAD) in the army base at Kandahar; and two private houses in the Shahr-e Nau district near the Musa Khan mosque.

"In the city of Jalalabad, the main KHAD detention centre is behind the Ningarhar University Hospital. Other towns where torture has been reported are in the towns of Faizabad (Badakhshan province) and Andkhoy (Faryab province)."<sup>\*\*</sup>/

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<sup>\*</sup>/ Interview in Peshawar, September 30, 1984. Name withheld on request.

<sup>\*\*</sup>/ "File on Torture," op. cit.

In addition, we received reports of torture in KHAD offices in Ghazni, capital of Ghazni Province, which are said to be in the Balahissar (citadel) and the Vilayat (prefecture), and in Pol-e Khomri, capital of Baghlan Province, where the KHAD offices are in the Puza-e Shan district.\*/

People arrested in Kabul are usually taken first to one of the smaller detention centers for a preliminary investigation. They are asked to confess their crimes and are left alone for various periods of time. If they do not confess, the torture begins, sometimes immediately, sometimes after a few days.

Usually, the prisoner is transferred to Sedarat, after a relatively short period of time (perhaps only a few days).\*\*/ In Sedarat the prisoner may receive another offer to cooperate, but is sooner or later subjected to more intensive torture.

Prisoners are held completely incommunicado throughout the interrogation. The frequency and intensity of the

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\*/ On Ghazni: interview with Shafaq Torialai, army officer, Paris, June 17, 1984, and with Abdul Wahid, student, Quetta, October 3, 1984. See also interview with Sarbiland, Afghan Information Centre Monthly Bulletin, February 1984. On Pol-e Khomri: interview with Azizullah, farmer, Peshawar, September 25, 1984.

\*\*/ Women and some other prisoners go immediately to Sedarat, while a few prisoners apparently stay for long periods of time in other detention centers: "Amnesty International was told of a man who was arrested by the KHAD in June 1981 and held in the Sheshdarak detention centre incommunicado until 1983." "File on Torture," op. cit.



torture appears to be carefully calibrated in relation to the political importance and physical stamina of the prisoner. When the KHAD has finished the interrogation, the prisoner is transferred to Pol-e Charkhi prison. In a few cases, the interrogation continues in Pol-e Charkhi.

Some of the most important prisoners are apparently interrogated in a special section of Pol-e Charkhi Prison. Some are kept in tiny cells where they cannot stand up or stretch out and are tortured daily for as much as a year by Soviet officers aided by a few Afghans.

In the provinces, those who are not executed upon arrest are brought first to the local KHAD office for preliminary interrogation. The more important prisoners are then transferred to a detention center in Kabul for intensive interrogation. Most are sent to Sedarat, but some apparently go to the special section of Pol-e Charkhi.

The most commonly reported methods of torture are sleep deprivation, prolonged beatings and electric shocks administered from a variety of devices and sometimes intensified by dousing the prisoner with water. There are many other methods as well, as illustrated by the following extracts from testimonies, which also illustrate the pattern of interrogation described above.

Testimony of Shafaq Torialai,\*/ 28, an army officer working for one of the resistance parties (Harakat-e Engelab-e Islami) when he was arrested in February 1982 at his base in Ghazni and taken to the KHAD office in the Ghazni citadel.

"I stayed there for 4 or 5 days. They brought me into a room. There was a bench, and they had us [the prisoners] sit down. They brought captured resistance fighters before us, and they tore out their fingernails, saying, 'This is what will happen to you, if you don't confess.' The Russians and the Afghans both did this. The majority were Russians, and there were a few interpreters. The person whose fingernails they tore out fainted several times.

"Once some of the Russians and the Afghan interpreters took us at night into the gardens of Ghazni, where there were poplar trees. They pulled down the tops of two poplars and tied ropes to them, and they tied one arm of one of the prisoners to one of the trees and the other arm to the other tree. Then they released the poplars, and the prisoner's arms were pulled off, and he was killed. They call that, 'making vests.' They told us, 'If you don't confess, this will happen to you too.'

"The afternoon of the fifth day they told me my interrogation was over, and that I would be shot. But that night they took me to Kabul. They started to torture me again in Kabul. I was in a room with such a low ceiling that it was impossible to stand up, about 1m by 1.5m, and I was there with two other prisoners. It was in Pol-e Charkhi. These were underground rooms for the most dangerous prisoners.

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\*/ Interview with Jeri Laber and Barnett Rubin in Paris, June 17, 1984.

"The torture there was always by electricity, with electric shock batons. One day during the interrogation, one of the Soviets got angry and hit me with his Kalashnikov in the mouth, and I lost 3 teeth. I was tortured 2 to 4 hours a day, every day, for about a year. There were different people torturing me. There were Afghans who spoke Pashto and there were Soviet officers. The Soviets tortured more, and they asked more questions. They did not let you sleep.

"They gave the shocks between the toes, between the fingers, on the temple. I often fell unconscious. One day they hung me up on a wall, where there were big hooks. They didn't let me sleep, eat or drink for 48 hours. My arms were stretched out wide, and the hands were tied to the hooks, and there were rings around my feet. This caused a great pain in the stomach and kidneys. The next morning they took me down and brought me a piece of bread and some water. Then they hung me upside down by the feet all day." [A few days later Soviet officers told Torialai that he had been sentenced to death, but resistance agents inside Pol-e Charkhi smuggled him out.]\*/

Testimony of Razia, \*\*/ a student at Kabul University when she was arrested and taken to Sedarat in 1981, where she stayed for a year.

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\*/ Said Noor Ahmad Hashimi, a resistance leader from Badakhshan Province, told the Chicago Sun Times, September 23, 1984, a similar story. He was tortured in the regional KHAD center in Badakhshan, then taken to Pol-e Charkhi prison, where he was "confined in a cell barely 4 feet high by 4 feet long ... a special cell, for those they would like to see suffer most." The reporter observed that 32-year-old Hashimi stoops like an old man: "His memories are of beatings and electric shock tortures at the hands of Soviet KGB agents and the Afghanistan State Information Police, the KHAD."

\*\*/ Interview with Jeri Laber and Barnett Rubin in Peshawar, September 23, 1984.

"I saw many people tortured, and I was tortured myself. Electricity, standing in cold water, keeping you from sleeping, beating, these are very normal things. They made a man stand on a board with nails coming out and beat him with chains or cables. They hung a man by the legs from the ceiling. All the men were tortured.

"For women, they would keep them from sleeping, or they would make them stand in cold water, then add a chemical, and after a half hour the skin would start to come off their feet. They made them stand barefoot in snow, gave them electric shocks, pulled out their hair, beat them with electric shock batons.

"For both women and men they have something like earphones. They attach wires to it and put it on your head and give you a shock, a harder one for the men. They attach wires to the hands and feet.

"There were men supervising the torture of the women. Sometimes they tortured them separately, sometimes together in the same room. This was a form of mental torture. For instance, they took one girl to a room, and the men from KHAD were all around her. They they brought a man, a mujahed. Then the KHAD men molested this girl, they fondled her all over the body. Then they beat the man in front of the girl. They beat that man to death, and then they left the girl alone with the dead body. This girl, Jamila, was in prison with me. She became deranged. For a whole week she could not move.

"When they took me, they gave me a paper, and said, 'Write your complete biography.' Then they asked, 'Did you write all your anti-government activity?' They took out a pistol and said, 'If you don't want to tell us, we will kill you.' They left me alone in a room for 3 or 4 hours. They came and saw I hadn't written anything, and they said, 'Now we will torture you, but electric shocks are not good for you, nice girl.' They they asked me questions for 8

hours, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., and then they started the shocks.

"There was something like a ruler -- they hit me on the knuckle, and I jumped back with the shock. They made me stand in cold water. They put some chemicals in the water and after 30 to 45 minutes the skin was coming off. They showed me a picture of myself in the demonstration. They tried to get something from me, but they couldn't. They tortured me for two months, with no sleep, and also with mental torture. They told me, 'We will bring your sister here and beat her and rape her.'

"The first day my interrogators were 3 women, Nazifa, Zarghuna and Nahib. Malia was the woman in charge of the women's jail, but they were all controlled by men. Then there were two men, Amin and Taher. The Russian advisors were also coming and telling us that Russia is a very good place, and that they were helping us. Sometimes the advisors were with uniform, sometimes without. The advisor organizes the interrogation. When they finish asking the questions, they go tell the advisor the answers. Then they come back and ask new questions. We heard from the men that the advisors sometimes give the torture for men, but we didn't see it."

Testimony of Qadratullah,\*/ 39, a farmer from just north of Kabul who was arrested in the summer of 1983.

"In Sedarat they put me in a small room. I was alone there from 9:30 in the morning to 9 at night. Then two Russians and an interpreter came, and I was under investigation. The Russian told me, 'You are an ashrar [bandit].' They accused me of burning the school in my village. They were beating me and hitting me against the

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\*/ Interview with Jeri Laber and Barnett Rubin in Peshawar, September 30, 1984.

wall. They had a table. They put my fingertips under the legs of the table and hit the table. Then they repeated this after 10 minutes. My nails were bleeding, and some of them were broken. [Then they asked a series of questions about his participation in the resistance.] Then they told me to stand. When I stood they told me to sit. Then they told me again to stand, and they were beating me on the shins while I did this. Then they left me alone till 9 o'clock the next night.

"For 5 nights they repeated the same questions. The Parchami told me, 'Your people have already confessed, and we have ways and means of making you confess.' I said I didn't know anything. Then the Parchami hit me in the stomach, and I had to lean against the wall. The Russian said to bring the wire, and the Russians connected the wires to my toes. They gave me a shock, and I fell unconscious.

"After an hour I woke up, and they told me to confess, or they would connect the wire again. [They asked many more questions, but Qadratullah did not confess to anything.] There were 2 tables. They turned me upside down. They put my head between the two tables and pushed them together. They leaned my feet against the wall and made me stretch out my arms on top of the tables, and the Parchami was beating my hands. They asked, 'Would you like to confess or not?'

"After half an hour my legs began to feel light, and my upper body felt heavy. My eyes and neck were swollen. My hands were trembling, and I lost control. I fell unconscious for a long time. When I woke up, at first I couldn't open my eyes. When I did, I saw a lot of blood on the floor. My mouth was so swollen I could not eat."

Testimony of Ghulam,\*/ 38, a shopkeeper in  
Kandahar, arrested in September 1981.

"First they took me to the headquarters of KHAD in Kandahar, which is in the house of Abdul Rahim Latif in Shahr-e Nau. For torture they took me to another house nearby, the house of Musa Khan. They told me to give the names of those I was helping. I refused and denied knowing anything about the documents. Then they started the electricity. They connected 4 wires to my toes, fingers and tongue. The wires came out of a machine with a crank like an old-fashioned telephone. It was operated by hand. They turned the crank, and I fell unconscious from the shock. Then I was thrown on the ground upside down and beaten with sticks. Then I was thrown in the water. Then they tied my hands behind me and tied my legs. I had to stand for 7 days. I just had 5 minutes rest in the evening. The KHAD people were torturing me, but every morning at 10 o'clock many Russians would come and say, 'Give me the names of people, and I will set you free.' The Russians were instructing the KHAD people what to do. Every morning the KHAD people reported to the Russians to find out what to do. We heard them talking on the telephone; it was a small place. Then I was locked in a room alone for 40 days and interrogated just once or twice. Then they let me go."

Testimony of K.,\*\*/ a student in the  
eleventh grade when he was arrested in  
1980.

"I was first taken to the KHAD office in Wazir Akbar Khan. At first they gagged me and hung me on a wall with both arms out

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\*/ Interview with Barnett Rubin in Quetta, October 3, 1984.

\*\*/ Interview with Jeri Laber and Barnett Rubin in Peshawar, September 24, 1984. Name withheld on request.

and my legs tied, and they lashed me with a cable from 8:30 to 12:30 at night. The question was, 'Tell to what organization you belong, and how many people you have killed.' I stayed in Wazir Akbar Khan 4 nights. But in the day they also tortured. They took a bandolier, a belt for holding bullets, and someone came and strangled me with that. They tried to hang me, and without asking me any questions.

"I was not given electric shocks, but I saw another boy. They tied some wires to his body, and I saw him jumping up and falling down.

"I was taken in the daytime to Sedarat in the minibus with about 25 other young people. They took us into a yard and told us, 'You will be talked to later. These are the last hours of your lives.' The next day they took papers and questionnaires and started the interrogation. I stayed in Sedarat for 25 days. Each day they interrogated me. They put my hand under a chair's leg and sat on the chair. They were beating me with Kalashnikovs and sticks. They told me, 'This is your last day.' Russians were coming in the room with their weapons and saying, 'You are basmachi' ['bandits,' a term originally used by the Soviets in referring to Central Asians who resisted their rule in the 1920s]. The most horrible thing of all was being strangled. I lost consciousness, and my face was all swollen. Then I went to Pol-e Charkhi."

