

ALLIANCE 45: Originally February 2, 2002***Web republication at Marxist-Leninist Currents today 21 August, 2021.*****THE AFGHANISTAN WAR OF 2002 - LEGACY OF USA IMPERIALISM
AND SOCIAL-IMPERIALISM**

Introduction

The Afghanistan war of 2001-2002 has been the prelude to the coming Third World War. In this world war the force of the USA will be likely pitched against that of China. We anticipate that some of the **key** points of the war will involve the Central Asian Republics and their strategic positions, and their reserves of oil.

The tragedy of the Afghan people can be traced to the absence of a Marxist-Leninist party in the country. But, it must be **openly** admitted that the objective circumstances facing the revolution in Afghanistan were always huge - larger perhaps than facing many other countries in the immediate area.

We will argue that the legacy of Oriental despotism, and the failure to develop more than a rudimentary national capitalist class – has posed huge difficulties for the Afghan toiling masses. The leaders of the Marxist-Leninist (Lenin and Stalin) movement had mapped out a pathway for such countries, but these depended critically on the working classes of either the socialist countries or the metropolitan West to aid the backward countries.

Regrettably the rise of Khrushchevite revisionism – has temporarily – halted that assistance. Instead of true socialist aid – the architects of revisionism ensured that Afghanistan became a neo-colony of the revisionist USSR. The USSR in that period engineered a social-imperialism.

This in conflict with USA imperialism, destroyed the well being of the Afghan peoples. We know that the Afghanistani Marxist-Leninists will re-build their movement.

We hope that we will from now, be able to help the Afghan movement re-build itself.

TABLE OF CONTENTS:**Introduction**

1. AFGHANISTAN - The Land
2. Early History
3. The Peoples of Afghanistan
4. Beginnings of The Modern Multi-National State of Afghanistan
5. Class Character of Afghanistan Prior To British Imperialism
6. British Incursions – The First Two Anglo-Afghan Wars
7. The Reign of Amir Amanullah 1919-1929: 'Reform Monarchy'
8. Class Character of Afghanistan in the Modern Era
9. Some Definitions
10. The Marxist-Leninist Strategy Of Revolution In The Colonial And Semi-Colonial Countries

11. Later Attempts to Develop the Afghani Bourgeoisie – Reliance on either the USA or Khrushchevite Revisionist Led USSR
 12. Early Progressive Organisations Leading up to The Formation of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA)
 13. The regime of Sardar Mohammed Daoud 1973-1978 – A Pashtun Dominated Comprador state.
 14. The 1978 Saur (Month of Taurus the Bull [April]) Revolution
 15. The "Eid Coup" – The Break-up of the Ruling Alliance
 16. The Comprador USSR Presidency of Babrak Karmal
 17. Gorbachev and Najibullah – A Change of Guard
 18. The Economic Status of Afghanistan At the End of the Soviet Comprador regime
 19. The Wars of the Mujahadeen
 20. The Economy of the Mujahadeen War-Lords
 21. The Rise, Ideology and Backers Of the Taliban
 22. What Is the Class basis of the Taliban?
 23. Consolidation of Taliban Victory – Embroiling of Central Asian Republics In War
 24. Prelude To The New USA War
 25. The USA Led War Against the Afghanistan State
 26. Motives For The USA Led War
 27. The New Comprador Regime of Hamid Karzai
 28. Conclusions
- List of Relevant Alliance Articles
Bibliography
Appendix: USA & Afghan families meet

1. AFGHANISTAN - The Land

Modern Afghanistan consists of 245,000 square miles split by the Hindu Kush mountain range. The population by 1978 was 15 million (Anwar, Raja: "The Tragedy of Afghanistan"; London; 1988; p. 125).

The region originally known as Khorasan, only came to be known as Afghanistan in the mid 18th century. Afghanistan means literally "The land of the Afghans". Its geographical position means that its lands form crossings from West to East, and from North to South - that were coveted both by the caravans of the Silk Route and by foreign invaders.

To the North-East corner lie the Pamir Mountains abutting onto Tajikstan, China and Pakistan. Directly North of the Hindu Kush lies the Central Asian steppes leading into Siberia. To the West lies historic Persia and modern day Iran, while to the East was historic India and modern day Pakistan through the narrow mountain passes such as the Khyber Pass. In such a bleak area, it is not surprising that only 10-12% of the terrain is

cultivable (*Rashid, Ahmed: "Taliban. Militant Islam, Oil & Fundamentalism in Central Asia"; New Haven; 2000; p.8*).

This geographical vortex has sucked waves of invaders into it, from ancient to modern times. No wonder that the Indian poet Mohammed Iqbal described it as 'The heart of Asia', whereas Lord Curzon, British Viceroy of India vividly portrayed it as "the cockpit of Asia". Engels agreed with these sentiments, adding the important human element - the unique character of its people:

"The geographical position of Afghanistan and the peculiar character of its people invest the country with a political importance that can scarcely be over-estimated in the affairs of Central Asia";

Engels, Frederick: "Encyclopedia article on Afghanistan"; 1857: In Collected Works; Volume 18; Moscow 1982; pp. 41; <http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1857/afghanistan/index.htm>

2. Early History

Early in historic times, Alexander the Great conquered the area bringing Hellenistic culture to Southern Afghanistan in 392 BC. Thereafter, repeated incursions included the Arabs in 645 AD bringing Islam; the Persians of the Saminid dynasty who stayed between 874-999 AD; the Ghaznavid dynasty who used it as a base to secure Northern India between 977-1186; the Mongol hordes of Genghis Khan who ravaged Afghanistan in 1219 and his descendant Taimur (Timur, or Tamerlane) who established the empire of the Timurids in 1381. Afghan tribes themselves periodically ruled Indian-Afghan dynastic empires, such as the Lodi empire of Delhi in the years 1451-1526.

3. The Peoples of Afghanistan

Afghanistan is usually rendered as being equivalent to the Pushtun nation, which in effect has been the dominant nation in a multi-national confederacy.

The second largest grouping-nation is the Tajik numbering by 1978, 3-4 million. In reality there are numerous ethnic groups as well, only some of which have by now achieved a national status. It has been described as:

"a tribal confederation comprising multi-racial groups and nationalities";

Anwar, Raja "The Tragedy of Afghanistan"; London; 1988; p.125.

