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Soviet Troops
Are In
Afghanistan**

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FOREWORD

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He was author of an article on Afghanistan which appeared in the March-April issue of *New World Review* and, recently, an article on Latvia — January-February 1980.

Since its inception 63 years ago, the Soviet Union has repeatedly supplied the assistance, military and otherwise, which has made the difference in whether another country taking an independent, progressive course would succeed or fall prey again to imperialist attempts to overthrow the developing people's power.

Indeed, it was in Central Asia, just across the border from Afghanistan, that the first example of this occurred. The new Soviet state, in December 1917, had recognized the sovereignty and the right of self-determination of the Bokhara Emirate and the Khiva Khanate. This was done despite the fact that both states were ruled by reactionary feudal lords who brutally suppressed the workers' and peasants' movements. The revolutionary movement eventually grew strong in Bokhara and Khiva. The Khan of Khiva was overthrown by a popular revolt on February 1, 1920, and the Emir of Bokhara was similarly ousted in September 1920.

In both cases the new people's governments requested the aid of the Soviet Red Army, which

entered and protected the revolutions from counterrevolution aided by imperialism from bases in Iran, Afghanistan and India. (Bokhara and Khiva are today part of the Soviet Republic of Uzbekistan.)

On March 12, 1936 the Soviet Union and the Mongolian People's Republic signed a *Protocol on Mutual Assistance* that said: "The Governments of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the Mongolian People's Republic undertake to render each other all assistance, including military, in the event of an armed attack on either of the Contracting Parties." The threat came from fascist Japan.

In the summer of 1937 that threat had grown, leading the MPR government to request Soviet military assistance. Red Army forces entered the Mongolian territory. The Japanese attacked in July 1939. In the latter part of August 1939 the Soviet Red Army, at Khalkhin-Gol, decisively shattered the Japanese army in one of the great battles of the era. Yumjaagiyn Tsendenbal, the Mongolian People's head of state, has said: "On the battle-field of Khalkhin-Gol the sacred blood of Soviet and Mongolian soldiers again confirmed the fraternal friendship between our peoples, united by a common goal and common interests." (In article *International Affairs*, No. 9, 1979, p. 111 "The Victory at Khalkhin-Gol," by A. Babin.)

In 1939 pressure from the peoples of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania forced their governments to sign mutual assistance pacts with the Soviet Union, against the menace of German fascism.

When those fascist-inclined governments undertook to invite German Nazi troops onto their territories in disregard of those pacts, the peoples of all three countries rose up against their reactionary governments in June 1940. The Soviet Red Army, under the terms of the mutual assistance pacts that all three peoples wanted upheld, entered each of the Baltic republics and safeguarded the setting up of Soviet power. (See W. Pomeroy, "Latvia," *New World Review*, Jan.-Feb. 1980.)

The principle and the process of fraternal aid and revolutionary security extended by the Soviet Union were therefore well-established before the history-making defeat of fascism changed the relations of forces in the world. Since that time, and particularly since the Warsaw Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance was signed on May 14, 1955, the capability of the Soviet Union in acting as the protective shield for its socialist allies has been well and thoroughly impressed upon the capitalist powers, although these have never abandoned efforts to intervene in such countries to reverse the socialist gains.

In Hungary in 1956 and in Czechoslovakia in 1968 the Soviet Union, acting under provisions of the Warsaw Treaty, did not hesitate to carry out its revolutionary obligations, barring in each case counterrevolution that was being aided from outside.

All of these instances have concerned countries close to the Soviet borders, where the security of the Soviet Union itself is affected. How-

ever, countries in all regions of the world in the contemporary period are under-going processes of social emancipation and are choosing paths of socialist or non-capitalist development: Cuba, Ethiopia, Angola, Mozambique, South Yemen, and others. Imperialist powers continually try to subvert and to intervene in these new people's republics, which have turned to the Soviet Union and other developed socialist countries for assistance, military and economic. Even from a great distance, the Soviet Union, scrupulously following procedures governing relations between states that are recognized internationally and by the United Nations Charter, has given all necessary aid to those requesting it.

Wherever this has occurred it has been called "intervention" by the capitalist powers like the United States and Britain, which have long records of intervening in innumerable countries with military force to put down popular movements and to overthrow popular governments. It may well be said that interventions, like wars, may be just or unjust, depending on the aims and on the forces that benefit. History has already rendered the verdict on the nature of those past cases in which Soviet troops or other effective aid have been sent to other countries.