We also received descriptions of torture from people who were not torture victims themselves.



-- "They hang the prisoner by one hand and one foot on the wall, and then they connect the wire to the toes or testicles. The wire comes out of a machine that plugs into an outlet. There is a switch, and a meter that shows the amount of current. There is a terminal with wires that have rings on the end to connect it to the body. You can control the amount of current. It looks like a telephone box. They put cotton in the prisoner's mouth, and start to turn the crank. When he nods his head, it means he will confess." [Testimony of a former KHAD agent, describing practices in the Sheshdarak KHAD office. Interview with Jeri Laber and Barnett Rubin in Peshawar, September 30, 1984.]

-- "We heard the moans and crying of the political prisoners being beaten by soldiers or party members in a separate building inside the prison compound. They were weeping, screaming. Once we managed to go to a canteen where we could purchase something. It was near where the political prisoners were. We could see the corridor -- the walls were covered with blood, dirty and wet. There were people who had been locked in their rooms for many months." [Mohammad Ashraf, 18, former high school student from Kandahar, describing conditions in Kandahar Jail where he was detained before being sent to military service. Interview with Barney Rubin in Quetta, October 3, 1984.]

There are reports that many prisoners have died under torture. Of those that survive, many suffer from the psychological and physical aftereffects of torture.

- "Prisoners are reported to have suffered permanent injury as a result of torture, and several are said to have died while they were being tortured. ... According to information received by Amnesty International, an internal KHAD report in late 1981 stated that four prisoners out of every 100 detained at the Sheshdarak detention centre in the preceding 12 months had died."\*/
- "My office was outside the city. One time in early 1981 I was coming to the city, and I saw a truck loaded with some people near the KHAD office in the prefecture. The driver of the truck said, 'We need some gasoline,' and we called somebody to bring it. Then I got out of my car, and I saw the truck was loaded with dead bodies. One of them, the hands were chopped with an axe or beaten with a hammer. One, I saw the blood come out of his mouth, and the other one had his head broken. Blood was all over. Usually, when the KHAD killed some people during interrogation, they carried the bodies to one of the military bases, and in the night they would bury the bodies far from the city." [Testimony of a former high police official from Kandahar. Interview with Patricia Gossman and Barnett Rubin in Alexandria, Virginia, March 23, 1984.]

Specialized items, such as those used for administering electric shocks, are not manufactured in Afghanistan. A former police official from Kandahar told us that during the monarchy, the Afghan police had imported electric shock batons from West Germany for use in controlling

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\*/ Amnesty International, "File on Torture," op. cit.

demonstrations. Sometimes, he said, they had also been used to torture criminal suspects. Col. Mohammad Ayoub Assil, a professor of criminology at the Kabul Police Academy until his defection in 1982, told Barnett Rubin in an interview in New York City on April 21, 1983, that since 1978 shock batons had been imported from East Germany. The "earphones" and the "telephone box" described to us by various torture victims are manufactured in the Soviet Union or East Germany, according to the former KHAD agent we interviewed in Peshawar on September 30, 1984. He said that he had seen markings on the equipment indicating their country of origin.

This former KHAD agent also said that the work of the KHAD is controlled by the Soviets:

"The Soviets have an office in Kabul controlling the KHAD. The ordinary work, like collecting information, can be done by Afghans. Then they take it for analysis by Soviets. The office is in a former private house on Dar-ul-Aman Road, between Habibia High School and the Soviet Embassy."\*/

Soviet advisors are present in all major detention centers, most visibly in Sedarat. In most cases, it appears to be Afghans who carry out the torture and interrogate prisoners, but they are supervised by the Soviet advisors,

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\*/ Dr. Shah Rukh Gran of the National Islamic Front of Afghanistan showed us a photograph of this office during an interview in New York City on July 23, 1984.

whom they frequently consult. In provincial cities, such as Ghazni and Pol-e Khomri, where there are sometimes not enough Afghan personnel, the Soviets conduct the interrogations themselves. The Soviets also take direct charge of the interrogation of important prisoners, both in the special section of Pol-e Charkhi and in Sedarat.

- "The very important people are taken to be questioned by the Russians. There was someone like that in my room in Sedarat. He was a Khalqi. Part of his family was captured by the Russians, and they said that he was active with the mujahedin. They searched his house and found some acids." [Testimony of a bank employee interviewed by Jeri Laber and Barnett Rubin in Peshawar, September 25, 1984.]
- "Two of the people with me in the cell in Sedarat were interrogated by Soviets. They were more 'guilty' than I was. They had been employees of the U.S. Embassy, and they took them for C.I.A. agents. Of course, they were just typists, and they had been working there with the consent of the Afghan government." [Anwar-ul-Haq, former physics student in Kabul. Interview with Jeri Laber and Barnett Rubin in Peshawar, September 29, 1984.]

Direct Soviet involvement in torture seems to be increasing.

- "For the first time, Soviet intelligence officers are personally interrogating and torturing Afghan resistance suspects as the Kremlin deepens its administrative and policymaking role in Afghanistan ... Former Afghan political prisoners living in Peshawar described in interviews how the

pattern of interrogation and torture changed at Kabul's sprawling Pol-e Charkhi prison last year as Tajiki and Pashto speaking Soviet officers replaced Afghan intelligence personnel.\*\*/

- Among the relatively few former prisoners we interviewed who had been interrogated in Kabul as recently as 1983 or 1984, Qadratullah, a farmer, reported being tortured by two Soviets with an Afghan interpreter, and a former bank employee reported that the head of the KHAD office in Kart-e Seh is a Russian who speaks Pashto and Persian. [Interviews in Peshawar on September 25 and 30, 1984.]

Dr. Najib Ahmedzai, the head of KHAD, is a graduate of a Bulgarian school for intelligence training.\*\*/ We were told that the Soviets have established a school near Kabul to teach interrogation techniques:

"I saw torture in Sheshdarak, and I also saw that some people are trained how to torture. The class was somewhere between Kabul and Paghman, in 'Company.' [An area where the headquarters of the American company that built the Kabul-Kandahar highway was located, which has come to be known as 'Company.'] I went there with someone important and saw them writing something on the blackboard. There are soundproof rooms where they beat and torture people there. They have these in the Ministry of the Interior, too. They show them theoretically and practically, and some have also gone to the Soviet Union. [Testimony of a former KHAD agent. Interview with Jeri Laber and Barnett Rubin in Peshawar, September 30, 1984.]

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\*/ Jonathan Broder, Chicago Tribune, August 26, 1984.

\*\*/ John Fullerton, The Soviet Occupation of Afghanistan, op. cit., p. 133.

Most observers agree that many KHAD agents learn their trade during 3-to 6-month training courses in the Soviet Union.\*/  
Details are not known. As the former KHAD agent we interviewed in Peshawar told us, "The KHAD students do not tell their stories. They know that they are KHAD."

#### Conditions of Detention and Imprisonment

"There was no respect for us as human beings."

Anwar-ul-Haq, former physics student, imprisoned in Sedarat and Pol-e Charkhi. Interview with Jeri Laber and Barnett Rubin in Peshawar, September 29, 1984.

After undergoing interrogation and torture in KHAD detention centers, Afghan prisoners are transferred to jails -- Pol-e Charkhi in Kabul, or smaller jails for less important prisoners in the provinces. There are even reports that some prisoners are sent to the Soviet Union to serve out their terms:

"After interrogation, they decide where to send the prisoners, some to Pol-e Charkhi, some to other units of KHAD, and some to the U.S.S.R. Most of the old people are kept here, but young people sentenced to prison for a long time are sent to the

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\*/ See interview with Abdul Majid Mangal, charge d'affaires at the Afghan Embassy in Moscow until his defection in March 1984, Afghan Realities, May 15-31, 1984. See also Roy, "La politique de pacification sovietique en Afghanistan," op. cit., and Girardet, Afghanistan, unpublished book manuscript.

U.S.S.R. They put them in special trucks after the curfew is imposed at night. They are blindfolded and taken to the airport. On one occasion, I was there. I separated some people to be sent to the airport. Dr. Baha [head of KHAD's Fifth Office] was also there, and so was Jaman Mohammadi, who is now the head of KHAD in Sheshdarak. I don't know exactly where they were going, but people were saying they were sent to Siberia." [Testimony of a former KHAD agent. Interview with Jeri Laber and Barnett Rubin in Peshawar, September 30, 1984.]

Conditions in KHAD detention centers are an integral part of the torture process, designed to break the prisoner.

-- "I was in a small room [in Sedarat] with 48 people. We could hardly sit down. There was nothing in the room -- no mattress, carpet -- it was completely empty, except for 48 people. There were small parasites, lice, everywhere. We had the right to go to the toilet one time in 24 hours, at 2 a.m., in groups of 5. There was no water to wash our hands with afterwards.\*/ There was no respect for us as human beings. The government people compared us to animals. Since once in 24 hours was not enough, we made a hole under the door to urinate. Often there were prisoners who had diarrhea. Since they couldn't wait until 2 a.m., they defecated in a small bowl. I was there for 2 months in these conditions." [Anwar-ul-Haq, former physics student. Interview with Jeri Laber and Barnett Rubin in Peshawar, September 29, 1984.]

-- "Let me tell you a story about the Soviets. A prisoner who had been in Sedarat told me in Pol-e Charkhi, 'In Sedarat I was in a dark room, and the guard of the room was

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\*/ The lack of water is not only unsanitary, but effectively makes it impossible to observe the commandments of Islam, which include washing after going to the toilet and before obligatory prayer, five times daily.

Soviet. He knew 4 words in Dari: Shoma doshman, paisa badeh. [You enemy, give money.] I lost all my money." [Qader, a former university student. Interview with Jeri Laber and Barnett Rubin in Peshawar, September 29, 1984.]

-- "I was arrested in Daulatabad on February 28, 1982. They took 80 peasants to Andkhoy prison. Throughout the journey we were blindfolded, and for the whole month I was imprisoned in Andkhoy it was the same. My cell was dark, without any light, 3 m. by 2 m. ... Then [after beatings] they took me to a subterranean prison, also in Andkhoy. There were five cells underground. There were 130 prisoners in my cell. We did not wear blindfolds, but the cell had no light. All we had to eat was dry bread."\*/

After interrogation by the KHAD, most prisoners are transferred to Pol-e Charkhi prison, about 12 km. outside of Kabul. British journalist Anthony Hyman describes it:

"Pol-e Charkhi is a great wheel composed of eight multi-storied blocks, with watchtowers and high walls cutting off the prison from the main road south to Jalalabad and the border, just a mile away. The prison was not completed in the spring of 1978, when the new regime's wave of arrests made it essential to use its ample accommodation for 5,000 prisoners, so as to relieve pressure on Kabul's old Deh Mazang prison. Intended as a modern-style, progressive prison by its designers, Pol-e Charkhi failed from the first to satisfy elementary rules of hygiene, quite apart from its other defects: floors were unfinished concrete, water pipes had not been connected, and there was no water closet, and all other necessary works were suspended after occupation."\*\*/

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\*/ Testimony of a shepherd from Faryab Province. Amnesty International, "File on Torture," op. cit.

\*\*/ Anthony Hyman, op. cit., p. 109.



The exact number of prisoners in Pol-e Charkhi prison is not certain. John Fullerton, who has interviewed both prisoners and former prison personnel, writes, "Pol-e Charkhi holds some 12-15,000 prisoners."<sup>\*</sup>/ Others give similar or higher figures.

Conditions vary among the blocks. There is a separate section for women. Testimonies from former prisoners give some idea of the abysmal conditions to which prisoners are subjected.

-- Tobah Hamid is a former university student who had been imprisoned in the women's section of Pol-e Charkhi after 46 days in the KHAD: "She joined 34 other women in a large cell, including a nine-year-old girl and two female informers. The place was bare save for the constantly burning light bulb and a few blankets the more fortunate inmates had managed to obtain on the all too rare family visits to the jail. Washing was not permitted. All the women suffered from body sores. Tobah still bears the scars. Most of them were sick most of the time. All had been tortured with varying degrees of severity. They were forbidden to talk to each other. They could not see out of the room and sunlight did not penetrate the small, barred window. The highlight of their existence consisted of a twice-daily visit to the lavatory."<sup>\*\*</sup>/

-- "There were a lot of strange and criminal stories. There was a retired army officer, an old man. One day he had blood diarrhea. The diet gave everyone diarrhea; it was rare

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<sup>\*</sup>/ John Fullerton, op. cit., p. 142.