The predominant religion is Islam, more particularly the Sunni branch. To the South of the Hindu Kush mountains are the majority of the Pashtuns, and to the North live Persian and Turkic ethnic groups. The Persian speaking Hazaras and Tajiks inhabit the Hindu Kush. In the West, Persian or Dari (Afghan dialect of Persian) is mainly spoken by both Pushtun and Tajiks, as well as by the Hazaras in central Afghanistan. In the North, the various Turkic languages of Central Asia are spoken by the Uzbeks, Turcomans, Krgyz and other tribes. Some other Pushtuns speak Pashto.

Pushtun Tribes:

Gankovsky, a Soviet historian proposed that the Pushtun tribes originated in the first millenium AD, from the East Iranian tribes of the Ephtalite Confederacy (*Cited by Raja Anwar; "The Tragedy of Afghanistan"; London; 1988; p.2*). By the 16th century the Pushtuns ("Those from Pusht" – a mountainous area known as Koh-I-Suleman) had migrated to far Eastern Afghanistan.

Pushtuns trace a common ancestor **Quais Abdul Rashid** who was converted to Islam, by the Prophet Mohammed himself. But a sub-division of the Pushtuns – the **Ghilzai** - are said to descend from the illicit affair of **Shah Hussain** with **Bibi Mato** (grand daughter of Quais Abdul Rashid) whose offspring were "ghilzai" (literally offspring of sin) (*Cited by Raja Anwar; "The Tragedy of Afghanistan"; London; 1988; p.6*).

The Pushtuns therefore are divided into two factions, the **Abdali or Durranni Pushtuns**, and the **Ghilzai Pushtuns**. It was largely the Durrani who formed the ruling sections.

In modern day Afghanistan, it must be concluded then:

- That there are a number of individual national minorities, including: the Pashtuns, Tajiks, Turkomans, Uzbeks, Hazaras, Baluchs, Qizilbash.
- The dominant nation is the Pushtun nation.
- Because of the history of colonial invasions, many of these minorities now live in several different countries – being Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, etc. These minorities form an oppressed national minority in several different states.
- Afghanistan is therefore a state that cuts across several national boundary lines, dominated by the Pushtun nation, and contains the elements of a multi-national state.

A **map** and overall summary of the main nationalities can be found at these web-sites:

<http://www.afghan-info.com/Ethnicst.htm>

http://www.vallemar.org/student/news/afghan_nationalities.htm

4. Beginnings of The Modern Multi-National State of Afghanistan

A separate Afghan identity began to emerge in the 18th century following the disintegration of the **Safavid** Dynasty in Iran to the West – and of the **Mughal** dynasty in India. As these empires dissolved, in the vacuum, the Pushtuns held a **tribal confederation** in 1747, known as a **Loya Jirga**, which elected **Ahmad Shah Abdali (Durrani)** as paramount chief. The Durrani leaders were to form the entire line of kings of Afghanistan until the modern time. Within a few years he had united the Pashtun tribes, and had seized regions from the two dying empires, and expanded North into Uzbekistan, and East into Kashmir and Delhi. By 1780, under his son **Taimur Shah** the Northern border was fixed at the river Oxus in a treaty with the Amir of Bukhara. But the **First Afghan empire** effectively splintered under tribal wars of succession.

Marx described these events as follows:

"Amid the anarchy that ensued in Persia after the death of Nadir Shah in 1747, there sprang up under the rule of Ahmed Duranee, an independent Afghan kingdom comprising the Principalities of Herat, Cabul, Candahar, Pechawur, and the whole of the territories afterward owned by the Sikhs. This kingdom only superficially cemented, collapsed at the death of its founder was again broken up into its constituent parts, the independent Afghan tribes with separate chiefs, divided by interminable feuds and only exceptionally rallied under the common pressure of a collision with Persia. This political antagonism between the Afghans and Persians, founded on diversity of race, blended with historical reminiscences, kept alive by frontier quarrels and rival claims, is also as it were sanctioned by religious antagonism, the Afghans being Mohammedans of the Suni sect, that is to say of the orthodox Mahometan faith, while Persia forms the stronghold of the heretical Shiites";

Marx K: "The War Against Persia"; Written January 27 1857; in Collected Works; Volume 15; Moscow 1986; p.177-178.

With these internecine wars, as the First Afghan Empire collapsed, both the British from East India and the Russian from the North, began their attempts to take over Afghanistan.

5. Class Character of Afghanistan Prior To British Imperialism

Alliance has re-published an outline of Marxist-Leninist views on the Asiatic Mode of Production, or Oriental Despotism, written by Communist League and W.B.Bland.

The key criteria that mark the **Asiatic Mode of Production** include:

a) Extensive public works relating to irrigation, drainage and flood control. Both Engels and Marx independently identified that area that now subsumes modern day Afghanistan as being within this mode of production:

"Great stretches of desert extend from the Sahara straight across Arabia, Persia, India and Tartary up to the highest Asiatic plateau. Artificial irrigation is here the first condition of Oriental agriculture."

Engels F; Letter to Karl Marx; June 6th 1853; In Correspondence 1846-1895"; London 1936; p. 67.

"Climate and territorial conditions, especially the vast tracts of desert extending from the Sahara, through Arabia, Persia, India and Tartary to the most elevated Asiatic highlands, constituted artificial irrigation by canals and waterworks the basis of Oriental agriculture".

K. Marx: "The British Rule in India", in: "Selected Works"; Volume 2; London; 1943; p. 652.

"It is the necessity of bringing a natural force under the control of society, of economising, of appropriating or subduing it on a large scale by the work of man's hand, that first plays the decisive part in the history of industry. Examples are the irrigation works in Egypt, Lombardy, Holland, or India and Persia, where

irrigation by means of artificial canals not only supplies the soil with the water indispensable to it, but also carries down to it, in the shape of sediment from the hills, mineral fertilisers".

K. Marx: "Capital", Volume 1; Moscow, 1954; p. 514.

b) A coercive state, in order to handle large-scale labour forces required to make these vast irrigation projects a reality. The directing personnel become, relatively rapidly, a ruling class in the full sense of the word, and the organs of authority under their control a **coercive state** in the full sense of the word:

"The state, which the primitive groups of communities of the same tribe had at first arrived at only in order to safeguard their common interests (e.g. irrigation in the East) . . . from this stage onwards acquires just as much the function of maintaining by force the conditions of existence and domination of the ruling class against the subject class".