It could not be said by any responsible person today that the highly developed and prosperous people of Central Asia did not benefit from Red Army aid in 1920, or that the Mongolian people were not saved from savage treatment and the destruction of their new society at the hands of Japanese facism in the 1930s, or that the high

standard of living and burgeoning socialist culture of the Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians were not made possible by Red Army assistance in 1940 (and by subsequent Red Army liberation in 1944). It could not be said that the people of Hungary and Czechoslovakia are not more secure and better off in every respect because the Red Army helped to thwart those who would destroy socialism in those countries, or that the people of Angola did not benefit from the Socialist aid that prevented apartheid South Africa and the CIA from overthrowing their liberation government, or that the people of Ethiopia have not gained from being ably assisted in repelling the forces that would have restored an oppressive feudalism. This is the only real way that the strong response of the Soviet Union to requests for military assistance can be measured.

Afghanistan is but one of a growing number of countries where the people led by revolutionary movements have embarked on deep social changes to overcome extreme backwardness and oppressive forms of rule, and where they are relying on socialist allies to protect their gains. If the United States and other leading capitalist powers are seeking to make a major issue out of Afghanistan it is because of their mounting fear that its example will be followed by many other developing countries.

The prolonged economic crisis in the capitalist countries, the widening gap between them and the developing countries that they try to exploit more intensively, and ever-more impatient demands by the developing countries for a more

just "new international economic order" are ingredients in the crisis that has been whipped up over Afghanistan. A denunciation of the Soviet Union for "intervention" is intended to divert other countries from the thought of seeking Soviet assistance.

The issue in the case of Afghanistan boils down to: what is the Soviet Union along with its Afghan allies defending, and why has it been necessary?

The revolution that occurred on April 27, 1978 was basically anti-feudal in nature. Although the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan that led it is a Marxist party, it set out merely to accomplish national democratic aims as a necessary prelude for laying a basis for socialism. The main purpose of government policies over the past two years has been the breaking up and transformation of the old feudal society; the main opposition has come from the feudal elements from whom power and privilege have been taken.

Anahita Retezad, woman political bureau member of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan and education minister in the present government of Babrak Karmal, has said in an interview: "Communism belongs to the next generation. We are in a feudal state with semitribal economy. We are at the national democratic stage." (*Guardian*, London, January 23, 1980).

Central to the revolutionary program has been land reform. Most of the population of 15 million have lived by agriculture or nomadic herding. The mountainous, rocky nature of the land

meant that there were no really vast agrarian estates owned by single families: there were only 35 big feudal landlords, but these had been powerful.

The feudal power structure lay in these 35 families, in the 70 families that owned over 200 hectares* or a total of 28,000 hectares (1.9 percent of all land), in the 300 families that had 100 to 200 hectares or 43,500 hectares in all (2.1 percent of the land), and in the 1000 families that owned 40 to 100 hectares totalling 58,000 hectares (2.9 percent). These rich landowners were supplemented by 40,000 families who had between 6 and 40 hectares and were well-to-do. The land-owning gentry embraced by these groups amounted to but 2.9 percent of total farming households, holding 28.6 percent of the arable land.**

At the other end of the scale were 934,000 families that had less than 2 hectares each, with a total of 639,000 hectares (figures that indicate that a great many families had much less than 1 hectare, usually of rocky soil).

In the land reform of the new government, land was confiscated, without compensation, from those holding over 6 hectares. It was distributed free of charge to 300,000 peasants families, each receiving either 2 hectares of first class land or up to 10 hectares of very poor grade

*A hectare equals about 2.5 acres.

**Information in this and succeeding paragraphs on the land situation and subsequent reform steps is from series of articles in *New Age*, Delhi, India, Sept. 9, 16, 23, 1979. These were written by Sadhan Mukherjee after visiting Afghanistan.

land. Actual cultivators who had been tenants were first to get land, then the landless, then small-holders and nomads. Peasants were given the right of inheritance, but cannot sell their land to another. A total of 25,000 hectares was converted into state farms.