<sup>\*\*</sup>/ Ibid., p. 141.

to have a normal stomach. Once he tried to go to the bathroom, but it was morning. The guard told him, 'Shut up! You are ashraf [bandit]! You burned schools and the Holy Koran.' The old man was nearly dying. He forced open the door and ran to the bathroom. The guard took a belt and hit him, and when he came back, his face was all covered with blood.

"For 7 or 8 nights I was alone in a very dark room. I couldn't see anyone but the guard who threw me a piece of bread now and then. Then I was brought into a room with about 12 people. Once one of them had his whole back on the ground, and this caused a quarrel. People asked, 'Why are you putting your whole back on the ground?' There was not enough room! At night, when we wanted to turn on our shoulder, we had to wake all the other prisoners.

"In 24 hours we could go once to the bathroom for 5 minutes, at 6 o'clock. You know, defecation is a natural thing. Some people were in urgent need of it, so we stood up and held our patous [a type of cloak worn in the winter] around them, and they did it in the cell." [Testimony of Qader, a former university student imprisoned in Pol-e Charkhi in 1980. Interview with Jeri Laber and Barnett Rubin in Peshawar, September 29, 1984.]

These conditions set off a hunger strike by some of the prisoners in Pol-e Charkhi in May 1982. Two of the former prisoners we met, civil engineer Mohammad Nabi Omar Khel and high school teacher Dad Mohammad, had participated in the strike. Dad Mohammad was considered a leader, and hence his sentence was lengthened by 6 months.

-- "In Jauza 1361 [May 1982] we started a movement in jail over the difficulties in prison. There was no good food, too many were sick, there was no medicine. There was one bathroom for 500 people. The condition of the food was so bad that many had dysentery. The electricity didn't work because the mujahedin had cut the power lines. The water was scarce, and we couldn't wash. In each block there was one doctor, and he was for the KGB agents, not the prisoners. The worst torture was the lack of bathrooms. Prisoners could not speak to each other. Every Friday night we were all searched. There was psychological torture: they would wake us up at night and check us. There were so many prisoners we could not lie on the floor. Most couldn't walk, from sitting on their knees for a long time on the concrete floor. There were many parasites, lice. We started a hunger strike. Twenty of us were punished -- our sentences were increased. Most of the people were just beaten." [Dad Mohammad. Interview with Jeri Laber and Barnett Rubin in Peshawar, September 26, 1984.]

-- "They warned us, 'If you don't eat the food, you will be responsible for what the government will do.' Soldiers came with guns and started beating us in the rooms. They moved people from the second block [where the strike began] to the third block. They tortured people in the first and second blocks. Then they started the investigation. They put about 17 persons they considered leaders in a small room. They took their patous and shoes away. The room was all wet with water. They brought more water 2 or 3 times. In the morning they started the investigation. But they punished us before the investigation." [Mohammad Nabi Omar Khel. Interview with Jeri Laber and Barnett Rubin in Peshawar, September 27, 1984.]

The presence of informers among the prisoners made it difficult for them to speak to each other:

"In Pol-e Charkhi there was a man who brought me tea and cakes. I asked him who he was. He said, 'I escaped from the army and killed 20 people and burned down 4 mosques. You haven't done anything, so why are you so upset?' After a few minutes, he told me to tell the truth. Then he got angry and shouted, 'Do you think I have nothing better to do than ask questions?' He stayed with me that night, and then I was transferred to another place. There were already 6 people there, and one of them gestured that I should keep my mouth shut. One of the people asked me why I was taken to prison. He said he was an army deserter. Each one was telling me they were sentenced to 6 years, 7 years. In the morning we were allowed to go out of the room for a half hour. The man who had gestured to me told me not to speak. The people who had been talking were all spies." [Qadratullah, a peasant from Qala-e Muradbek. Interview with Jeri Laber and Barnett Rubin in Peshawar, September 30, 1984.]

Although there are fewer Soviets in Pol-e Charkhi than in the KHAD centers, the prison has not escaped the Sovietization program.

-- "There are [Russian] advisors there, sometimes wearing Afghan uniforms and sometimes not. It seemed to me that they were inspecting the prison. Those who don't have uniforms have offices in the first block. I don't know what they are doing, probably advising the chief of the prison." [Engineer Omar Khel. Interview with Jeri Laber and Barnett Rubin in Peshawar, September 27, 1984.]

-- "I saw Russians in Pol-e Charkhi. One came into my room. The Russian, who was wearing

a suit, was in front, and a group of Parchamis were following him. They walked around the room. They didn't speak to anyone. They left our room, and then they went into the next one. They were inspecting the rooms.

"The control of Pol-e Charkhi is in the hands of the Soviets. They have a Center of Afghan-Soviet Friendship in Block 1 of Pol-e Charkhi Prison! Of course, it is for the personnel, not the prisoners." [Anwar ul-Haq, physics student, also quoted above.]

### Trials, Sentences, Executions

After interrogation, prisoners in Kabul are usually transferred to Pol-e Charkhi prison, where they may wait for some months without charges or a trial. Some, presumably judged "not guilty," may then be released without explanation.

-- "I had no trial, because I had not done anything. But when I was released, my brother and his friends were taken before the judge. Of course, the judge has no power. The Russians write on the back of the file how many years to give. My brother got 14 years." [Testimony of a bank employee, arrested and tortured because of his brother's political connections. Interview with Jeri Laber and Barnett Rubin in Peshawar, September 25, 1984.]

-- "One night in the washroom [in Pol-e Charkhi prison] I saw a small piece of paper in the mirror. It said, 'Brother, be careful. They took two people from their rooms and must have killed them last night. Fight on the way.' Then at 1 a.m. at night someone came and knocked on my door and said, 'Take your clothes. You'll be released.' They took me to sign a form, that I wouldn't be in demonstrations or be against the government, and that I would

report anyone against the government. And I signed it.\*/ And I remembered this guy's letter. And I was thinking, 'Let's see where they take you. I know the directions.' When they left the prison it took a while to get to the main road. I was thinking, 'If they turn left, that's to Kabul, where my house is. If they turn right, it means somewhere else.' Then when we were in Kabul I thought again, 'If they go right here it means they'll take you to KHAD again,' and then the driver asked me, 'Where do you live?'" [Statement of Anwar, former office worker. Interview with Patricia Gossman and Hans Wahl, Chicago, April 15, 1984.]

Those considered guilty are presented with a document called the Surat-e Da'awa, a "statement of accusation" issued by the KHAD. Former high school teacher, Dad Mohammad, showed us his "statement of accusation." Under the KHAD letterhead, it lists the conclusions of the investigation, names the laws under which the defendant was charged, and recommends a sentence to the Revolutionary Court.

A prisoner cannot meet with family members or lawyers, confront witnesses or prepare a defense. In many cases the main evidence is a confession obtained under torture. Sometimes a prisoner is not informed of his trial until the night before it is to begin. He is then taken in a windowless van from Pol-e Charkhi prison to the Sedarat Palace, where the Revolutionary Court holds its secret

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\*/ Many former prisoners report that signing such a statement was a condition for release.

sessions in the precincts of the KHAD:\*/

"All the reports that Amnesty International has received indicate that most trials take place in camera and without the defendant being legally represented. In some cases the defendant has not been informed of the charges against him prior to his appearance in court."\*\*/

Except for a few trials staged for political purposes, no one is present in the court except the prisoner (or group of prisoners) and the officials of the court. The charges are read, but the prisoner is not allowed to defend himself and may be reprimanded if he tries. It is the KHAD, rather than the court, that determines innocence or guilt. The court confirms the KHAD's "guilty" verdict and determines the sentence in accordance with the recommendation of the KHAD. In the course of our interviews, we did not hear of even one case in which someone judged guilty by the KHAD was found not guilty by the court. There is no appeal from the decision of the Revolutionary Court.

-- Engineer Omar Khel was charged 6 months after his arrest: "They sent me a copy of the Surat-e Da'awa from the investigation office. It said, 'You did such and such anti-government activity in violation of such and such number of the law, and for this you might be in jail 10 or 15 years.' I said, 'I don't accept this.' But they said, 'Whether you accept

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\*/ A number of people we interviewed referred to it as "the KHAD court."

\*\*/ Amnesty International, "Background Briefing," op. cit., pp. 2, 6.

or not, you have to sign.' So I signed, but I said, 'I don't accept this 15 years, because they tortured me, and there is nothing that proves my membership in Afghan Mellat. The only evidence against me was that one shab nameh, that anyone can pick up in the street.' [The KHAD had found one leaflet during a search of his house. He wrote on the Surat-e Da'awa that he had been tortured. He was sent to see the prison doctor, who wrote he had not been tortured without examining him. A new Surat-e Da'awa was issued, asking for only 5 to 10 years.]

"After one and a half months, at midnight, they called me and said, 'You will be taken to the court tomorrow morning.' They had a special bus without windows carrying the prisoners to court in Sedarat. The judge would not listen to the defense I had written out. Instead he gave 3 reasons for my guilt: 'You are from Maidan [Wardak] Province, and Mr. Ghulam Ahmad Farhad [founder of Afghan Mellat] is also from Maidan Province; this proves that you are a member of the Afghan Mellat Party. You don't work for the government. The third reason is that members of Afghan Mellat and mujahedin attacked Russian and Afghan government troops on the Kabul-Jalalabad road about a month ago [while Omar Khel was in prison]. This means that Afghan Mellat is completely against the government, so you have to be in jail.' I said, 'There is no document that proves my membership. Please show me a document such as a card, my photo or my signature, and I will accept that you put me in jail.' But he didn't give me any answer and just wrote there, '5 years.' The whole procedure took about 20 minutes." [Omar Khel was released in an amnesty for the fifth anniversary of the 1978 coup in April 1983. We interviewed him in Peshawar on September 27, 1984.]

-- "After the end of the interrogation, they sent me the Surat-e Da'awa. Two months later I went to the judge to answer the charges. The court was in Sedarat. There was the president of the court, a judge and two saranwals [other court officials]. The saranwals brought the Surat-e Da'awa.



For defense, there was only me, no representative. I was not allowed to defend myself. All four didn't ask questions like a judge but like a boss. Whatever you say, the sentence is determined in advance. They got angry whenever I said anything. I was sentenced to 5 years, but the sentence was reduced by 18 months last year." [Anwar-ul-Haq, physics student. Interview with Jeri Laber and Barnett Rubin in Peshawar, September 29, 1984.]

The procedure appears to be similar in the provinces, except that there are no regular sessions of the Revolutionary Courts there. From time to time judges of the Revolutionary Court come from Kabul and hold sessions.

-- Abdul Wahid, who was in prison in Jalalabad for 2 years and 17 days, described the following to Syed Fazl Akbar, former director of Radio Kabul: "During the month of March 1984 members of the so-called Revolutionary Court of the Communist regime visited the Jalalabad central jail, and the Communist judges ordered the execution of the 12 detainees who were lying there without trial for the last more than 2 years. ... 200 more detainees were punished with from 3 to 20 years of imprisonment because they defected from the army. With some of them they had captured cards of the mujahedin groups. I was also imprisoned for 3 years without knowing the crime and the charge of my imprisonment. All the comments by the KHAD department regarding these detainees were confirmed by the judges."\*/

-- "A judicial delegation of the Special Revolutionary Court which had gone to Faryab, Jowzjan, Balkh and Samangan Provinces to assess and investigate cases within the jurisdiction of the court today returned to

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\*/ Afghan Realities, May 1-15, 1984, p. 5.

Kabul.... Thousands of citizens of Maymana and Mazar-e Sharif attended these open sessions and welcomed the decisions of the court concerning these criminals."\*/ [Kabul Radio home service in Pashto, May 27, 1984.]

These courts can also impose the death penalty, which must be confirmed by the Revolutionary Council, but which cannot be appealed by the defendant.

In President Babrak Karmal's first policy statement, he stated that the government deemed it its urgent duty to "abolish executions under favorable conditions."\*\*/ He repeated these assurances to representatives of Amnesty International in Kabul in February 1980.\*\*\*/ Nevertheless, the government has continued to announce executions. Former prisoners, defecting officials and defecting prison personnel are unanimous in their testimonies that actual executions far outnumber those publicly announced. Moreover, the number of announced executions has dramatically increased since September 1984.

-- In 1980 the Kabul government announced 18 executions, including 17 former officials of the government of Hafezullah Amin and Abdul Majid Kalakhani, leader of the leftist SAMA. In 1981 Kabul identified 14 people who were executed. Sixteen executions were

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\*/ Kabul Radio frequently carries such accounts, according to which all trials are open to the public.

\*\*/ Kabul New Times, January 1, 1980.