F. Engels: "Herr Eugen Duhring's Revolution in Science"; Moscow; 1959; p.205.

"This prime necessity of an economical and common use of water . . . necessitated in the Orient the interference of the centralising power of government. Hence an economic function devolved upon all Asiatic governments, the function of providing public works".

K Marx: "The British Rule in India" in: "Selected Works" Volume 2; London; 1943; p. 652

c) the absence of private property. The state system of oriental despotism thus arises on the foundation of the Asiatic mode of production in countries where large-scale public works of irrigation, drainage and/or flood control are essential to an adequate level of agriculture:

"Oriental despotism was founded on common property".

F. Engels: "Herr Eugen Duhring's Revolution in Science"; Moscow; 1959; p. 486

"The stationary character of this part of Asia (i.e., the Indian sub-continent -- Ed.) . . . is fully explained by two mutually dependent circumstances: 1) the public works were the business of the central government; 2) beside these, the whole empire, not counting the few larger towns, was resolved into villages, which possessed a completely separate organisation and formed a little world in themselves. I do not think one could imagine a more solid foundation for the stagnation of Asiatic despotism".

K. Marx: Letter to F. Engels, June 14th., 1853, in: K. Marx & F. Engels: "Correspondence: 1846-1895"; London; 1936; p. 70

"This prime necessity of an economical and common use of water . . . necessitated in the orient the interference of the centralising power of government. These idyllic village communities had always been the solid foundation of Oriental

despotism".

K. Marx: "The British Rule in India", in: "Selected Works", Volume 2; London; 1943; p.652, 655

The general form of rule in the dynasties that embody **Oriental Despotism** – is an **absolute monarchy**. Afghanistan early on became such a state, itself acquiring an empire under the **Afghan Lodis**. Its development out of tribalism, into Oriental despotism was an 'acquired' Oriental Despotism. On the whole, Afghan society was a tribal and nomadic land with only a subsistence agriculture at best. But such a society - with no essential need for large-scale public works of irrigation drainage and/or flood control in order to carry on agriculture at an adequate level, may have oriental despotism **imposed** on it by another society which conquers it. Alternatively the primitive aristocracy of a society may be able to establish an oriental despotic state as a result of conquest of an oriental despotic society or as a result of conscious imitation of such a society with which they are in close contact:

"Pastoral nomads frequently supplement their herding economy-by farming. Yet... their migratory way of life excludes the construction of elaborate and permanent works of water control, which form the foundation of hydraulic agriculture. But this mode of life does not prevent them from adopting Oriental despotic methods of organisation and acquisition. To be sure, such methods do not grow out of the needs of pastoral life. . . . The chiefly leader and those close to him are eager to place themselves in a position of permanent and total power; but as a rule they attain this goal only after submission to, or conquest of, a hydraulic country. In the first case the overlords of the agrarian state may apply their own patterns of political control (registration, corvee, taxation) to the submitting herders, whose chieftain usually emerges as the absolute and permanent master of his tribe. In the second case the supreme chieftain (khan, khaghan, etc.) seizes the power devices of the agro-managerial civilisations he has conquered".

K. A. Wittfogel: "Oriental Despotism"; New York; 1981; p. 204-5

We contend that it was first under the reign of **Asoka** (273 BC-232 BC), that the oriental despotic regime in what was to become part of Afghanistan was definitively laid:

"Asoka's empire comprised the countries now known as Afghanistan as far as the Hindu Kush; Baluchistan and Makran.... And the whole of India proper";

Smith V.A. & Spear P: The Oxford History of India;" Delhi 1958; p.127.

It was then consolidated under various Indian regimes such as that of the Sultanate of Delhi – or the **Tughluqs** – which included both **Akbar** and his successors and the Afghan Lodis. It was finally made independent of outside imperial regimes under the leadership of **Ahmad Shah Abdali (Durrani)**, an Afghan state was established of an oriental despotic type. This established a village based bureaucracy collecting both land-tax and livestock tax by the **woleswal** and **alaqadari** (officials representing central government)

liasing with the **malik** (see below) and the mullah.

Land was collectively owned by a tribe or village (khaliash land), but some privately owned land did exist in parts of the country, especially Nuristan and Tajikistan (*Smith & Spear Ibid; p.69*). Periodic land allocation was made by the tribal **jirgha** (council), but this practice changed as private property became more widespread. As the power of the central state weakened, especially after British imperialist incursions, tribal war-bands were able to seize control of one locality after another and to establish them as independent or semi-independent states. These repudiated their former obligations to the central state. This transposed common-tribal land, into land held by the tribal chief. An attenuated oriental despotism arose:

"combining aspects of egalitarian tribalism with hillbilly versions of oriental despotism";

Male, Beverley: "Revolutionary Afghanistan – A reappraisal."; London; 1982; p. 80.

Gradually a piece-meal feudal system, with strong tribal ties arose. This was made easier by the mountain geography:

"The fragmentation which resulted from the emphasis placed on lineage and tribal groupings was reinforced by the topography of much of Afghanistan – small valley isolated from each other by great mountain ranges and roads frequently.. closed by snow for much of the year. This enforced isolation contributed to the creation of a deep suspicion of the outside world and reinforced dependence on kinship ties.";

Male, Beverley: "Revolutionary Afghanistan – A reappraisal."; London; 1982; p. 80.

The elder head (**malik** or **khan**) became transformed over time into a landlord, and money lender. His power was enhanced by the unique 'tribal' version of Islam that developed in Afghanistan, which incorporated blood vengeance. The process of private property development concentrated land into the hands of the chief who became the khan:

"The origins of feudalism can perhaps be traced back to water, the source of life and food in an arid country. If a tribe successfully occupied the source of a rival tribe it virtually amounted to the occupation of that tribes lands. To protect this precious source of life, sustenance and power, forts were built around the area. With the passing of time, both the forts and water sources became the personal property of the tribal chiefs who began to charge the farmers for the use of the water. In the beginning all landholdings in the tribe were of equal size, the owner of the land being called Defter. However in times of drought or the loss of agricultural livestock, the farmers were forced to borrow money from the tribal chief on interest. The only collateral they could offer was the little land they held. Once it was handed over, its retrieval was very difficult. Gradually therefore

almost all land in the tribe came to rest in the hands of the chief. Those who were once his equals became his tenants. No member of the tribe was entitled to sell his land. It could only be used as collateral within the tribe. As for adjacent rivers, mountains and grazing grounds, they continue to be in communal ownership, but it is the tribal chief who principally benefits from them."