Along with this key reform went the introduction of democratic forms of participation. Around 820 cooperatives were set up with an initial 90,000 members. Trade unions were organized for the first time. A people's militia was established. Youth organizations and women's organizations were set up. The equality of nationalities was proclaimed. (Previously among the Pushtoon, Baluch, Tajik, Uzbek, Turkmen, Hazara, and Nuristani nationalities, the Pushtoon had been dominant with the rest more or less denied rights.)

Usury was abolished. This was one of the main forms of enrichment for the feudal landlords who were most often the tribal chiefs (sirdars) at the same time, holding a village or many villages in their control. It is estimated that 11 million peasants were in usurious debt conditions owing the equivalent of nearly \$700 million to the moneylenders. The debts were cancelled.

The whole range of feudal customs was done away with. In this, the principal step was the declaration of the equality of women. In feudal Afghanistan women were sold slave-like into marriage, the prices ranging from \$1,400 to \$4,550. This has been banned, and father-in-laws who demand a bridal price today can be brought to court.

Women, especially in the villages, were denied education. Over half of the population is illiterate, but among women the illiteracy rate was over 80 percent. An intensive drive to enroll women and girls in schools has been undertaken. According to sympathetic observers, women are enthusiastic supporters of the new government.*

Educational reform has been given major emphasis. In the first year 600 new schools were built, mostly in the villages, and new colleges were constructed. An Academy of Science was created. Over 12,000 graduates of lower schools were sent to higher schools and thousands were sent abroad to study, mainly to socialist countries. One million illiterates were enrolled in classes in the first year. In the factories it is the trade unions that conduct the literacy campaign. Each nationality now has schools in its own language, and has books published similarly.**

Imperialist propaganda against the revolutionary Afghanistan government has tried to claim that it has an anti-religious bias and has sought to suppress the Moslem religion. This has tried to capitalize on the fact that fanatical forms of belief and of interpretations of the Koran were made use of by the feudal rulers to enact submission from the people (rulers must be obeyed, property such as landownership must be respected,

*From interview with Dr. Anahita Ratebzad, Minister of Education in present Afghanistan government in *Guardian*, London, Jan. 23, 1980.

**From World Peace Council booklet "Onward March of the Afghan Revolution" and *Moscow News*, April 29, 1979.

women must be submissive to men, etc.) Uprooting of feudal customs is therefore made to appear like persecution of believers.

On August 8, 1979, a General Jirgah (Council) of the Islamic Ulema (Council of Mullahs) was held in Kabul. It included the foremost Ulema or Mullahs from all 20 provinces in Afghanistan. This meeting hailed the freedom of religion made possible by the new government, and expressed support for its reform. It declared: "With all certainty, our Khalqi (people's) state is the servant of destitutes and of poor people, and the protector of the religion of Islam and shariat of Mohammed."

The Ulema Council expressed support for the abolition of bride sale, and for the abolition of usury (it quoted a provision in the Koran that opposes usury). It said in its declaration that those who oppose the state "are rebels and insurgents and their elimination is legal and fighting them is in accordance with the Koran: Obey God, the Prophet, and your ruler."

On January 2, 1980, after the increased entry of Soviet troops into Afghanistan, the chairman of the Afghanistan Council of Ulema, Abdul Aziz Sadiq, gave an interview in which he praised the Soviet Union as a "reliable barrier against imperialist aggression." He said that Moslems in Afghanistan and elsewhere welcomed this. "All Afghans, Moslems, our entire people," he said, "resolutely reject the brazen and unprecedentedly malicious attacks of the imperialists and their accomplices on our country, on its pol-

icy, and on our friendship with the Soviet Union."**

In a further interview given on January 20 to the Madrid daily *El Pais*, he said: "I can assure you the Soviet Union has not interfered in the religious affairs of Afghanistan and has not tried to spread atheistic propaganda." He condemned the rebels fighting the government as "English Moslems" who did not receive their guidance from Mecca but from England.

It is unfortunate that the course of the Afghan revolution has been marked by serious conflicts over leadership and implementation of policies existing within the People's Democratic Party. These have not negated the historical necessity for the revolution but have complicated its development.

At the time of the April 1978 revolution the PDPA had less than 10,000 members, of which over 2,000 were in the army (a factor that made the revolutionary coup possible). Most of the party members were in the cities; there were extremely few members from the countryside. This made the carrying out of all-important land reform a grave problem. Without adequate revolutionary organization in the rural areas, landlords were able to defy the reform, to sabotage it, and to intimidate the peasants, withholding water for irrigation, seeds, implements and other needs.**

Consequently the government had to fall back

*Interview with Sadig on Jan. 2, 1980 *Times*, London.