\*\*\*/ Amnesty International Report 1980, p. 179.

announced in 1982 and 13 in 1983.\*/ In 1984 the number increased, although we do not have complete figures. We know of 23 executions and death sentences through August. Amnesty International reported, "In September 1984, Kabul Radio and the official Bakhtar agency announced 43 death sentences, 42 of which were reportedly carried out. A further 24 executions have been announced as of the first week of November 1984."\*\*/

-- Professor Abdul Ahad of the Agricultural Faculty of Kabul University saw 300 men taken out for execution at night, their mouths gagged and their hands tied behind them, during his 7-month stay in Pol-e Charkhi from June 1982 to January 1983.\*\*\*/

-- Assad, an engineering student at Kabul University, was in Pol-e Charkhi twice, with a hiatus between December 1982 and April 1983. When he returned in April 1983, prisoners told him 400 people had been executed meanwhile.\*\*\*\*/

-- K., a high school student, told us on September 24, 1984: "Many people are taken out and executed. In 1981 I saw 25 people taken and executed in 15 days. They killed them on Polygon Field." [Polygon field, behind the Military Academy, is a well known execution ground.]

-- "Under Babrak many of the prisoners have been killed. They wrote it on the Surat-e Da'awa -- killing. I knew many of them. Silently, during the night, they were transferred for killing. Only a few

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\*/ Based on Amnesty International's "Background Briefing," Appendix II, October 1983, and wire service reports.

\*\*/ Amnesty International, "The Death Penalty in Afghanistan," November 13, 1984.

\*\*\*/ Interview with Borje Almquist, Swedish journalist.

\*\*\*\*/ Afghan Information Centre Monthly Bulletin, op. cit., February 1984, pp. 2-4.

persons are announced, the most famous. Sometimes they don't inform the person he is to be killed. At the trial the judges say, 'We will deal with your case later.' Then they come and kill them. Thousands have been killed. This process is current." [Testimony of Engineer Omar Khel. Interview with Jeri Laber and Barnett Rubin in Peshawar, September 27, 1984.]

In May 1984 the Chief Justice of the Kabul Civil Court, Sayed Gharib Gharibnawaz, defected to Pakistan:

"In an interview, he said that only 50 of Afghanistan's 230 courts were functioning; the remainder had been closed because the majority of judges had either fled or been jailed or killed. Soviet advisers were working in the Supreme Court, and no judgment was pronounced without their permission. A 30-member committee of Soviet advisers called the Revolutionary Court was entrusted with investigation work in political affairs and in the affairs of the mujahedin."\*/

#### Political Assassinations and Reprisal Killings

The KHAD organizes special units -- death squads -- to assassinate people who cannot be dealt with by using the methods described above. Many times such assassinations are part of a continuing battle between the Khalq and Parcham factions of the Party. Dr. Shah Rukh Gran of the National Front of Afghanistan told us that KHAD's Fifth Office (KHAD-e Panj) runs death squads for Parcham, and that the Ministry of

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\*/ Karachi home service, May 15, 1984, summarized in BBC Foreign Broadcast Monitoring, FE/7645/C/3, May 17, 1984.

the Interior's Department A (Sha'abeh Alef) does the same for Khalq.\*/

A former KHAD agent, whom we interviewed on September 30, 1984, in Peshawar, described the work of the KHAD's Fifth Office:

"[Assassination] is one of the main jobs of this branch. They do this work inside Kabul and outside Kabul. There are some people who cannot be captured by ordinary means, so they kill them by secret means. These people can be Parcham or Khalq. Both are in the government, and both have some kind of power, so it is difficult for them to fight each other openly. Gulabzoy [Minister of the Interior] is leading one faction, and Dr. Najib [head of KHAD] is leading another faction."

Other victims of anonymous political killings have been described:

"My uncle was a military officer in South Afghanistan. He was a religious man and a Moslem. He was arrested by the Soviets or government troops in 1979 because of his religious beliefs. The Russians thought that he was a leader in the Islamic Party because he was a religious person. He was imprisoned for two years, tortured and abused. However, he did leave prison alive. One night in September 1982, he left his house in Kabul to get something from a store. He was shot by someone just as he left his house. Near his body was found a Soviet weapon. No one is sure who killed him or why, because an investigation was never done."\*\*/ [When the Afghan

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\*/ Interview in New York City, July 23, 1984.

\*\*/ Application of a young woman seeking political asylum in the United States.

government suspects that the resistance is behind an assassination, it carries out a vigorous investigation.]

Although Soviet and Afghan troops occupying Kabul appear to treat civilians better than in the countryside, they still sometimes kill them wantonly or take revenge on them for attacks by the resistance.

- "A Russian soldier in Kabul let fly with his automatic rifle at a crowd of people waiting at a bus stand a week ago, killing at least six people and wounding 12 others. The incident happened at the Taimani bus depot at evening rush hour on May 7. A jeep carrying three or four uniformed soldiers careened out of the Soviet enclave at Khairkhana nearby and drove erratically up to the bus stand where 24 people were waiting. The soldier in the rear of the jeep opened fire, sweeping the crowd with bullets. The jeep did a U-turn, the soldier opened fire again, and the jeep stormed back into Khairkhana. According to eyewitnesses the wounded included three girls aged 15, a uniformed Afghan officer, several soldiers, a woman with a child, and several old people. One report said that the soldier who opened fire had been startled by the crowd's sudden surge. Diplomats say the more likely explanation is that the jeep's onslaught was a revenge raid for an ambush in which seven Russians died."\*/
  
- "In one incident in 1981 the Russians killed about 48 people in Kandahar. One of my students was wounded. The Russians kill them indiscriminately in the streets. This year on the 29 of Ramazan [around June 20] at 5:30 in the morning Kandahar city was

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\*/ The Times, London, May 16, 1984.

bombed by jet fighters, especially in Herat Darwaza. No one was allowed to take the dead bodies from Herat Darwaza until the Russians permitted. One of the government employees was so angry that he ran into the street and cursed the Russians, and he was shot. I myself saw him lying on the road. He was still alive, but the Russian troops were standing there, so no one could take him to the hospital, until he died. And no one knows the exact number of the dead." [Shah Mahmud Baasir, economist from Kandahar. Interview with Barnett Rubin in Quetta, October 3, 1984.]

-- "Sometimes [in Kandahar] the mujahedin kill some of the Party members. Then the military people come and kill around, indiscriminately. When some people run away, they are not mujahedin, they are the local people, they are not the people who killed that person, but still they run away. And then the government or military officers run after them, they take them, and they kill them. And it happened several times." [Former police official of Kandahar. Interview with Patricia Gossman and Barnett Rubin in Alexandria, Virginia, March 23, 1984.]

## V. ADDITIONAL VIOLATIONS OF INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS

The Democratic Republic of Afghanistan is a member of the United Nations and one of the High Contracting Parties of the 1949 Geneva Conventions and the 1977 Additional Protocols. It ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights on January 24, 1983. The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics is a founding member of the United Nations and a permanent member of the Security Council. It is one of the High Contracting Parties of the Geneva Conventions and the Additional Protocols, and it ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights on October 16, 1973. Both countries, as members of the United Nations, are responsible for upholding the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Most of the practices described in Chapters III and IV are violations of these international agreements.

- Indiscriminate bombing violates the following provisions of Article 51 of Protocol I Additional to the Geneva Conventions:  
"4. Indiscriminate attacks are prohibited. Indiscriminate attacks are: (a) those which are not directed at a specific military objective; ... and consequently ... are of a nature to strike military objectives and civilians or civilian objects without distinction. 5. Among others, the following type of attacks are to be considered as indiscriminate: (a) an attack by bombardment by any methods or means which treats as a single military objective a number of clearly separated and distinct military objectives located in a city, town, or village or other area containing a similar concentration of civilians or civilian objects."



- Reprisals against villages and villagers violate other provisions of Additional Protocol I: "Attacks against the civilian population or civilians by way of reprisals is prohibited." [Article 51, paragraph 6.] "Civilian objects shall not be the object of attack or reprisals." [Article 52, paragraph 1.]
- Summary executions violate the provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights prohibiting the arbitrary deprivation of life, as well as the following provision of Additional Protocol I: "The civilian population as such, as well as individual civilians, shall not be the object of attack. Acts or threats of violence the primary purpose of which is to spread terror among the civilian population are prohibited." [Article 51, paragraph 2.]
- Placing mines in inhabited areas or in homes violates those provisions of Additional Protocol I prohibiting attacks on civilians as well as those including as "indiscriminate" [hence prohibited] attacks "those which employ a method or means of combat which cannot be directed at a specific military objective" [Article 51, paragraph 4(b)] or "which may be expected to cause incidental loss of civilian life, injury to civilians, damage to civilian objects, or a combination thereof, which would be excessive in relation to the concrete and direct military advantage anticipated." [Article 51, paragraph 5(b).] It also violates Article 35, paragraph 2: "It is prohibited to employ weapons, projectiles and material and methods of warfare of a nature to cause superfluous injury or unnecessary suffering."
- Burning the bodies of the slain and mining corpses with grenades violate Additional Protocol I, Article 34, paragraph 1: "The remains of persons who have died for reasons related to occupation or in detention resulting from occupation or hostilities ... shall be respected."

- Article 54 of Additional Protocol I explicitly prohibits all those actions undertaken by the Soviet-Afghan forces to destroy Afghan agriculture: "1. Starvation of civilians as a method of warfare is prohibited. 2. It is prohibited to attack, destroy, remove, or render useless objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian population, such as foodstuffs, agricultural areas for the production of foodstuffs, crops, livestock, drinking water installations and supplies and irrigation works, for the specific purpose of denying them for their sustenance value to the civilian population or to the adverse Party, whatever the motive, whether in order to starve out civilians, to cause them to move away, or for any other motive."
- Stealing the personal property of civilians also violates the Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of August 12, 1949, Part III, Section I, Article 33: "Pillage is prohibited."
- Attacks on and desecration of mosques violate Additional Protocol I, not only in that they are "civilian objects," attack on which is prohibited by Article 52, paragraph 1, as noted above, but also in view of the following provisions: "In case of doubt whether an object which is normally dedicated to civilian purposes, such as a place of worship, a house or other dwelling or a school, is being used to make an effective contribution to military action, it shall be presumed not to be so used." [Article 52, paragraph 3.] "It is prohibited: (a) to commit any acts of hostility directed against the historic monuments, works of art or places of worship which constitute the cultural or spiritual heritage of peoples." [Article 53.]
- Suppression of freedoms of speech, press, political activity, association, assembly and movement; arbitrary arrest; searches of homes and persons without warrants; torture; detention without charge; detention in inhumane conditions; trials without right to defense or other elements of due process; imposition of the death penalty without right

of appeal; and similar offenses are prohibited by various provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

In addition to these violations there are a number of other practices by Soviet and Afghan government forces that violate international agreements: killing prisoners of war; prohibiting medical aid and other forms of international humanitarian assistance; attacking medical personnel and bombing hospitals and clinics; attacking journalists; and using children to carry out military missions. Some of these measures and other specific actions by Soviet and Afghan authorities have as their goal the prevention of international supervision and inspection.

A. Killing Prisoners of War<sup>\*</sup>/

"Prisoners of war must at all times be humanely treated. Any unlawful act or omission by the Detaining Power causing death or seriously endangering the health of a prisoner of war in its custody is prohibited and will be regarded as a serious breach of the present Convention .... Measures of reprisal against prisoners of war are prohibited."

Geneva Convention Relative to  
the Treatment of Prisoners  
of War of August 12, 1949,  
Part II, Article 13.

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<sup>\*</sup>/ On the treatment of prisoners of war by the resistance, see Chapter VI.

"We did not take any prisoners of war.  
None."

Sgt. Igor Rykov, Soviet Army  
defector, interview in Le  
Monde, June 3-4, 1984.

The Afghan resistance fighters assume that they will be killed if they are captured in the field by Soviet troops. The testimony of former Soviet soldiers confirms their assumptions.

- Former Soviet Army Pvt. Nikolai Ryzhkov, when asked how Soviet forces treated Afghan prisoners, replied "They destroy [unichtozhayut] them." [Public meeting in New Haven, Connecticut, February 27, 1984.]
  