Anwar R; Ibid; p.130-1.

Under more usual Islamic law, usury – the practice of interest being charged in loans – is forbidden. However in the Afghan Islamic a bargain was early struck with the Mullahs. They were first of all given a piece of the communal land known as **Seri**. This was a large piece. He had tenants. He was largely of Arabic stock, or if not he was in any case, termed a 'syed' – a descendant of the Prophet Mohammed. It appears that the land relations of the Mullahs, became one of the first steps towards feudal land tenure:

"It is important to note that the Muslim theologians were the first to form into a privileged estate of the Pushtun society, and it was they who made the first breach in the system of agrarian relationships based on common landownership ... seri – a land benefice granted to the clergy can and must be regarded as the initial form of feudal land tenure".

Anwar R; Ibid; p. 132; citing Gankovsky, Yuri V: "The Peoples of Pakistan"; Moscow; 1971; p. 132.

Naturally the Afghan version of Islamic law incorporates both blood revenge and usury, which became a crippling instrument of the landowner over the peasants.

Furthermore, the large nomadic populations that patrolled Afghanistan, also gradually settled, especially in the 1890's with the granting of large tracts of land by Abdur Rahman. This process encouraged Ghilzai - the dominant Pashtun - to settle into the former Hazarat territory. Certain sections of the nomads became associated to the trade routes, and some became in time merchants themselves. The merchants of Kabul, Kandahar, Herat and Mazar-I-Sharif were descendants of the merchant clans who had taken Marco Polo to China.

Some work-shops had arisen but they were small and by the 1860's, had only produced gun and artillery. They were destroyed by the British wars. By the time of the British incursions, feudal property relations were beginning to be established in Afghanistan and the private property relations of landowner to landless peasant was becoming established.

6. British Incursions – The First Two Anglo-Afghan Wars

It was into this milieu that the British imperialism entered. In total, three British invasions of Afghanistan – collectively known as the **Three Afghan Wars** – took place. The first two follow a similar pattern whereby the British colonising power attempted to install

comprador agents as a bulwark against the Northern Russian threat to the British Indian Empire:

"The British did not seek direct colonisation, but to persuade local rulers to accept 'British advice', which in practical terms mean accepting a resident British political officer and British control over their foreign relations so that rival, acquisitive nations, especially Russia, could be excluded."

Edgar O'Ballance: "Afghan Wars 1839-1992: What Britain Gave Up & The Soviet Union Lost"; London; 1993; p.7.

The grand-son of Ahmad Shah Durrani was the first puppet that the British installed: [Shah Shuja](#) was installed against his rival [Amir Dost Mohammed](#), who had previously captured the throne in battle. Now British troops entered Kandhar and Kabul in 1839 and held the coronation of King Shah Shuja. But by 1842, they were driven out by a popular revolt. Out of an army of 4,500 soldiers and 12,000 followers, only one man would survive the retreat from Kabul. Meanwhile Shah Shuja was assassinated by a Barazaki clansman. So ended the [First Anglo-Afghan War](#). It left Afghanistan although under the sway of Britain, Britain still had to complete its full military hold over India proper. Thus it did not for the time being attempt to re-invade Afghanistan. Both Marx and Engels wrote detailed reportage of this First war.

For the time being Britain again had a docile stooge at the head. Dost Mohammed – who meanwhile had been in exile in India – had arranged with the British that he should return as King. He signed the [Anglo-Afghan Treaty](#) with Britain in 1855. This gave Dost Mohammed protection from the Persians who had been invading in the meantime. The Anglo-Persian War of 1856-7, drove the Persians out of Herat.

Later, the son of Dost Mohammed, [Amir Sher Ali](#) began to play off the Russians and the British over the right to a diplomatic mission in Kabul. The Russians forcibly expanded Southwards into Turkistan, capturing Tashkent by 1865, Bokhara in 1866, Samarkand in 1868, and then Khiva in 1869 (*O'Ballance Ibid; p.34*). As they came ever closer towards Afghanistan, they sent an uninvited Russian diplomatic mission to arrive in Kabul shortly, prompting the British Viceroy Lord Lytton to demand similar rights for Britain. The Emir refused to allow entry to a British mission at the Khyber Pass, thereby triggering the [Second Anglo-Afghan War](#) in 1839. As British troops entered, Amir Sher Ali fled to die en route to the Russian court.

His son [Yakub Khan](#) took the throne. He signed the [Treaty of Gandamak](#) on 26 May 1879, whereby he accepted a British Resident (Political Officer) control over Kabul's external affairs. The treaty left domestic affairs outside of British control, but the British gained territories around Quetta and the Khyber Pass. However the Afghan army mutinied over payment arrears, and in doing so they killed the British Resident Sir Louis Cavagnari. Brutal retaliation by General Roberts followed, but further mutinies led by the Ghilzais were difficult to contain. At the Battle of Mainwand 1000 British soldiers were

killed. The British cost of the campaign was over 17 million pounds sterling. Lord Ripon the new Viceroy therefore now recognised **Abdur Rahman** as Amir and he withdrew the British army.

Under Abdur Rahman, the Northern Frontier between India and Afghanistan was established at the '**Durand Line**' in 1893 extending into the North as a frontier buffer zone between British India and Russia controlled territory in Turkistan. By 1905, Lord **Curzon** Viceroy of India, carved out the **North West Frontier Province** from the triangle between Afghanistan and then India to create another buffer zone.

It was this province that formed the bulk of the area known as **Baluchistan** that was to become an oppressed nation under the domination of the dominant Punjabi nation of the later state of Pakistan.

Abdur Rahman was termed the Iron Amir for his crushing of the non-Pushtuns, which fueled a bitter enmity that endures to today. He also introduced the Divine right of kings – as against the tribal inspired Loya Jirga election.

Lenin summarised the situation of British imperialism by the year 1916, in his *Persian Notebook*:

"Afghanistan – a mountainous region. 624,000 sq Km. 4,450,000 inhabitants. Nominally she is completely independent. In reality, all foreign policy is in the hands of Great Britain; the emir is on Britain's pay-roll. Under the Anglo-Russian treaty (August 31, 1907), Britain recognised freedom of trade in Afghanistan and Russia recognized Afghanistan as being "outside her sphere of influence". The British do not allow foreigners to enter !! Afghanistan (!!!). Militarily the Afghans: should by no means be under-estimated as adversaries. Britain treats them with the greatest caution. "In this one sees the wisdom of Britain's 'velvet glove' policy , for the British could not behave to anyone more tolerantly and cautiously than they have to him (The Emir of Afghanistan)";

V.I.Lenin; In "Notebooks on Imperialism"; Volume 39 "Collected Works"; Moscow; 1968; p. 727.