**Information on PDPA members in *New Age* articles above.

on using the army to enforce the land reform in many areas, with all the tendencies toward coercion that this embodies. In the same way, in the haste to implement the literacy program without sufficient organization structure, force was sometimes used to compel young women to attend school against the resistance of father and brothers in villages under the influence of reactionary tribal chiefs and fanatical religious elements.

Strenuous efforts were made to build the People's Democratic Party, to provide the cadres for carrying out the revolutionary reform. By September 1979 the PDP had grown to 100,000 members, but this, too, meant great problems: of political education and of developing party branches throughout the country, problems that were especially great in the remoter areas where the feudal influences were stronger.

To fill the gap in trained personnel that existed in all fields in Afghanistan, the new government requested extensive Soviet assistance. Prime Minister Nur Mohammad Taraki informed the conference of non-aligned countries in Havana in September, 1979, that there were 1,431 Soviet advisers in Afghanistan. United States Intelligence and State Department releases constantly inflated these figures, claiming 7,000 in a report of October 30, 1979, and 10,000 a few days later on November 4.*

Soviet aid made up for the lack of development

*Statement by Taraki on Soviet aid, *Guardian*, London, Sept. 8, 1979.

resources in the backward Afghanistan economy. By November 1979, according to a *Pravda* report, Soviet assistance had been given for 131 projects, of which 71 were already in operation. In addition to economic aid, requested Soviet help was given to the training and equipping of the Afghan army.

On December 5, 1978 a Soviet-Afghanistan *Treaty of Friendship, Good Neighborliness and Cooperation* was signed. It is a 20-year Treaty that includes provisions for the Soviet Union to give military assistance when requested. Article 4 of that Treaty states:

"Acting in the spirit of the traditions of friendship and good-neighborliness, as well as the United Nations Charter, the parties to the treaty will be consulting each other and with mutual consent will be taking appropriate measures to ensure security, independence and territorial integrity of both countries. In the interests of reinforcing defense potentials of the parties to the treaty, they will continue developing cooperation in the military sphere."

Opposition to the new government came as soon as it won power and began to promulgate reforms. It came from varied quarters ranging from extreme right to extreme left. Any revolution that brings serious social changes is opposed by the minority whose interests are affected, and often they are able to influence backward or politically uneducated sections of the population. The disaffected groups in Afghanistan included both wealthy bourgeois and feudal elements. Dispossessed landlords and moneylenders, who usu-

ally were also the tribal chiefs and their lieutenants, formed the leadership of most right-wing groups. Besides land rents, crop shares, usury, and various tributes from the feudal relationships, these had had a big source of income from the feudal bride sale, which usually was negotiated through the tribal chief who received a percentage of the price.

One of the main leaders of rebel forces that were formed, Sebhatullah, was one of the richest feudal landlords in Afghanistan. Another, Syed Ahmed Gilani, who heads what he calls the Islamic Revolutionary Council, is a dispossessed landowner from the Kabul area. A third right-wing group, Paiman-i-Ittihade Islami, wants the restoration of the reactionary monarchy and the return of King Sahir Shah who had been deposed in 1973 by the former Daud government and has been residing in Italy. The leader of a fourth group, the self-proclaimed "Free Islamic Republic," is actually a U.S. citizen, Zia Khan Nassri, who had headed a "consultancy agency" in New York; according to the British *Financial Times* (January 31, 1980), the money used by Nassri for his group's activities "apparently emanates from an overdraft on his personal account at Citibank in New York."

Besides the right-wing rebels, there is an ultra-left group, the Sholee Jawid, Maoist in inclination. Based initially among students in Kabul who were from the Tajik region in the north near the border with China, this group fled to the northern mountains after the April Revolution and had tried to conduct guerrilla war-

fare from the area with Chinese assistance.

As in the case of the Cuban "gusanos," the disaffected elements fled the country. The wealthier among them went to Western Europe. The local landlords and tribal chiefs, usually compelling peasants and villages they control to evacuate with them, crossed the border into Pakistan. Rebel warfare that began was not based in Afghanistan but in adjoining countries, mainly Pakistan, from which hit-and-run attacks have been made across the border.