- Former Soviet Army Pvt. Garik Muradovich Dzhambalbekov witnessed the following incident in February 1982, while he was stationed with a company of the 121st brigade, headquartered in Mazar-e Sharif, at a post on the road between Rabatak and Samangan in Samangan province in northern Afghanistan: "Three Afghan trucks were coming with dried fruit toward Mazar-e Sharif. Our commander, Captain Rudenko, from Zhdanov in Donbas, Ukraine, and some soldiers stopped those trucks and asked for a report. The truck driver, who was a spy, said, 'There are 12 Afghans standing by the road, 2 of them with weapons, 10 of them without arms. They stopped the trucks, and they asked to go to Samangan.' Capt. Rudenko took some APC's, went toward Rabatak, and captured those 12 Afghans. He brought them back close to the garrison. Capt. Rudenko was drunk. It was about 4 or 5 o'clock in the afternoon. They took their weapons and ammunition, searched them and took some knives, everything they had. Then they tied them up, laid them down in the

road, and Capt. Rudenko gave the order to drive the APC's over them. I saw the vehicles coming back all covered with blood. Once they kill them, they are just meat, and they left them for the jackals to come at night. They just cleared them off of the road and dropped the bodies beside the road. At 9 o'clock the commander was even more drunk, and he went back again. He cut off the head of one body, a mullah with a long beard. He brought the head back and said, 'Look, I've brought some fish.' He gave it to one of the soldiers with some gasoline. The whole night they were pouring gasoline on the head and burning it, and in the morning it was just ash." [Interview in Peshawar, September 21, 1984.]\*/\_

-- Former Soviet Army Private Vladislav Naumov had just finished repairing two combat vehicles in a post on the Kabul-Jalalabad road in May 1983, when he heard some cursing: "Two soldiers were chasing a man whose hands were tied. The man's face was swollen, there were fresh scratches, his mouth was bleeding. They brought the Afghan prisoner to the tanks and forced him to his knees. 'Well, what shall we do with him?' Two noncommissioned officers had arrived. They were drunk. One of them looked at the Afghan and said with a wicked smile, 'This beast is unworthy of prison. He must be shot.' 'No,' mumbled the second one, 'He should be hung upside down in the sun. Then he'll realize who he attacked.' But then a lieutenant arrived. The soldiers reported they had arrested a 'dushman.' 'Good,' said the officer. 'We'll settle accounts. Shoot him. Bring an automatic rifle.' The Afghan understood what was about to happen, and he started to say something in his language, but no one

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\*/\_ There are many other reports of captured fighters being crushed under combat vehicles. For instance, Agence France Presse reported from Islamabad on February 18, 1981, that 20 suspected insurgents had been crushed under tanks in the Tangi Valley.

listened to him. We were all around, waiting to see what would happen. One of the soldiers came back and said that all the rifles were locked up. 'Too bad,' said the officer. 'We'll have to manage without bullets. Bring him over to the cannon.' The officer climbed up on the turret. The soldiers stuck the tied hands of the Afghan into the barrel of the gun. 'Move aside,' hollered the officer. 'Fire.' When the smoke dissipated, there was no trace of the Afghan. Everyone left. I was waiting in line for tea to eat with my porridge, when suddenly a sergeant next to me started yelling, 'Go away, you filthy beast!' I didn't understand right away. Then I saw a dog with a piece of meat in his mouth. It was the arm of the man we had just killed."\*/

-- Former Soviet Army Sgt. Igor Rykov testified: "We did not take any prisoners of war. None. Generally we killed them on the spot. As soon as we caught them, the officers ordered us to slaughter them. I'll tell you one story. Lt. Gevorkian was the commander of my unit. When I arrived, he had already been in Afghanistan for a year. He told us that he had seen a lot, and that now he had become like ice, he had learned to kill absolutely anyone, and he had to teach the same to the soldiers. One day he brought in a boy, an Afghan kid about 14 years old. He told us that the boy was certainly a dushman; he had tried to run away when he saw the soldiers. There was one soldier in our unit, Oleg Sotnik, who could not stand the sight of blood. Then Gevorkian took out a sort of bayonet -- it had been mounted on a carbine; it looked like a dagger, and Gevorkian always carried it. He gave this knife to Sotnik and told him to kill the boy. Sotnik's face was unbelievable. He was planted to the ground, shaking all over his body. The boy was sitting peacefully on the ground. Finally Sotnik got control

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\*/ Le Monde, June 3-4, 1984.

of himself, went up to the boy, and stuck the knife in his chest. The boy started to shriek, and he grabbed onto Sotnik's hands. Then Gevorkian started yelling, 'You idiot! What do you think you're doing? Watch how it should be done!' He pulled out the knife, kicked the boy in the face, and when the boy fell backwards from the kick, he stuck the knife in his throat, once, twice. We were all around watching, but no one said anything."\*/

-- Kefayatullah, a farmer from the Kohistan region of Kapisa province, described what happened after a Soviet-Afghan offensive in his region two and a half years ago: "The Russians came with a few Parchamis. They took authority and captured people. Those who escaped attacked them again. The Russians took more prisoners. The people who didn't surrender to them they took to the bank of the river and shot."  
[Interview with Jeri Laber and Barnett Rubin in Peshawar, September 23, 1984.]

-- Tur Abbas, a 22-year-old farmer from Keraman in the Panjsher Valley, had spoken to a boy who had just come from Panjsher with this story: "Last spring [1984, during the seventh offensive in Panjsher] the Russians landed paratroops in Keraman. The mujahedin fought as long as they could, but they ran out of ammunition. Most of them were killed. About 10 were caught by the Russians. They put them in a line and tied some kind of electric bombs to their bodies and blew them up."  
[Interview with Jeri Laber and Barnett Rubin in Peshawar, September 27, 1984.]

#### B. Preventing Medical and Humanitarian Assistance

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is now unable to work on Afghan soil. The Afghan government will not allow the ICRC to provide medical care to victims,

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\*/ Ibid.

to visit prisoners in prisons, to assure the safety of prisoners of war or to work out exchanges of prisoners. Because the ICRC will not work in a country without the express consent of the government, it now confines its activities to running hospitals and treatment centers for Afghans in Pakistan.

Soviet-Afghan military units have searched for and arrested civilian medical personnel, both foreign and Afghan, working in resistance-held areas, including French doctors from various medical associations based in Paris, as well as Afghan doctors operating clinics inside Afghanistan. Soviet aircraft have also bombed hospitals operated by such doctors.

The International Committee of the Red Cross

"1. It is the duty of the Parties to a conflict from the beginning of that conflict to secure the supervision and implementation of the Conventions and of this Protocol by the application of the system of Protecting Powers ....

"4. If, despite the foregoing, there is no Protecting Power, the Parties to the conflict shall accept without delay an offer which may be made by the International Committee of the Red Cross or by any other organization which offers all guarantees of impartiality and efficacy ..."

Protocol I Additional to the  
Geneva Conventions, Article 5.



The ICRC is known for its discretion. Its officials usually refuse to discuss ICRC activities with outsiders, even confidentially. Rarely indeed do they make public statements criticizing a government for not living up to its obligations under the Geneva Conventions. It is thus doubly significant that the ICRC issued a press release on May 20, 1984, protesting limitations on its activity in Afghanistan:

-- "Since 1979, the International Committee of the Red Cross has made every effort to provide protection and assistance to the civilian and military victims of the armed conflict in Afghanistan, in accordance with the mandate conferred upon it in the Geneva Conventions and the statutes of the International Red Cross.

"On several occasions, it has reminded the parties whose armed forces are engaged in the conflict of their obligations under international humanitarian law. However, in spite of repeated offers of services to the Afghan government and representations to the government of the USSR, the ICRC has only on two occasions -- during brief missions in 1980 and 1982 -- been authorized to act inside Afghanistan. Consequently, the ICRC has to date been able to carry out very few of the assistance and protection activities urgently needed by the numerous victims of the conflict on Afghan territory."\*/

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\*/ Press Release of May 20, 1984, published in ICRC Bulletin, June 1984.

The two missions referred to were both visits by the ICRC to inspect Pol-e Charkhi Prison. The first, from April to July 1980, included interviews by representatives of the ICRC with people said to be prisoners in Pol-e Charkhi. No information was disclosed about this mission. When the ICRC delegation returned to Kabul in August 1982, they left before accomplishing their mission. Francois Zen Ruffinen, now head of the ICRC delegation based in Pakistan, participated in the second mission to Kabul. He told us in an interview in Peshawar on September 22, 1984: "We don't go on missions just to sit in our hotel rooms. Also it was indicated to us that we should leave."

- The ICRC announced in a communique of October 9, 1982, that the delegates who had arrived in Kabul on August 14 at the invitation of Afghan authorities had proceeded first to visit Pol-e Charkhi Prison and were then requested by the authorities to interrupt their mission and leave Kabul temporarily. The ICRC had nonetheless received the assurance, during negotiations between its representatives and the Afghan authorities, that it would be able to visit all prisoners captured with arms or detained as a result of the events taking place in Afghanistan.\*

Evidence presented by witnesses who were in Pol-e Charkhi prison at the time of the ICRC's August 24, 1982, visit indicates that the authorities had duly prepared for the visit.

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\*/ Agence France Presse, Geneva, October 9, 1982.

-- "Many prisoners from block no. 1 of Pol-e Charkhi have been transferred into another block. It seems that a mission of the U.N. [actually the ICRC] is going to visit the prison, and they want to show them block 1, which they are now cleaning up. They have removed the young prisoners who might dare to speak up. Thus the delegation will see only an insignificant number of prisoners in block 1. That's what people are saying; I can't confirm it."\*/

-- "What I just want to stress is that sometimes international delegations are asked to visit the Kabul prison. This is what happened in July [actually August] 1982. There was a Red Cross delegation which went to the Pul-i-Charkhi prison. They were only shown block no. 1. There are 450 prisoners in that block, more or less, and block no. 1 was shown to them, they did not see block no. 2 or block no. 3 .... As I recall, before the Red Cross delegates were inspecting block no. 1 they had removed other prisoners, except 120 prisoners, who were [former President Hafezullah] Amin's cronies, from this block and brought them to block 3. Children under the age of 18 were taken out and kept in other blocks. Women prisoners were sent to the Prime Minister's compound [Sedarat]. Only those agents who were imprisoned after Amin and government agents were praising the conditions and introducing themselves as freedom fighters from Panjsher or generally freedom fighters and students, and they were praising the regime. But the real prisoners of Pul-i-Charkhi were not seen by the delegates."\*\*/

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\*/ Letter from Kabul, reprinted in Les Nouvelles d'Afghanistan, op. cit., December 1982, p. 9.

\*\*/ Testimony of Mohammad Seddiq Mossadeq, former student at Kabul University, "International Afghanistan Hearings," Oslo, p. 153. Mossadeq was in Pol-e Charkhi during the visit.

-- M., the elder brother of high school student Mohammad Gul, told us, "I had a friend who was in prison when the Red Cross came to Kabul. When they came to see Pol-e Charkhi, they had emptied out the prisoners and replaced them with Parchamis who gave the testimonies." [Interview with Jeri Laber and Barnett Rubin in Peshawar, September 29, 1984.]

In its June 20, 1984, press release, the ICRC notes that it has had access to Soviet prisoners of war captured by the resistance, but says nothing about access to resistance prisoners captured by the other side. ICRC official Francois Zen Ruffinen told us in an interview in Peshawar on September 22, 1984, that "the leaders of the resistance groups understand our needs and try to cooperate with us, but they tell us they are under a lot of pressure from their men, since there is no reciprocation from the other side."

The ICRC has been forbidden to undertake within Afghanistan any emergency or long-term medical treatment for victims of the conflict. Instead, it has had to open surgical hospitals in Peshawar and Quetta, and to establish border posts from which arriving Afghan patients can be transported quickly to the nearest hospital. Many victims, of course, never reach those border posts; they die or are permanently crippled for lack of swift, on-the-spot treatment. We asked Mr. Ruffinen how the ICRC would wish to operate:

"We would like to start by establishing a hospital in Kabul. Then after some time we would hope to be able to work closer to the fighting, in provincial centers, and even in field hospitals. But as things are now, it's very frustrating."  
[Interview with Jeri Laber and Barnett Rubin in Peshawar, September 22, 1984.]

### Medical Personnel in Resistance-Held Areas

"Medical units shall be respected and protected at all times and shall not be the object of attack. ... Civilian medical personnel shall be respected and protected. ... Under no circumstances shall any person be punished for carrying out medical activities compatible with medical ethics, regardless of the person benefitting therefrom. ..."

Protocol I Additional to the Geneva Conventions: Article 12, paragraph 1; Article 13, paragraph 1; Article 16, paragraph 1.

Some doctors and nurses have undertaken to provide medical services to resistance fighters and the civilian population in resistance-held areas. Among them are many dedicated and courageous French doctors and nurses associated with three medical associations based in Paris -- Medecins sans Frontieres, Aide Medicale Internationale, and Medecins du Monde. They have sent teams into rural Afghanistan, to areas controlled by the resistance, where they have established clinics that treat both general medical problems and those stemming from the war. Afghan doctors have also established clinics in resistance-held areas. These clinics receive

financial and material assistance from relief organizations such as the Peshawar-based Swedish Committee for Afghanistan.

These Afghan and foreign doctors take enormous risks. The Afghan doctors are treated as enemy personnel by the Soviet-Afghan forces, which also conduct systematic searches for the French doctors.