7. The Reign of Amir Amanullah 1919-1929: 'Reform Monarchy'

Following the First World War in which Afghanistan remained neutral, the Russian Revolution in 1917 ignited the area around Turkestan with anti-Soviet agitation. The then King of Afghanistan – **Amir Habibullah** – attempted to form a "League of Free Muslim States In Central Asia". But this was superseded by his murder. His son – Amanullah – took the throne. He was already a committed nationalist. His Foreign Minister was appointed quickly, and was Mohammed Tarzi who had founded the only newspaper in the country. On 3 March 1919, **Amir Amanullah** wrote to the viceroy offering commercial treaties, while on 13 April at his Durbar, he declared:

"Afghanistan to be fully independent both internally and externally";
O'Ballance E: Ibid; p. 54.

When Amunullah criticised the British handling of security and the [Amritsar Massacre](#) under [General Dyer](#) – of the Indian nationalists, he moved Afghan troops to the frontier in 1919. British troops engaged them in the Battle of Bagh in May. Enormous RAF air force inflicted casualties did not deter Amunullah's forces. The Third Loya Jirga (tribal confederation) in history, proclaimed a Jihad against Britain. But massive reinforcements from British India coupled with air attacks on Jalalabad and Kabul brought about an armistice. However, given the tensions inside British India, the British were at a disadvantage. The [Treaty of Rawalpindi](#) was signed in August 1919, ceding the state of Afghanistan control of their foreign policy, while Afghanistan recognised the Durand Line.

Initially Amunullah attempted to re-create the impetus for an Islamic Central Asian Federation, wishing to bite off Soviet territory in the Muslim Bokhara, Tartara and Turkestan areas. The Red Army under [General Frunze](#) established control by subduing Tashkent. Amunullah turned to establishing a modernised state. His model was Mustafa Kemal of Turkey. He visited the Soviet Union, and in 1921 signed a Treaty of Friendship with the Soviet Union and then a Treaty of Non-Interference and Non-Aggression.

Lenin wrote to him as follows:

"May the desire of the Afghan people to follow the Russian example be the best guarantee of the strength and independence of the Afghan state";
Cited by Hyman A: "Afghanistan Under Soviet Domination 1964-81"; New York; 1982; p. 41; Cited from "Lenin on The National Liberation Movement in the East" Moscow 1969; p.252.

Amunullah set out seriously to modernise the state, improving the position on women, establishing secular schools, ordering un-veiling of women's purdah, and modernization of the land tenure system. All for these reasons amounted to anti-imperialism – such that [Stalin](#) echoed Lenin's favourable view of Amunullah:

"The struggle that the Emir of Afghanistan is waging for the independence of Afghanistan is objectively a revolutionary struggle, despite the monarchist views of the Emir and his associates, for it weakens, disintegrates and undermines imperialism";
J.V.Stalin; "The Foundations of Leninism"; April 1924; In "Works"; Volume 6; Moscow 1953; p.148.

However Amunullah's 1928 decrees on [purdah](#), sparked a British inspired religious revolt under the reactionary [Hazrat Shor Bazar](#). Following Amunullah's flight to Kandhar, Kabul fell to the Tajik [Bacha-I-Saquao](#) ('Son of a Water Carrier") a bandit leader. Very quickly [Nadir Shah](#), another member of the Durrani Pashtun Royal family, began rallying tribesmen in the North East. Nadir Shah received aid from the Gihlzhai tribes and the Hazrat of Shor bazaar (the foremost religious leader of Afghanistan), and the British.

By October Nadir Shah had seized power, and hanged Bacha. Amanullah left for exile.

Nadir Shah reversed the reforms of Amanullah, instituting very quickly a regime whose day to day rule was enforced by religious ulemas and mullahs. Nadir Shah objectively served the interests of the reactionary feudal landlords and the British imperialists.

Consistent with the views of Lenin cited above, the **Communist International** characterised the fall of Amanullah as being the result of a weak national bourgeoisie, a weak peasant reform programme, and British manipulation and arming of Bacha:

"Comments in the communist press on the events leading up to the fall of Amanullah ... included the information that arms and money for the plot were supplied by T.E.Lawrence; Amanullah had survived ten years of British opposition because of Soviet friendship and the support of the rising bourgeoisie; Raskolnikov on the other hand wrote that Afghanistan had no bourgeoisie not even commercial (all trade was in Indian hands). But there were 'young Afghans' inspired by Russian and India who supported Amanullah; Amanullah had introduced bourgeois reforms without a bourgeoisie to support him; their cost had fallen on the peasants, whom he had failed to win over by agrarian reform";
In Degras, Jane Editor: " Documents of The Communist International Volume 3:" London 1971; p.23. Cited From Inprecorr 19 April 1929

8. Class Character of Afghanistan in the Modern Era

Even by the 1980's Afghanistan was one of the most under-developed and backward countries in the world, with 40% of the population under-nourished and an annual growth of national income of only 0.7%. (*World bank figures, Cited by Anwar R ibid; p. 136*). The situation is well summarised by Barnett Rubin:

"Afghanistan was among the world's poorest countries, but it lacked the grinding poverty of ex-colonial societies with a higher degree of capitalist penetration. Its rural society still included a safety net based on an ethic of asymmetrical reciprocity within kinship-based solidarity groups (qawm). This solidarity was slowly being undermined by inroads of the market and education but the process was much less advanced than in neighboring countries. This was most manifest in some areas where property rights came to depend on enforcement by the state, rather than being a manifestation of local social relations. The state, which established private property in land and pasture, assured Pashtun nomads and landlords access to pasture and agricultural land in the largely non-Pashtun areas of central and northern Afghanistan. The state also made possible the development of absentee landlordism in the periphery of major cities. Before the mid-1950s, an merchant class led the country's economic development, but thereafter the state nationalized the banking system and controlled the small industries that developed."

Barnett Rubin; Political Economy of War and Peace in Afghanistan; In: AFGHANISTAN RESOURCES: at: <http://www.eurasianet.org/resource/afghanistan/links/rubin99.shtml>

A summary of the class formations of the state of Afghanistan, from the early 20th century, up to the modern era – looks as follows.