The so-called rebellion or counter-revolution against the revolutionary government in Afghanistan is one of the most embroidered and fictionalized of stories in contemporary propaganda. There has been no even-remotely unified opposition or rebellion against the government. The armed actions have followed the pattern of feudal chieftanship with its petty rivalries and bloody feuding as well as resistance to central authority that have marked Afghan society, due in part to the extremely mountainous terrain of the country that separates villages in isolated valleys.

Most of the "rebel" bands have operated as bandits. Following the dictates of landlords and feudal chiefs, they have specialized in murdering peasants who received land under the land reform and schoolteachers bringing education to backward villages. Schools have been the chief targets for burning and bombing. Nick Downey, a British television cameraman who spent four months with the roving bands on the Pakistan border, said on return that the rebels "fight

mainly for loot." (London *Times*, December 31, 1979) Emancipated women have also been murdered.

The correspondent of the London *Times* reported from the city of Jalalabad on February 4, 1980: "The *mojaheddin* have burnt most of the schools in the surrounding villages on the ground that these were centers of atheism and communism. But they also murdered the schoolteachers, and several villagers in Jalalabad spoke of children who were accidentally killed by the same bullets. The *mojaheddin* are still not universally loved and their habit of ambushing civilian traffic on the road—two weeks ago they murdered a German lorry driver—has not added much glory to their name."

Many of the bands on the Pakistan border are made up of smugglers who had operated on a large scale, dealing in every conceivable commodity, but whose activities had been suppressed and made illegal by the revolutionary government. Clashes between these elements, still persisting in smuggling with armed convoys, and Afghan government troops are played up as incidents of counter-revolution.

Without organized assistance and direction from outside, these sporadic instances of banditry would undoubtedly have been taken under control by the government forces in due time, as they have in virtually every revolution that has ever occurred. The dispossessed exiles, however, were quickly contracted and mobilized for prolonged resistance by varied foreign quarters. These were: the United States (with the CIA as

chief instrument), China, Egypt (working together with U.S.), and the reactionary feudal states of the Persian Gulf.

The Soviet press has published the names of some of the CIA agents who became regular visitors to the Afghan exile camps in Pakistan: Lynn Robinson, Rogers Block, Vanan David. (*Sovietskaya Rossia*, January 9, 1980) In July 1979 the Pakistan weekly *Millet* reported that CIA headquarters for the South West Asian region had been transferred from Teheran to Peshawar, Pakistan. (*Pravda*, January 8, 1980)

Peshawar became the main headquarters for the Afghan rebel groups, which had no concept of organization until consultations were held with "representatives of friendly countries." The military attachés of the U.S., Chinese, Egyptian and other embassies made regular trips to Peshawar, as did Pakistani officers. In the middle of 1979 a Chinese military delegation visited Pakistan and toured the border area near Afghanistan where exile camps were located, especially the Khyber Pass area.

In January 1979 a conference of Afghan rebels was held in Peshawar, which set up a "committee of struggle" that had regular connections with "friendly countries." Organized camps for training purposes began to be set up, with CIA and Chinese instructors. By April 1979 there were 12 such camps in Pakistan. By the beginning of 1980 these had increased to 30 bases and 50 training centers. Up to November 1979 a total of 15,000 rebels had been trained. (*Pravda*, January 8, 1980; London *Times*, February 6, 1980)

In late November 1979 representatives of the various armed groups based in Pakistan journeyed to Western Europe and met with Afghan emigré bourgeois elements in Munich, a well-known CIA center. (Pravda, January 8, 1980)

On February 15, 1980 U.S. government sources admitted that the CIA had been aiding the Afghan rebels before December 1979 when direct Soviet military assistance to the Afghanistan government began. It was admitted that the CIA had provided the rebels with medical supplies, communications equipment and "technical advice" (i.e., military training, instruction in sabotage, etc.) The question of arms supply at that time was still evaded, but it was admitted that quantities of arms were delivered to the rebels by the CIA "shortly after" Christmas 1979 when Soviet troops arrived. (*Guardian*, London, February 16, 1980) A logistics system with arms in the pipeline would have had to exist for such rapid backing to be given, especially when through a third country, Pakistan.