- "Two and a half years ago our whole region was under blockade. Then many Russians and a few Parchamis came. They captured many people. One of them was an Afghan doctor [name withheld on request], who was the doctor of the mujahedin. He is in prison now. They sentenced him to 3 years." [Testimony of Kefayatullah, farmer from Harioki Ulya, Kapisa Province. Interview with Jeri Laber and Barnett Rubin in Peshawar, September 23, 1984.]
- During the May 1982 Soviet-Afghan offensive in the Panjsher Valley, Dr. Laurence Laumonier and Capucine de Bretagne, a nurse, were working there for Aide Medicale Internationale. Dr. Laumonier testified: "The Russians were looking for us specifically. In every village they went through, they asked the old men who had stayed behind, 'Where are the two Frenchwomen?'"\*/
- Dr. Juliette Fournot of Medecins sans Frontieres told Barnett Rubin in an interview in Paris on June 8, 1984: "In the last two weeks of August last year, in the village where we had our northern dispensary in Badakhshan, the mujahedin arrested 5 people at night. One of them had a walkie-talkie. Another had a map with our hospital and the homes where the doctors were living marked."

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\*/ Agence France Presse, Peshawar, June 19, 1984.

-- Dr. Marie-Paul Leveilhet described what happened on her way to the Badakhshan hospital in early July 1983: "It was about 10 days before the end of Ramazan last year. Just before crossing the river on the way north we stopped at a mosque to have lunch at about 3 in the afternoon. They had specially prepared lunch for us, even though they were fasting, and they had it ready when we arrived. It was near Bagh-e Sah. We stayed less than an hour. We hurried, because they were afraid that airplanes might spot us. We left, and then immediately helicopters came, about 8 of them, 2 by 2. We hid under some fruit trees, and then we heard bombing for about a quarter of an hour. The next day a report came that the helicopters had fired on the mosque where we had eaten and destroyed much of the village, killing 16 and wounding 40." [Interview with Barnett Rubin in Paris, June 8, 1984.]

-- Dr. Philippe Augoyard said that at the time of the Soviet-Afghan Logar offensive of January 1983, Soviet troops arrested some women and children and made them stand barefoot in the snow: "The Soviets told them they would not let them go until they told where the French doctors were." [Interview with Barnett Rubin in New York City, January 31, 1984.] During the same offensive, Soviet soldiers summarily executed three old men and wounded another when they did not reveal the whereabouts of the French doctors.\*/

On January 16, 1983, a group of heliborne Soviet commandos captured the French doctor Philippe Augoyard. He was first taken to a Soviet military base for a preliminary

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\*/ International Afghanistan Hearing, op. cit.

interrogation and then delivered in a Soviet vehicle to the doors of the Sedarat, where he was interrogated by an English-speaking Afghan. The interrogator offered him a choice: if he was stubborn, he would receive the death penalty or a long prison term; if he would say the right things at a press conference and a public trial, he would be released in 5 months:

"They told me what I had to do. The press conference [only for Communist journalists] was prepared the night before. The answers were prepared. The questions the next day were the ones for which they had prepared answers. ... It is not easy to say completely false things about people that you have worked with or tried to help. ... But it was the only way to escape. ... In Kabul they always portrayed me as a spy who had come to supply arms. The trial was only for propaganda. It was directed and produced just like a play. It's very difficult, it's humiliating to have to say things one does not believe, that are not true. After the trial, I was freed [on June 9, 1983]."<sup>\*</sup>/

The Afghan and Soviet press have consistently described Augoyard and other French doctors as "spies," implying that they do not deserve protection as medical personnel.

The arrest of Dr. Augoyard near Padkhwab-e Shana may have been related to a successful mission in the same area two months before by Michael Barry, an American expert on

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<sup>\*</sup>/ From Augoyard's June 12, 1983, press conference upon his return to France, quoted in Les Nouvelles d'Afghanistan, op. cit., June-August 1983, p. 17.



Afghanistan and Ricardo Fraile, a French jurist, in which they documented the massacre in Padkhwab-e Shana. After the worldwide publicity surrounding Barry's investigations in December 1982, the Soviet high command was apparently determined to see that such investigations would not be repeated.\*/

### Hospitals

The Soviets and their Afghan allies have also engaged in a campaign of destroying hospitals and dispensaries in areas controlled by the resistance.

- "The hospital of Yakaolang [in the Hazara part of Bamiyan Province], built by the Americans in 1971, and completely equipped, with an operating room, laboratory, radiology installation, ophthalmological clinic, and which attracted the sick from all over Afghanistan until 1974, when [President] Daoud, under Soviet pressure, expelled the American doctors, was completely sacked by Soviet troops during their attack in September 1980. The medicines and the medical equipment, until then carefully guarded by the resistance, were systematically removed or destroyed. There is not a single usable capsule or pill. All that remain, scattered all over the floor, are the medical records, with a file on each patient. ... A similar Soviet expedition in the fall of 1980 left numerous burned houses in the Turkmen region west of Kabul, where the small hospital of Lalenj suffered the fate of the hospital of Yakaolang."\*\*/

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\*/ See Michael Barry, Le Royaume de l'Insolence, Paris: Flammarion, 1984, p. 35.

\*\*/ "La situation dans le Hazarajat," January 20, 1982, pp. 19, 9. Available from Medecins sans Frontieres, Paris.

- In 1981, the Soviets began a systematic effort to bomb hospitals operated by the French medical organizations. Three small hospitals operated by Medecins du Monde were bombed early in the year. On November 4 MIG-27s and armored helicopters bombed the hospital of Aide Medicale Internationale in the Panjsher Valley, razing the stone building to the ground. On November 5 at 7 a.m., 3 MI-24 helicopters razed the hospital of Medecins sans Frontieres in Jaghori, Ghazni, in the southern part of Hazarajat. On November 6, three other helicopters destroyed a dispensary of Aide Medical Internationale in Ningrahar Province. Later in November the dispensary of Medecins sans Frontieres in Waras was attacked. On March 14, 1982, the new hospital established by Medecins sans Frontieres in Jaghori was bombed.\*/
- "After the first time they bombed our hospital in Panjsher," Dr. Laurence Laumonier of Aide Medicale Internationale told us, "I went to see [Panjsher Valley resistance Commander Ahmad Shah] Massoud. I told him we were going to make another hospital and put a red cross on the roof, so they would be sure to know it was a hospital. He told me I was crazy, it would just make it easier for the Russians to bomb it. But I did it anyway, and then the helicopters came and bombed it." [Interview with Jeri Laber and Barnett Rubin in Paris, June 16, 1984.]
- In Herat Province, there are hospitals staffed by Afghan doctors in the areas controlled by the Jamiat-e Islami under the command of Ismael Khan. British art historian Nicholas Danziger told us: "As soon as the Russians know where the hospitals are, they bomb them. They will not keep the hospitals in the same place more than a month. The hospitals have

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\*/ Les Nouvelles d'Afghanistan, op. cit., February-March, 1982, p. 14; testimony of Dr. Juliette Fournot, Medecins sans Frontieres, interview with Barnett Rubin in Paris, June 8, 1984.

obviously been bombed, because even when I was in Mashhad [Iran], it was one of the first things they mentioned." [Interview with Jeri Laber and Barnett Rubin in Peshawar, September 26, 1984.]

The French medical organizations are finding it increasingly difficult to carry out their missions. "We will have to start moving the doctors frequently between two or three points," Dr. Juliette Fournot told us in Peshawar on September 27, 1984. "We will have to move everything, all the medicines, the equipment. And I know that someday we will have some deaths."

#### C. Restricting and Attacking Journalists

"Journalists engaged in dangerous professional missions in areas of armed conflict shall be considered as civilians within the meaning of Article 50, Paragraph 1."

Protocol I Additional to the  
Geneva Conventions, Article  
79, paragraph 1.

"I warn you, and through you, all of your journalist colleagues: stop trying to penetrate Afghanistan with the so-called mujahedin. From now on, the bandits and the so-called journalists -- French, American, British and others -- accompanying them will be killed. And our units in Afghanistan will help the Afghan forces to do it."

Vitaly Smirnov, Soviet  
Ambassador to Pakistan, to  
Olivier Warin of French tele-  
vision and the Agence France  
Presse correspondent in  
Islamabad, October 5, 1984.

After the Soviet invasion and the accession to power of Babrak Karmal, foreign journalists were expelled from Afghanistan, and strict controls were established over future entry into the country. Since 1980 very few foreign journalists have been allowed to visit Afghanistan, except for those from state- or Party-controlled media of the Soviet bloc. The few independent journalists who have been allowed to visit Kabul have been taken on staged tours, accompanied by government interpreters. Their telephones have been tapped, and some have had their belongings inspected upon leaving:

"'We are not free; there are spies everywhere. ...' The sentence is not even finished before the Afghan censor rewinds the tape to the beginning and erases it. This scene took place last May 3 in Kabul in the offices of Afghan Films, where the special correspondent of Agence France Presse as well as the correspondent of France-Inter, Ulysse Gosset, had to submit all their films and tapes for censorship.

"All tapes with information or comments hostile to the Afghan regime or the Soviets were erased. Similarly, everything sent by telex had first to be submitted for censorship.

"Not only systematic censorship, but also continual control of their activity was imposed on the two French journalists -- as well as on other Western journalists (British, Swedish, West German) -- during their entire stay in Kabul.

"This surveillance of our activities, we learned in Kabul from an informed Afghan source, was supervised by Soviet advisors, in particular those residing in the Hotel Intercontinental. These two advisors -- one

for political affairs and the other for security -- were continually consulted by the Afghans, according to this source.

"We managed to escape from this surveillance only through acrobatics. In theory, we had to be accompanied at all times by official 'guide-interpreters,' responsible for all our acts. ... In view of this insistent surveillance, an Afghan Communist finally asked, 'But why did they give you a visa, if it is only to keep you from working?'"\*/

Some journalists have tried to cover the war from the other side. Rather than respecting their mission, as required by the Additional Protocols to the Geneva Conventions, the Soviets and the Afghan regime have consistently described such journalists as spies and criminals.

- Two French journalists, Francois Missen and Antoine Darnaud, were arrested by Afghan troops in Kandahar on September 9, 1980. The arresting officers refused to examine the identity cards which the journalists were carrying in accord with Article 79, paragraph 3, of Protocol I Additional to the Geneva Conventions, and instead charged them with being C.I.A. agents.

Transferred to Kabul, they were eventually interrogated by a Central Asian who referred to the Soviet Union as "my country." He demanded they confess their ties to the C.I.A. and threatened them with 20 years imprisonment. They were not allowed to see French diplomats or anyone else. Finally they were told they would be released if they gave an interview to Afghan television

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\*/ Agence France Presse special correspondent Yves Heller, Kabul, May 7, 1983.

confessing their work for the C.I.A. and their "crimes against the revolution." They agreed and were released on November 2, 1980.\*/\_/

- On September 17, Jacques Abouchar, a French television reporter, entered Afghanistan from Baluchistan escorted by members of the Afghan resistance. They were ambushed by Soviet troops, who captured Abouchar and took him to Kabul. There he was sentenced to 18 years in prison. He was released on October 25, after concerted pressure from the French government and warnings that in the future such journalists will be killed.

The treatment of Jacques Abouchar may well have a further chilling effect on efforts by the international press to cover this hidden war from inside Afghanistan. One major U.S. newspaper has decided that, in view of recent Soviet threats, they will not send a correspondent into Afghanistan. "If someone volunteers," an editor told us, "Fine. But we are not going to tell someone he has to go."

#### D. Training Children as Spies

"The Parties to the conflict shall take all feasible measures in order that children who have not attained the age of fifteen years do not take a direct part in hostilities and, in particular, they shall refrain from recruiting them into their armed forces."

Protocol I Additional to the  
Geneva Conventions, Article  
77, paragraph 2.

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\*/\_/ Francois Missen, "50 jours dans les cachots d'Afghanistan," Le Point 428, December 1, 1980, p. 58; and 429, December 8, 1980, p. 151.

Many of those with whom we spoke in Peshawar described to us a Soviet-Afghan program to train boys aged about 10 to 14 as spies. These children, sometimes orphans, are recruited into an organization called Peshahangan, meaning "Vanguard" or "Pioneers." They are sent to the Soviet Union and trained in weaponry and espionage. The Soviet-Afghan authorities then send them into resistance-held areas with various missions, such as collecting information or assassinating commanders.