(i) A Weak National Bourgeoisie; and Foreign ownership of small-scale industry:

The rapid disintegration of the Amanullah reformist government, showed the objectively weak – even the non-existence - of a national bourgeoisie. The Soviet ambassador to Kabul, **F.F Raskolnikov**, wrote in 1929:

"The tragedy of Amanullah's case lay in the fact that he undertook bourgeois reforms without the existence of any national bourgeoisie in the country".

Cited by Hyman, Antony: "Afghanistan Under Soviet Domination 1964-81"; London 1982; p. 42;

And indeed the country had very little industry, that could form the social base for any significant national bourgeoisie. Even as late as 1978, what little industry there was, was in the either State enterprises or in the hands of neighbouring **Pakistani** bourgeoisie; i.e.; it was **comprador** in character. What native bourgeoisie there was, in the main belonged to the traditional industries of fruits and carpets:

"The share of industry in Afghan GNP was 17 %, which could..... meet 10-15% of the home demand for textiles, sugar and so on. The bulk of the industrial sector was in public ownership. Private manufacture of such goods as socks, shoes, textiles, clarified butter, sugar and cotton ginning was mostly controlled by foreign companies, many of them Pakistani. The Afghan 'national trader' was confined to the traditional trade in dried fruits and carpets."

Anwar, Rajah: "The Tragedy of Afghanistan": Ibid; p. 135.

Even these figures are misleading, since the main import-export revenue was hidden, being at least 50% composed of smuggling (*US Army Area Handbook cited by Male B; Ibid; p.87*). This illegal sector applied also to the **currency** trade. Much of the commercial capital was in the hands of **Indians** – mainly Hindus and Sikhs – who ran the currency trade in illegal foreign exchange concerns in the bazaar, even after the first Afghan bank was started in 1930. These foreign capitalist elements were naturally closely related to the indigenous money lenders. These dominated the countryside, and were largely the same individuals as the khan or landed property owners. But as noted before, some sections of the more wealthy nomads had transformed themselves into traders and merchants and they were also money lenders.

This relationship gave rise to the **alliance of the tribal-feudal landlords and merchants of Kabul and Kandhar**.

Attempts were indeed made to develop industry, in the 1930's using government sponsored development led by the Bank Mili, but this remained very small in scale. Even under the regime of **Sardar Mohammed Daud** of 1953, and with the aid of monies from

the USA and Khrushchevite USSR imperialists, there was no real change (*Male B; Ibid; p. 92*). The actual industrial capitalists remained only a very small component of the Afghanistan economy:

"The number of workers in indigenous trades was greater than that of industrial workers. In 1978, total industrial labour in Afghanistan was around 40,000 nearly 70% of it in Kabul alone. Kunduz (Qanduz) with its clarified butter and sugar factories employed 22% of the workers. In other words industry ... was confined to Kabul and Qanduz. 39% of the industrial workers were associated with textiles and cotton ginning, 11 % with the cement and minerals industry and between 7 and 9% with food processing, construction, minerals and power-generated industries. In February 1986, a survey of privately owned industry.. estimated 474 such units representing 11% of industrial production: the share of handicraft products was higher than that of industrially produced ones".

Anwar, Rajah: "The Tragedy of Afghanistan": Ibid; p. 135.

Links to imperialist foreign capital were made from the end of the Second World War in earnest Bilateral relation between the USA and Afghanistan, were followed by the First Afghan-Soviet agreement for long term trade in 1954. By 1981 Afghanistan owed the USSR government owed 1.49 billion dollars. After 1968 a flourishing gas export trade to the Soviet Union accounted for the largest foreign exchange revenue. But irrespective of all this, the major result of all this was not a meaningful development of wealth, but a huge foreign debt:

"The legacy inherited by the new government of 1978 was an immense foreign debt. Debt servicing charges amounted to between 15 and 20% of the current expenditure";

Male B; Ibid; p. 93.

The majority of the traders and capitalists were still at the stage of merchant capital.

(ii) The Working Class

Naturally given the above statistics, the industrial working class was very small amounting in 1978 to 40,000 as cited above. Although industry in 1982 accounted for 21% of the GNP, it employed only 1.9% of the national workforce (Cited by Anwar R Ibid; p. 135). What industrial working class there was, resided heavily in Kabul (70% of the work-force) followed by Kunduz (22%) (*Cited by Male B; Ibid; p. 94*). Trade unions were illegal.

(iii) The City Petit-bourgeois

The majority of the governmental income was derived from taxes on business and trade.

Land tax in 1966 was only 3.5% of the total national tax, in contrast to customs duties on imports and exports which accounted for 27%. This trade required a petit bourgeois

intelligentsia to form – but it was also a very small section. As late as 1978, there were no professional organisations of doctors, lawyers, journalists, teachers, writers etc. (*Cited Anwar ibid; p. 137*). The civil service in 1978 included all salaried personnel from the government (including doctors and teachers and lawyers) numbered some 100,000 in 1978 (*cited Male B Ibid; p. 95*). Salary levels were very low, encouraging corruption. After the overthrow of Amanullah, the clergy – the ulema and mullahs – were recruited to the civil service as Muslim jurists and teachers. This naturally led to a further reactionary base, within a section that *normally* might have been progressive.

(iv) Feudal Land Ownership with vestiges of Tribal authority

The countryside houses some 88% of the total population of Afghanistan (*Anwar Ibid; p. 127*). So any account of its class structure must carefully delineate the powers in the countryside.

As described earlier, the oriental despotism was the state form under the Afghan empire. But it became converted to a form where feudalism was the mode of production but under a tribal form. This social structure remained largely in place to the modern day, where the **Khan** or feudal lord was both a **landlord** and also retained **tribal rights** as a chief:

"In Afghanistan... the feudal lord or the Khan was very much a part of the social and tribal system. He acted not only as the economic lord and master of the peasants, but was at the same time their unquestioned military, tribal, and administrative leader. The Khan's elevated position was an indisputable fact of tribal life...";

Anwar, Rajah: "The Tragedy of Afghanistan": Ibid; p. 132.