Reports of this foreign-assisted counter-revolutionary warfare were published in growing volume throughout 1979. When the International Conference of Solidarity with the Peoples of Afghanistan was held in Kabul on August 24-27, 1979, sponsored by the World Peace Council, it was presented with abundant evidence of this intensifying armed subversion. The Kabul Declaration adopted by the Conference stated:

"The United States imperialists, international reaction and the expansionist and bellicose

leaders of the People's Republic of China are financing, organizing and training reactionary forces in Pakistan and Iran to launch armed intervention against the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan.

"A handful of reactionary elements, supporters of the old monarchy and of the feudal lords and their henchmen, are being used by the CIA and its reactionary allies to make statements on the radio networks and in the press of imperialism, international reaction, expansionists and hegemonists to suggest that these armed mercenaries, many of them belonging to para-military forces of Pakistan, who in their attacks into Afghanistan cut into pieces small girls and boys, ill old people, burn schools, hospital and mosques, destroy bridges, roads and buildings, and make savage and horrible assaults against the villages, are part of a so-called 'uprising' of the the people of Afghanistan directed against the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan and the Government of Afghanistan."

In addition to the Declaration, the Solidarity Conference dispatched a message to the General Assembly of the United Nations, which said:

"Thanks to the economic measures it has taken, Afghanistan has fulfilled in the best possible way the resolutions of the United Nations for the the establishment of a New International Economic Order. The Saur Revolution has brought about a new meaning to the life of the Afghan people by undertaking and implementing fundamental and practical steps, such as carrying out of the agrarian reform, guaranteeing the free exercise of reli-

gious beliefs and equal rights for nationalities, creation of trade unions, cooperatives and other mass organizations, elimination of mortgages, elimination of illiteracy, which are all in the interests of the Afghan people. . . .

"At this hour, the forces of imperialism and reaction have launched a vicious campaign of armed intervention against the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan.

"The conference appeals to the United Nations at the coming session of its General Assembly which opens next month in New York, to take all possible steps to halt the armed intervention against the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan, which violates the charter of the UN.*

This appeal was not acted upon by the U.N. General Assembly. Training and arming of counter-revolutionary groups went on at an accelerated pace in the latter part of 1979. The *British Daily Telegraph*, in report from its correspondent in the training camp area of Pakistan, said on November 14 that the rebels "are reorganizing and planning for the spring."

The crisis that developed for the Afghan Revolution in the latter part of 1979 did not come only from the external threat of armed attack being organized and mounted by imperialist interventionists. It came also from an internal threat, from elements within the People's Democratic Party and the revolutionary government, who were pursuing an extremist line that was

*Quotation from World Peace Council booklet, "Onward March of the Afghan Revolution."

disrupting revolutionary reforms and alienating many of the people.

Organized in 1965, the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan had divided into two groupings by 1967. Originally, the two main leaders of the PDPA were Nur Mohammad Taraki and Babrak Karmal. The latter had been a dynamic student leader. One of those who subsequently joined the party and became a leader was Hafizullah Amin joined with Taraki to head one wing of the PDPA that called itself Khalq (Masses); the other wing, calling itself Parcham (Banner), was led by Babrak Karmal. The Parcham group broke away in 1967. It included the leading theoretician of the party, Mir Akhbar Khaiber, and the present minister of education, Dr. Anahita Ratebzad.

Under Karmal, the Parcham wing took the position of working within parliaments and governments to back and strengthen the more progressive trends. When the Daud regime was established through a coup in 1973, Parcham supported the dissolution of the monarchy and the establishment of a republic. Both Parcham and Khalq followed parallel paths of organizing in the army as well as civilian sectors, but Khalq took a more clandestine course, outside of the political system. When the Daud regime failed to carry out promised reforms and became smothered in corruption, Karmal negotiated a settlement of difference with Khalq. At a unity conference in 1977 the PDPA was reunited, with Taraki at its head.

This party unity facilitated the April 1978 re-

volution that ousted the Daud regime and established the present people's republic. Of the ministers in the revolutionary government, eleven were Khalq and ten were Parcham. The unity, however, did not last long. Soon after the revolution the Parcham group was forced out of the government, with many of its leaders, including Babrak Karmal, "exiled" through appointment as ambassadors of the government in other countries (Karmal was assigned to Prague).

The combined factors of leadership rivalry and of approach to implementing the reforms initiated by the revolutionary government brought about the split in the PDPA. Khalq sought to press a rapid transformation that led to errors of haste and roughshod methods. Parcham had advocated a gradualist line.