-- The Soviet Union and the Afghan government acknowledge that they are training children for such tasks: "More than 900 children of martyrs of the revolution are under training in the Watan children's centre. ... At the moment 19 children from the centre are attending preparatory classes for technical education, 21 are to help the security forces, and another 56 will be sent to the Soviet Union for training as workers. According to Mahbuba Karmal other children's centres are being built in the provinces with Soviet assistance."\*/

-- "They have an organization called 'Pioneers,' for teenagers or younger children. They send them to the Soviet Union. Then after 6 months training or so they come back, and then they are sent to different areas to collect information. Last year about 10 of them were captured in Panjsher, and some were also captured in Ghazni and Herat, and other places. Farid Mazdak is the chairman of the Pioneers, and another man, sometimes called Yusuf and sometimes Nur Agha, is another leader." [Testimony of a former KHAD agent. Interview with Jeri Laber and Barnett Rubin in Peshawar, September 30, 1984.]

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\*/ Kabul Radio Dari Service, May 15, 1984, reported in BBC Foreign Broadcast Monitoring FE/7645/C/3, May 17, 1984.

-- "They are using children. And mujahedin are setting them free. The Communists are using them against mujahedin, but after some time the mujahedin are giving them back to their families, in Kabul. So this is a very humanitarian gesture, but it is one-sided, because they are not stopping that. They are doing it over and over and over. And some of these children are under the age of 12, or 10, so it's very difficult to try them. And when they send them, they don't think about their safety at all. A boy who is from Paktia [a Pashtun area] is sent to Panjsher [a Tajik area]. He is immediately recognized. These people have been sent to the Soviet Union as Pioneers, and these people have been sent to Peshawar as well, and these people have also been captured. But this is a problem. Because some of them, their families do not know about them. They have been taken by force and sent somewhere. It's a very big humanitarian problem." [Engineer Mohammad Eshaq, aide to Panjsher Valley resistance commander Ahmad Shah Massoud. Interview with Jeri Laber and Barnett Rubin in Peshawar, September 24, 1984.]

-- "At one point there was a 14-year-old boy who'd been sent to kill a commander and poison mujahedin, to drop poison into the soup, and he could undo a Kalashnikov quicker than the mujahedin. They put him to the test, because he said, 'I'd like to do this. Give me a Kalashnikov.' He was being paid Afs. 10,000 a month. He was from Kabul, but they'd sent him to Herat. He was a prisoner. They said to me they wouldn't kill him, because he was a boy; had he been a man, they would have killed him. They said they would sent the boy to school to be re-educated." [Nicholas Danziger, British art historian. Interview with Jeri Laber and Barnett Rubin in Peshawar, September 26, 1984.]



-- Shah Bazgar, an Afghan biologist who has been doing cancer research in Orleans, France, told us that the Pakistani police had recently dissolved a resistance jail in Peshawar where over a dozen of these child spies, captured in Pakistan, were being held by several parties. The children could handle Soviet weapons better than any of the resistance fighters, he said. Some of them were now being given Islamic educations. [Interview with Jeri Laber and Barnett Rubin in Peshawar, September 28, 1984.]

-- "Soviet forces in Afghanistan are abducting and indoctrinating children and returning them as spies to rebel strongholds, according to a Briton recently returned from the country. Adam Holloway, 18, told the Daily Express newspaper he met one of the child spies, a 10-year-old boy named Naiem, in a rebel base near the Soviet-held town of Urgun. The boy said he had been taken from his parents a year ago and flown with 200 other children to a Soviet town. He was given a Soviet foster mother, lectured in Marxism, given firearms training and taught how to infiltrate rebel camps and direct Soviet bombers to their targets by lighting fires, according to Holloway's account. When he returned to Afghanistan, he was taken in as an orphan at a rebel base. ... [Holloway] said Naiem demonstrated his skill with a captured Soviet Makarov 9mm automatic pistol and said he had been trained to use Soviet TT pistols"\*/

#### E. Preventing International Inspection

Human rights in Afghanistan, as everywhere else, are rightfully the concern of international organizations and international public opinion. It is in fact the duty of such organizations and of the public to insist on the right to

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\*/ Reuters, London, June 12, 1984.

collect information and monitor compliance with international agreements.

Every year in its Annual Report, Amnesty International includes a disclaimer in the entry on Afghanistan:

"The civil war itself and the continued denial of access to the country by the Afghan Government to international humanitarian organizations and most of the world press hampered Amnesty International's collection of information and the verification of such allegations [of human rights violations by both sides]."\*/

Other organizations face the same problem. A request by Helsinki Watch to send a mission to Kabul has been met with polite evasion. The decision by the U.N. Human Rights Commission to appoint a special rapporteur on Afghanistan was opposed by Afghan Ambassador Mohammad Farid Zarif who claimed in the debate that consideration of human rights in Afghanistan was a violation of the United Nations Charter and constituted interference in the internal affairs of a state. The Soviet delegate, Igor Yakovlev, also said that such a decision "would infringe in serious fashion the sovereign rights of a state."\*\*/ As of this writing, the Afghan government has refused all cooperation with the special rapporteur appointed by the U.N. Human Rights Commission.

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\*/ Amnesty International Annual Report 1984, p. 205.

\*\*/ U.N. Press Release ECOSOC/4756, May 17, 1984.

## VI. HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS BY THE AFGHAN RESISTANCE

The Afghan resistance is not a government, a member of the United Nations, or a party to any international agreements. It is not even a unified "Party to the conflict." There are perhaps a dozen parties with offices in Pakistan and Iran. Besides these parties a number of independent tribal and political groups also maintain offices in the countries of refuge. Inside Afghanistan, the fighters are organized in groups that may have strong, weak, or no links to the parties outside the country. The internal resistance ranges from informal village militias that are little more than illiterate peasants operating almost without direction, to well organized bodies of thousands of men, based in areas administered by a quasi-government of one or more of the resistance parties.

Hence it is almost meaningless to discuss human rights violations by the "resistance" as a whole. The parties differ in their respect for human rights. Some actions taken by groups within Afghanistan may not reflect the policy of any political organization, but may be simply the acts of barely organized desperate peasants, or of a particular commander. Furthermore, groups controlling territory and population, as some do, have greater responsibilities than

those who operate underground in conditions of great insecurity.\*/

Nevertheless at least some elements of the Afghan resistance have committed acts forbidden by the Geneva Conventions to all parties to a conflict. These include the execution of prisoners of war, the torture of prisoners and attacks on civilian targets. Some such practices appear to be widespread, while others are occasional.

We were hampered in our investigation of these allegations by a lack of cooperation from the Afghan government. Helsinki Watch has received no response to its request to send a mission to Kabul to examine, among other things, evidence of the many crimes with which the Afghan government has charged the resistance.

#### A. Treatment of Prisoners of War

The Afghan parties in Peshawar and Quetta (we could not speak with those in Iran) and most of the resistance groups operating within Afghanistan appear to have broadly consistent policies on prisoners of war. They distinguish three groups: Soviet prisoners, Afghan conscripts, and Afghan officers or Party members.

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\*/ On the Afghan resistance see: Olivier Roy, "Islam in the Afghan Resistance," Religion in Communist Lands (February 1984), pp. 55-68 or Michael Barry, Le Royaume de l'insolence: La resistance Afghane du Grand Moghol a l'invasion sovietique, Paris, Flammarion, 1984.

It is the Soviet prisoners who have received the bulk of international attention. Until 1981, Afghan resistance forces acting on the basis of their traditional concept of badal (revenge) executed any captured Soviet soldiers. During 1981, however, the resistance parties in Pakistan agreed to allow the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) access to Soviet prisoners, and word apparently went out to commanders in the field to try to keep Soviet prisoners alive. The ICRC began negotiations and worked out an agreement:

"Negotiations carried out by the ICRC with, successively, the USSR, the Afghan opposition movements, Pakistan, and Switzerland led to partial success. The parties agreed to the transfer and internment in a neutral country of Soviet soldiers detained by the Afghan opposition movements, in application, by analogy, of the Third Geneva Convention, relative to the treatment of prisoners of war.

"On the basis of this agreement, the ICRC has had access to some of the Soviet prisoners in the hands of the Afghan movements and has informed them, in the course of interviews without witness, of the possibility for transfer by the ICRC to Switzerland, where they would spend two years under the responsibility and watch of the Swiss government before returning to their country of origin. ...

"To date, eleven Soviet soldiers have accepted the proposal. The first three were transferred to Switzerland on 28 May 1982. Eight others arrived in August and October 1982, January and October 1983, and February and April 1984."<sup>\*</sup>

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<sup>\*</sup>/ ICRC Press Release of May 20, 1984, published in ICRC Bulletin, June 1984.

There are several reasons why the ICRC has had only "partial" success. One is that it can only have access to those prisoners held in or near Pakistan, as it has not been able to operate in Afghanistan or Iran. British art historian Nicholas Danziger told us about problems faced by the Jamiat-e Islami resistance group in Herat, near Iran:

"There was a Russian prisoner while I was there. They said that the prisoners go to Iran, and they hand them over to the Pasdaran [the Iranian revolutionary guards]. They realize that it is good for them to have prisoners, it is good for them to go to the West, but the problem for them is to actually get the prisoners to Pakistan -- I saw it myself -- it is an impossibility to do that. So I fear the worst." [Interview in Peshawar, September 26, 1984.]

The main problem, however, is that the Soviets and the Kabul government have refused to let the ICRC even interview their prisoners of war, that there is "no reciprocation from from the other side."\*/

"They [the resistance fighters] were very upset by a BBC report whilst I was there that said that two Russian prisoners were going back to Russia, had decided to go home, after a period of two years in prison [in Switzerland, under the ICRC agreement]. I spent the next week trying to explain this, because they felt that two years in prison was nothing -- they obviously are

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\*/ Francois Zen Ruffinen, head of the ICRC delegation in Pakistan.

shot to death immediately once they're caught, if the Russians realize that they're mujahedin." [Nicholas Danziger, also quoted above.]

The resistance groups have thus become more reluctant to cooperate with the ICRC. Some are once again killing Soviet prisoners, while others are holding them, but not permitting them to be transferred abroad.

The resistance generally treats captured Afghan conscripts as potential allies rather than enemies. Mike Hoover, a CBS television producer, described an incident he witnessed in September 1984 where fighters of the National Islamic Front of Afghanistan (Gailani) carefully disarmed a group of Afghan prisoners near Sarobi, Kabul Province:

"They were telling them to lay down their arms very carefully, because they didn't want to harm them. They were so careful, that one of them got killed. It was early evening, when visibility is really bad, and there was one guy who was guarding these prisoners. But it turned out that one of them was an officer, a real Party member, and he fired at the guy who was guarding him, and hit him right in the head. I saw him go down. He was dead. Then everybody started shouting and firing all over the place, but in the confusion, the officer escaped. The other ones, they did what they always do. They took their weapons and then let them go home to their families." [Interview with Jeri Laber and Barnett Rubin in Peshawar, September 22, 1984.]

We have even heard of the resistance giving the soldiers pocket money to pay for expenses on the trip home.

Afghan army officers are treated quite differently. A variety of representatives of the Afghan resistance, of different tendencies, said that they or an Islamic court first carry out an investigation to see whether an officer is a Party member, after which he is tried. In some cases, when it is feasible, the officer may be imprisoned, but usually he is sentenced to death. The sentence is often, but not always, carried out.

-- "Amnesty International also received reports of the execution of individuals detained by the many Islamic groups which were carrying out insurgent activities against the government of Babrak Karmal and which effectively controlled territory, although these were rarely officially acknowledged by the groups. At the end of December 1983 an Afghan Army Captain, Mohammad Naim, was reportedly executed following a 'trial' by one such group in Nangarhar Province."\*/

-- Aziz was a high school student from Kabul who ran away to join the resistance in Paghman after members of his family were arrested for connections to the Hezb-e Islami. The Paghman resistance group, affiliated with the party of Ghulam Rasul Sayyaf in Peshawar, suspected him of being a KHAD agent, interrogated him, and put him to work as a cook: "They had some prisoners of war. There was one them who belonged to the Party [P.D.P.A.]. He had a card, and they decided to kill him. But the commander of the mujahedin said to me, 'Shall I kill him, or would you like him to help you cook?' I said I needed the help, so he helped me cook. Another time they captured one army officer and two soldiers. They killed the officer and released the soldiers. The

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\*/ Amnesty International Report 1984, pp. 207-208.



commander of the mujahedin told me to kill him. He was sort of testing me, and I agreed, but then I found that he had already been killed." [Interview with Jeri Laber and Barnett Rubin in Peshawar, September 25, 1984.]