Of the landmass, only some 12% is cultivable, and of this only 60% is in fact farmed due to either lack of water or restrictive feudal practices. Land is highly **concentrated**:

"In 1978... 5% of the landowners were in possession of 45% of all cultivable land. About 83% of owners held between 5-10 acres of largely uneconomic land.... In 1978 there were thirty families in the country whose holding consisted of between 500 and 50,000 acres of agricultural land. The number of Afghan landlords affected by the 1978 reforms did not exceed 400. These people owned about 20,000 villages."

Anwar, Rajah: "The Tragedy of Afghanistan"; Ibid; p. 130.

By 1978, very large accumulation of land ownership had occurred as seen in the following table (from Anwar R; Ibid; p. 130).

Size Holding	% Total Number of Landowners in country	% of total cultivable land
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5-10 acres	83%	35%
10-25 acres	12%	45%
25-50,000 acres	5%	45%

The crops were divided into five parts: land, water, labour, capital, and seed. The peasant obtained only one-fifth of the yield therefore as the land, capital, and seed were from the landlord and the water from the **mir-i-aab** (the owner of the water). The peasant was largely of the same tribe as his landlord and subject to an extra burden resulting from tribal obligations – becoming effectively landless labourers:

"Men belonging to the same racial stock and the same village have become reduced to the lowly status of landless cultivators, the sole beneficiary of whose back-breaking labour is the feudal landlord."

Anwar R; Ibid; p.130.

The famine and related deaths in the years 1969 to 1971 – whereby 500,000 died in 1972 alone, further drove the peasant into indebtedness. As the peasant's indebtedness grew – rates of interest being 20-50% in good times – the proportion of landless grew. They became transformed into an agricultural proletariat who worked for payment in kind - or in cash.

This process was facilitated by the late entry of tractors into the countryside, In 1968 there were only 400 private tractors in Afghanistan. As this process accelerated, marginal lands were lost to nomadic farming who were thereby brought into the cash economy. (*Male B; 'Revolutionary Afghanistan- A Reappraisal'; Ibid; p. 75*). Even by 1978 however, there were still approximately 2.5 million nomads who were still existing (*Anwar Ibid; p.129*). They are destined to enter the countryside labour market as landless agricultural workers.

By 1978 **agri-business – i.e.; capitalism in the countryside** – had been established in certain areas, e.g. around Ghanzni (*Male B: Ibid; p.76*).

In Conclusion:

The ruling class of Afghanistan was the rural feudal landlord class in alliance with the **comprador** capitalists linked to foreign interests i.e. imperialists; aided by the small money capitalists and the illegal smugglers;

The small capitalist class was largely non-industrial and largely comprador in character. Only a tiny, insignificant section was national in character.

There was only a very small working class that numbered only 400,000 of a total population of 15 million in 1978.

The vast majority of the population –13 million or 86% - was rural, and was largely landless peasants.

The desperate need of the peoples of Afghanistan was for a **national democratic revolution** that would aim to liberate the country from foreign domination and carry through the rural land reforms to liberate the peasantry.

Up to 1978, Afghanistan was a semi-colony in thrall to several imperialisms, including USA imperialism.

9. Some Definitions

A colonial type country is one which is industrially relatively undeveloped and which is under the economic, and possibly the political, domination of a Great Power - in the 20th century an imperialist country.

A Colonial-Type Country May Be :

1. A colony i.e. under the open direct political rule of a dominating Great Power;
2. A semi-colony i.e. nominally independent but with its economic system largely dominated and controlled for the benefit of the ruling class of a dominating great Power;
- or 3. A neo-colony i.e. a former colony which has become nominally "independent" but which continues to have its economic system largely controlled for the benefit of the ruling class of the same dominating Great Power which formerly ruled it directly.

The nominal "ruling class" of a semi-colony or of a neo-colony is one which is dependent on the ruling class of the dominating Great Power; it is a comprador class.

Revolution In The Colonial-Type Countries.

Sooner or later the struggle for national liberation from the domination of the Great Power concerned develops in every colonial type country. In the 20th Century, in general, the classes in a colonial-type country which benefits by the national liberation are:

1. The working class
2. The urban petty-bourgeoisie
3. The peasantry and
4. The national bourgeoisie, that section of the capitalist class whose whole interests are held back the domination of the Great Power.

In general, the classes in a colonial-type country whose interests are harmed by the national liberation are:

1. The landlord class; and
2. The comprador bourgeoisie, i.e. that section of the capitalist class the interests of which (mainly commercial and financial) are dependent upon the domination of the Great power.

10. The Marxist-Leninist Strategy Of Revolution In The Colonial And Semi-Colonial Countries

At the [Second Congress of the Communist International](#), held in Petrograd and Moscow from July 19th to August 7th, 1920 - [Lenin](#) had outlined the Marxist-Leninist strategy of the socialist revolution in countries that were either of colonial or semi-colonial nature. Lenin had modified his own "Theses on Revolution in Semi-Colonial Countries" in debate with [Mabendra Nath Roy](#); (M.N.Roy). The Theses On The National And Colonial Question Were Adopted At The 2nd Congress Of The Communist International (CI), [Petrograd and Moscow : July 19th to August 7th, 1920]. The Theses were adopted only after intense study by The National and Colonial Commission of the Congress. Lenin and Roy disagreed over whether, and how much to ally with the national bourgeoisie.

Lenin's view would prevail:

"The Communist International must enter into temporary alliance with bourgeois democracy in colonial and backward countries, but should not merge with it, and under all circumstances should uphold the independence of the proletarian movement even if it is in the most embryonic form."

V.I.Lenin: "Preliminary Draft of Theses on the National and Colonial Countries, 2nd Congress Communist International"; June 1920; in "Collected Works", Volume 31, Moscow, 1966; p.150.

Both Lenin and Stalin advocated that if there was a revolutionary bourgeoisie (i.e. a determined wing of the national bourgeoisie) the task of communists was to link up with these elements in a revolutionary united front:

"The task of the communist elements in the colonial type countries is to link up with the revolutionary elements of the bourgeoisie.. against the bloc of imperialism and the compromising elements of 'their own' bourgeoisie, in order.. to wage a genuinely revolutionary struggle for liberation from imperialism".

J.V.Stalin: "The Results of the Work At the 14th Congress of the RCP(B)," in May 1925; in "Works" Volume 7, Moscow, 1954, p.108-9.

"The second deviation lies.. in an underestimation of the role of an alliance between the working class (of a colonial type country) and the revolutionary

bourgeoisie against imperialism.. That is a deviation to the Left , and it is fraught with danger of the Communist Party being divorced from the masses and converted into a sect. A determined struggle against that deviation is an essential condition for the training of real revolutionary cadres for colonies and dependent countries of the East."