Both before and after the April 1978 revolution, the personality of Hafizullah Amin had played a key part in the dissension and intrigues within the PDPA. After the 1977 unity conference, his attempts to promote an anti-Karmal cabal even led to an 11 to 4 vote in the Political Bureau of the party for his expulsion, later rescinded.

Amin reportedly engineered the coup that overthrew Daud. He was the chief organizer of the internal party coup that removed Parcham members from the revolutionary government. On March 28, 1979 he became prime minister. However, he failed to command sufficient trust in the party to attain full leadership: Taraki remained as president of the revolutionary council (the actual director of the revolution and of the

government), as secretary-general of the PDPA, and as supreme commander of the armed forces.

An article in the anti-Communist journal *Problems of Communism* (No. 28) found it a "curious spectacle" that Amin should be prime minister of a revolutionary government, because he had been trained at Columbia University in New York, where he had obtained a doctorate. This fact caused a lingering distrust of Amin in the PDPA, where even some of his Khalq associates wondered at the seeming discordance of his background and his ruthless extremist tendencies.

In August 1979 President Taraki went abroad. He attended the Non-Aligned conference in Havana that month, then visited the Soviet Union on his way home. There he met Babrak Karmal. In the course of their talks, Karmal impressed upon him the mistakes being committed by the revolutionary government under Amin's influence. Taraki admitted the errors and admitted that it was wrong to place such trust in Amin. He reportedly offered to dismiss Amin and bring Karmal back into the government.

Amin learned of the Taraki-Karmal meetings. Soon after Taraki's return to Kabul, Amin engineered another coup on September 16, in which Taraki was killed. Amin assumed presidency of the revolutionary council and command of the armed forces.

This turn of affairs brought the Afghan revolution to the brink of disaster. Amin instituted a reign of terror, in part to establish his undisputed control of the PDPA and in part to ram through

his governmental policies ruthlessly, overriding popular sentiment, Moslem practices, and lack of organized preparation for changes. The result was extensive disaffection among the peoples and the creation of opportunities for the rebel elements to be more active.

Between September and December 1979 the Amin regime executed and otherwise killed an estimated 8,000 to 10,000 people. An untold number were imprisoned. Of these, over 2,000 were militants and activists of the People's Democratic Party, including the wife of Nur Mohammad Taraki and the leader of the Afghan women's organization, Soraya, who was also a central committee member of the PDPA. All told, over 500 women were imprisoned, 50 of them PDPA members, some of them being tortured.

The Afghan army itself, where the purge also took effect, was itself demoralized in this period, enabling bolder activity by the rebel forces.

Sometime in October 1979 Babrak Karmal returned to Afghanistan and began underground political and military organization. He began with his Parcham group but also won over many of the Khalq members. Nearly all the units in the army went over to Parcham in this period. A key to the gaining of control lay in winning a majority in the revolutionary council. By December this was attained. On December 29 the Parcham forces and those allied with them were able to gain control. The revolutionary council removed Amin from his posts, arrested him, and ordered his execution. So widespread had hatred of Amin's rule become by then that there was virtu-

ally no opposition to the change of government leaders.

The government of President Babrak Karmal has denounced Hafizullah Amin as having had secret ties with the CIA and other agencies of the U.S. government. His behavior in the PDPA and in the revolutionary government of Afghanistan is viewed as a wrecking operation in league with imperialist interests. Amin's actuations as he became aware of the movement to remove him tend to bear out such an association.

Early in December 1979 he is reported to have made overtures to the U.S. for help, via the Afghan United Nations delegation. (*Guardian*, London, February 8, 1980) At the same time he approached the Pakistan government for aid. President Zia of Pakistan said on February 13, 1980 that Amin had sent "frantic messages" to him for an immediate meeting to get assistance. "Diplomatic sources" in Kabul admitted that Amin also approached U.S. representatives then. (*Times*, London, February 14, 1980) It has been claimed that Amin was plotting to bring U.S. and Chinese troops in to keep himself in power.

The London *Guardian* on January 22, 1980 published a report showing a concensus of views from a variety of sources in Kabul—Afghan, Soviet, East European, western diplomats, the official Afghan press—indicating that the latter part of December was the critical period in the struggle for control within the Afghan revolution forces. This report stated that Amin had planned a "bloodletting" for December 29 in which all

prominent political prisoners who opposed him were to have been killed, and, more important, in which the Soviet embassy was to have been assaulted by troops and secret police loyal to Amin, all but a few of its personnel killed, the selected few to be held as hostages. An appeal was then to have been made by Amin to the United States for aid to resist any Soviet response.