-- Agence France Presse correspondent Michel Martin-Roland witnessed the following scenes in May 1983 in the Barri Fort in Paktia Province, which had just fallen to one of the resistance groups (he did not say which one): "Under a tent sit six Afghan officers, tank drivers trained in the Soviet Union. Pale, frightened, they listen to a maulawi (Muslim scholar) teaching them and agree in a trembling voice to all of his criticisms. Outside, an unbearable odor: fifty prisoners have been shot in the last three days, then thrown into a mass grave covered with a few shovels of earth. 'The irredeemable Communists were executed. Others were shot while trying to escape,' stated one of the guards."\*/

-- In July 1981 wire services reported a large battle in the Paghman area of Kabul province between resistance forces and a military force that included several hundred cadets from the Kabul military academy. Some of these cadets were captured by the resistance.\*\*/ Anwar, a former office worker, knew one of them: "There were some military students in the military university, and the Russians advised that they would take them to practice shooting. And they were taken to a famous district called Paghman. They took these young kids -- they were taken out from the bus and told to start shooting. And there were thousands of automatic rifles shooting at

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\*/ Agence France Presse, Barri Fort, East Afghanistan, May 1, 1983.

\*\*/ Agence France Presse, Islamabad, July 22, 1981.

them, and they stopped shooting. One of my friends was there, and he told me. My friend was running through a street in a small village, trying to find a house to hide, and he was caught by a mujahed. He was taken to a mujahed court immediately and was asked if he was a member of the Communist Party. He said he is not. 'What are you doing here?' He said he was a student, and then he told the facts to the people there, like 'We were told we were going to practice. I've only been a student. One or two years and I will graduate, and I couldn't quit, because if I quit, then they would kill me. They would realize I quit the military because I came to work with the mujahedin, so I had to stay there.' So he told all the facts to the mujahedin, and he said he was kept in the night, because they went to many folks to find out if he was a member of the Communist Party. Since they didn't find his name, he was released so that he came back home." [Interview with Patricia Gossman and Hans Wahl, Chicago, April 15, 1984.]

#### B. Treatment of Other Prisoners

From time to time the Afghan resistance groups take other kinds of prisoners, usually suspected agents of the KHAD acting as spies. Sometimes these prisoners are tortured. We know of cases where torture has resulted in false confessions of guilt.

The Geneva Conventions and the Additional Protocols specifically note that spies do not have the status of prisoners of war.\* / Hence, putting such persons on trial per

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\* / Protocol I Additional to the Geneva Conventions, Article 46.

se is not a violation of the Conventions. There have been reports from various resistance parties that suspected spies have been sentenced to death by Islamic courts and executed. We do not have enough information to judge to what extent the "Islamic courts" grant prisoners the right to defend themselves.

There is cause for concern that innocent people may be arrested by some resistance groups and charged with spying for the KHAD; that those so accused may be tortured; and that they may be sentenced to death and executed under judicial procedures that do not adequately protect the rights of the accused and may well lead to the execution of the innocent.

-- Aziz, a former high school student, described how he became a prisoner of an Afghan resistance group affiliated with the party of Ghulam Rasul Sayyaf: "After my brother was arrested, my father told me and my other brother that we also might be arrested, so we should leave Kabul and join the mujahedin. So we went to Paghman to join the mujahedin, but they made us prisoners, because they thought we had been sent by KHAD. They didn't trust us, because they have a big problem with KHAD, and also they had found that students of my age from the government schools may be on the side of the government. So my brother and I were prisoners of the mujahedin for 13 months. They also tortured us by beating us on the feet. But we don't blame them. Some of the people are agents. Finally we confessed we belonged to KHAD. Then they kept beating us for a while. Eventually they stopped and let me work as their cook." [Interview with Jeri Laber and Barnett Rubin in Peshawar, September 25, 1984.]

- "Gul Mohammad [a resistance commander in Logar] said that towards the end of April [1983], four leading figures of the local informants' network were arrested at Zaidabad, Nazarkhel, Kotikhel, and Pol-e-Kandari; documents seized from them showed their close connections with the Soviet-Kabul authorities and the extent of their activities in the province. After having been tried by an Islamic resistance court, they were executed."\*/
- "The leader of the Afghan resistance in the Panjsher Valley, 'Commander' Ahmad Shah Massoud, has reportedly undertaken a vast purge among his resistance fighters, unmasking about 50 agents infiltrated from Kabul by the secret police ('KHAD'), Western diplomatic sources revealed Tuesday in Islamabad. According to this same source, these agents of the 'KHAD' were imprisoned in Rokha, in the southern part of the valley, on April 4, where they are awaiting trial. Some of the Communist regime's spies had portable radio transmitters. A source close to the resistance in Peshawar indicated that the mujahedin of Panjsher were continually on guard against infiltrators. The agents of the 'KHAD' who are discovered are killed, turned into double agents, or imprisoned."\*\*/
- "In the summer of 1982 I saw a trial near Herat, in a village controlled by the Jamiat-e Islami. The resistance had arrested an agent of the KHAD and imprisoned him in a house. This agent managed to escape, and, when they caught him, they beat him pretty badly. The next day a gazi [Islamic judge] was summoned, because the family of the KHAD agent had gone to the resistance court and entered a complaint against the mujahedin. The family of the KHAD agent actually went to the resistance

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\*/ Afghan Information Centre Monthly Bulletin, June 1983, p.3.

\*\*/ Agence France Presse, Islamabad, April 17, 1984.

court! And I was there the next day, when the gazi came in and started yelling at the commander. He said, 'Torture is forbidden by Islam. We should not adopt the practices of our enemy, or we will have no right to fight against him.' The resistance chief tried to excuse his men; he said, 'We didn't really torture him -- he was escaping,' and so on. But the gazi examined the prisoner and saw he had cut lips and a black eye and rebuked the commander again.

"Then the gazi convened a court of four judges and held a trial. This trial lasted over a week, maybe 8 to 10 days. I attended many of the sessions. The prisoner was charged with having caused the death of a member of the resistance. The gazi called a lot of witnesses, including the family of the accused. In the end the prisoner was found guilty and executed." [Testimony of Olivier Roy, French political scientist and expert on Afghanistan. Interview with Barnett Rubin in New York, April 25, 1984.]

We do not know of any political prisoners held by the Afghan resistance inside Afghanistan, although there are reports that the Hazara Council, the most highly developed resistance "government," may have held some.\*/ There are accusations that the Hezb-e Islami of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar has held such prisoners in Pakistan and also been responsible for political assassinations, perhaps in cooperation with the Pakistani intelligence agencies:

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\*/ "La situation dans le Hazarajat en 1980," available from Medecins sans Frontieres.

"Sometimes it is difficult to tell who is doing the detaining, as the distinction between Pakistan's own Special Branch in NWFP [Northwest Frontier Province] and Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's own security organization blurs. ... Hezb-i-Islami maintains its own detention centres in and near Peshawar. So do other resistance groups, such as Jamiat-i-Islami and Harakat Inquilab-i-Islami. Hezb-i-Islami concentrates on what it calls 'leftists' and 'Western imperialists.' Small, independent Afghan resistance groups or political parties are particularly nervous of SAKHAR, acronym for Organization for the Service of Islam, in effect Gulbuddin's private security and intelligence body which his critics say has its own surveillance and 'hit' squads."\*/

The resistance also tries to impose a sort of "frontier justice," punishing criminals of various sorts in ways not consistent with international standards employed under more settled conditions:

"Thirty Afghans accused of having committed several thefts, passing themselves off as mujahedin, had their right hands cut off last month after being tried by an Islamic court of the resistance. A group of Afghans, claiming to be mujahedin, committed several robberies and hold-ups in the province of Baghlan over the past few months. They went as far as to levy 'taxes' and to attack the real mujahedin in order to

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\*/ John Fullerton, The Soviet Occupation of Afghanistan, op. cit., p. 147.

confiscate their goods. But the Afghan rebels captured the 30 members of the gang, who were tried by a court of the mujahedin applying Islamic law."\*/

In other cases there are reports that resistance fighters have executed those found with looted goods or guilty of other such offenses common in areas disturbed by war.

### C. Attacks on Civilian Targets

The Afghan resistance has attacked civilians who collaborate with the Soviets or the Kabul government.

- "On the morning of April 27 [1983], three buses transporting Afghan youths for the parade on the anniversary [of the 'Saur Revolution'] ran over some mines near the Darulaman palace, in the southern part of the city [Kabul]. Twenty-five passengers, most of them seriously mutilated, were evacuated to one of the city's hospitals. ... The day before, five persons were killed and several tens of others injured by the explosion of two bombs placed in the entries of two buildings in the neighborhood

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\*/ Liberation, (Paris), May 8, 1984. The punishment of amputation is prescribed for theft, under certain conditions, by Islamic law. Amnesty International considers it to be "cruel and degrading treatment or punishment," as prohibited by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The United Nations Sub-Commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities adopted a resolution on August 29, 1984, calling for governments providing for amputation to substitute other punishments.

reserved for Soviets and members of the Afghan Communist Party."\*\*/

-- During the anti-government and anti-Soviet demonstrations in Kabul in June 1980, the resistance executed seven shopkeepers who refused to join the strike by closing their shops.\*\*/

-- "On December 4 [1983], about 9 p.m., a wedding party of government sympathisers at Matun village [Paktia Province] was raided by a mujahedeen group. Three collaborators of the local Khost radio station who were playing music at the party were killed, including Ahmad Khan, well-known for his anti-mujahedeen songs."\*\*\*/

Some resistance groups have also attacked and burned schools, a complicated matter because many schools have been turned into military posts. Prof. Hakim Taniwal explained to us: "In the rural areas, the only good buildings constructed by the government were the schools. So when the Party and military units moved into the countryside, they made their headquarters in the schools." Eshaq Gailani, a former lecturer in sociology, added: "I was a teacher at the university, but I myself, when I was fighting with the mujahedin, when I saw the Russians and Khalqis in the schools, I burned 10 schools." [Interview with Jeri Laber and Barnett Rubin in Peshawar, September 28, 1984.]

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\*/ Agence France Presse, Islamabad, May 3, 1983.

\*\*/ Ibid., June 23, 1980.

\*\*\*/ Afghan Information Centre Monthly Bulletin, January 1984, pp. 7-8.



Another reason given for attacks on schools was the use of the schools to impose Soviet and Communist ideology. "We built the schools," said Prof. Taniwal, "and they should be Afghan. But these schools are only producing Khalqis and Parchamis."

Economist Shah Mahmud Baasir was removed from his post as Director-General of Economic Analysis in the Ministry of Planning in 1978 and transferred to the Ministry of Education. He served there six years, until his defection in late September 1984, working as a high school teacher and a school inspector in both Kabul and Kandahar. In discussing resistance attacks on the schools, he attempted to place them in a larger context:

"One time in Kandahar in early 1981, they called a meeting of all the teachers, administrative officials, and clerical workers in the Ministry of Education. There was a complaint from the government that the mujahedin were burning the schools, killing the children. I asked for a chance to speak. I said, 'These people are not mad. They respect the schools and the teachers. Before 1978 no one ever attacked the schools. But the problem is that the Russians have just killed about 48 people in Kandahar. One of my students was wounded. This is because the Russians kill them indiscriminately. So the people are frustrated. Why are the Russians not prohibited from shooting people?' Then they all got angry with me, and told me, 'This sort of thing will affect your future.' Soon they transferred me and made all kinds of threats. But I didn't care.

"I heard many" stories about the mujahedin attacks on the schools when I was inspecting them. They would come at night and tie up the soldiers. They would do their best not to kill them. Then they would burn the books published by the Russians and go back. Then the military would start investigating the guards, who would say, 'We couldn't fight with the mujahedin.' They were in trouble because the mujahedin didn't kill them.

"The only problem to my mind is that the Russian armed forces should withdraw from Afghanistan." [Interview with Jeri Laber and Barnett Rubin in Quetta, October 2, 1984.]

## SOURCES

In preparing this report we have used written materials from a variety of sources: articles and news reports from a number of countries; books; materials collected by humanitarian and research organizations in England, France, Pakistan, Sweden, India, and the United States; and documentation compiled by scholars specializing in the area. We have relied primarily, however, on verbal evidence collected in interviews we conducted ourselves with Afghan refugees, with Western journalists and French doctors who have been behind the lines in Afghanistan, and with people working for relief agencies in Pakistan.

We know that refugees -- especially those from villages who have no experience in reporting and no context in which to understand what has happened to them -- are not always the most reliable witnesses. We took great care not to ask leading questions in the interviews we conducted and to let facts emerge by themselves. We asked for as many details as possible -- names, dates, descriptions. Most of the interviews were taped.

Whenever possible, we cross-checked the information we received by conducting separate interviews with people from the same place. In interviewing the groups of refugees, for example, one of us would interview the women and the other the men; later, we compared testimonies to see if they corresponded. We also cross-checked our information with that

of the Afghan Information Centre in Peshawar and with the files of AFRANE in Paris.

Occasionally, we have withheld or changed the names of people we interviewed, when they expressed concern about the safety of relatives still in Afghanistan. We have also withheld enough atrocity stories to fill another report or many appendices. Whatever we have included is only a fraction of the reality.