From both inside and outside the country serious threats had developed to the Afghan revolution. A combined assault on Afghanistan and its revolution was taking shape. If this had occurred, the bloodletting and mass oppression of the Afghan people would have been very plainly on a vast scale, far exceeding that which took place in Chile.

From the standpoint of the Soviet Union these developments had to be dovetailed with U.S. imperialist moves on the global scale. Under U.S. pressure, NATO countries in Western Europe had in November agreed to the stationing of advanced first-strike nuclear missiles on their territories, targetted on the Soviet Union. The Carter administration simultaneously was pressing countries in the Middle East and its vicinity for agreement to permit U.S. military bases to be established for receiving the 110,000-strong "rapid deployment forces" designed to serve U.S. "vital interests." A counter-revolutionary regime installed in Afghanistan with U.S. backing would provide an important base for every variety of anti-Soviet activity.

In this time of danger to the revolution in Af-

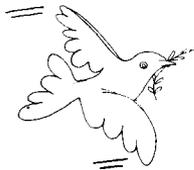
ghanistan, when a crisis in the revolutionary government coincided with an active threat of intervention from outside, the Soviet Union heeded the request of the Afghan authorities under the Treaty of Friendship and sent contingents of the Red Army into Afghanistan in the last week of December, 1979.

As in the case of all previous acts by the Soviet Union to defend the revolution and its gains in neighboring and other friendly countries, the capitalist media in orchestrated chorus has cried "Intervention!" while the United States has taken the lead in trying to penalize the Soviet Union for its fraternal step.

The Red Army presence in Afghanistan, however, bears no resemblance to any intervention carried out by aggressor states. Its significance may be seen in Afghan villages where unmolested peasants can continue with the carrying out of land reform and with the overcoming of their illiteracy, where young women can be free to attend schools and be free from sale into marriage, and where the usurer remains banished. It may be seen in the Afghan cities, where workers can feel free of the fear of having their trade unions suppressed, and where the industrial projects can rise as the basis for a new and modern Afghanistan.

It is the Afghan people themselves who will carry out their revolution to its completion. The Soviet Red Army is a shield behind which they can fulfill that task in peace.





ACTION

Concerned with American interests undermined by the Administration's unwarranted and extreme reaction to the events in Afghanistan, the National Council of American-Soviet Friendship has presented recommendations calling for counter-action to its 18 affiliated societies across the country.

1. Hold fast to provisions of the SALT II Treaty pending ratification. Bring to the Senate at earliest favorable opportunity to formalize the ratification.
2. Arrest the plan and production that would send more nuclear missiles — Pershing II's and advanced cruise missiles — into the hands of NATO countries in middle Europe, capable of first-strike direct attack on the Soviet Union.
3. Cancel plan for the creation of the MX Missile System.
4. Cut the military budget.
5. Remove all barriers to United States trade with the Soviet Union.
6. Lift the boycott on United States participation in the summer 1980 Olympics in Moscow.

We urge you to participate in these actions and to join in coalition efforts being organized in many cities. If you wish further information and supporting documents, you may write

Peace Division
National Council of American-Soviet Friendship
Suite 304 156 Fifth ave., New York, N.Y. 10010

ACTION

Cooperated with American interests undertaken by the Administration a unswerving and extensive support to the efforts in Afghanistan. The National Council of American-Soviet Friendship has provided for consultations calling for counter-action in its 14-15th district outside of the country.

1. Hold out in front of the BALL H. Every possible contribution. Bring to the attention of the most favorable opportunity to formulate the plan.

2. Assess the plan and production that would send more nuclear missiles -- Testing H's and advanced nuclear missiles -- into the hands of NATO countries in middle Europe, capable of their direct attack on the Soviet Union.

3. Carry plan for the creation of the MX missile system.

4. Cut the military budget.
5. Remove all barriers to United States trade with the Soviet Union.

6. Let the boycott on United States products in the summer 1980 (boycott in Moscow).

We urge you to participate in the action and to join in coalition efforts being organized in many cities. If you wish further information and supporting literature you may write:

Peace Division
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Suite 308, 125 Park Ave., New York, N.Y. 10019