J.V.Stalin, "The Political tasks of the University of the Peoples of the East", in May 1925; In Works", Vol 7. Moscow, 1954, p.154.

However, **what if there was almost no national bourgeoisie and a very weak (numerically and politically) working class?** Lenin had recognised that this was a serious matter for the world's toilers:

"And one of the most important tasks now confronting us it to consider how the foundation-stone of the organisation of the Soviet movement can be laid in the non-capitalist countries. Soviets are possible there; they will not be workers' Soviets, but peasants' Soviets or Soviets of working people";

V.I.Lenin: "Report On The International Situation & The Fundamental Tasks of the Communist International; July 19th; 1920"; The Second Congress of the Communist International; "Collected Works"; Volume 31; Moscow 1966; p. 233.

Roy's insistence on modifications given such circumstances led to the "Supplementary Theses":

"Both in his speeches and his theses (at the 2nd Congress of CI - ed) Lenin has in mind the countries where:

'There can be no question of a purely proletarian movement,' where, 'there is practically no industrial proletariat."

Why were the Supplementary Theses needed? In order to single out from the backward colonial countries which have no industrial proletariat such countries as China and India, of which it cannot be said that they have 'practically no industrial proletariat'. Read the "Supplementary Theses", and you will realise that they refer chiefly to China and India...How could it happen that Roy's special Theses were needed to "Supplement" Lenin's theses? The fact is that Lenin's Theses were written and published long before the Second Congress opened.. prior to the discussion in the Special Commission of the Second Congress. And since the Second Congress revealed the necessity of singling out from the backward countries such countries as China and India the necessity of 'Supplementary Theses' arose."

J.V.Stalin: "Questions of the Chinese Revolution", "Works" May 1927; Vol 9; Moscow 1953; p.236-238.

Therefore Lenin believed that the model of revolution for Russia – the Soviet based revolutionary model of the soviet passing through the national democratic revolution **could** be applied to feudal conditions in the colonial and semi-colonial countries of the world. Thus in the "pre-capitalist world" where there was "practically no

industrial proletariat". The model would need to be amended in one regard - being made into a **peasant** Soviet primarily:

"Next, I would like to make a remark on the subject of peasants' Soviets. The Russian Communists' practical activities in the former tsarist colonies, in such backward countries as Turkestan, etc., have confronted us with the question of how to apply the communist tactics and policy in pre-capitalist conditions. The preponderance of pre-capitalist relationships is still the main determining feature in these countries, so that there can be no question of a purely proletarian movement in them. There is practically no industrial proletariat in these countries. Nevertheless, we have assumed, we must assume, the role of leader even there. Experience has shown us that tremendous difficulties have to be surmounted in these countries. However, the practical results of our work have also shown that despite these difficulties we are in a position to inspire in the masses an urge for independent political thinking and independent political action, even where a proletariat is practically non-existent.

..... It will readily be understood that peasants living in conditions of semi-feudal dependence can easily assimilate and give effect to the idea of Soviet organisation. It is also clear that the oppressed masses, those who are exploited, not only by merchant capital but also by the feudalists, and by a state based on feudalism, can apply this weapon, this type of organisation, in their conditions too. The idea of Soviet organisation is a simple one, and is applicable, not only to proletariat, but also to peasant feudal and semi-feudal relations. the Communist International's theses should point out that peasants' Soviets, Soviets of the exploited, are a weapon which can be employed, not only in capitalist countries but also in countries with pre-capitalist relations, and that it is the absolute duty of Communist parties and of elements prepared to form Communist parties, everywhere to conduct propaganda in favour of peasants' Soviets or of working people's Soviets, this to include backward and colonial countries..."

V.I.Lenin: "Report on the Commission"; The Second Congress of the Communist International; "Collected Works"; Volume 31; Moscow 1966; p. 243; or at:<http://www.marx2mao.org/Lenin/SCCI20.html#s3>

As outlined above, in **general** the **working class** should if possible exercise the leading role, even in the first phase of the revolution (i.e. the national democratic revolution). But what should be the strategy of Marxists-Leninists if there was no, or a very small, or only a weak working class in the colony or semi-colony?

In this case, it was considered that the leadership was to be exercised by the **comrade working classes of the world**. In particular those of **socialist states**, if there were any. In fact, the responsibility of the socialist state and its' proletariat, was outlined clearly in the Theses adopted under Lenin's direction, at the Second Congress of the Comintern.

Without a significant working class in the colonial country, leadership devolved to the Soviet state, and the working class of the developed capitalist countries. In fact under this circumstance it may be possible to successfully go through the first national democratic revolution thought to the second phase the socialist stage without traversing capitalism:

"If the revolutionary victorious proletariat carries on systematic propaganda among them, and if the Soviet governments render them all the assistance they possibly can.. the backward countries may pass to the Soviet system, and after passing through a definite stage of development to Communism without passing though the capitalists stage of development."

V.I.Lenin: "Report on the Commission"; The Second Congress of the Communist International; "Collected Works"; Volume 31; Moscow 1966; p.

244. <http://www.marx2mao.org/Lenin/SCCI20.html#s3>

Naturally each country's particular circumstances should be considered carefully:

"The nationally peculiar and nationally specific features in each separate country must unflinchingly be taken into account by the Comintern when drawing up guiding directives for the working class movement of the country concerned."

Stalin J.V. "Notes on Contemporary Themes"; (July 1927); In Works; Volume 9; Moscow; 1954; p.337.

Stalin, addressing the People's of the East had distinguished by 1925: "*at least three categories of colonial and dependent countries*":

"Firstly countries like Morocco who have little or not proletariat, and are industrially quite undeveloped. Secondly countries like China and Egypt which are under-developed industries and have a relatively small proletariat. Thirdly countries like India, which are capitalistically more or less developed and have a more or less numerous national proletariat. Clearly all these countries cannot possibly be put on a par with one another."

J.V.Stalin. "Political Tasks of the University of Peoples of the East." May 18. 1925. Works Vol 7; Moscow; 1954; p. 149

Of course in 1920, the revolutionary wave impelled Lenin and his comrades, to see the possibility of imminent world revolution. What did Stalin see as the possible scenarios, at a later stage? What about those countries where Stalin saw "little or no proletariat"?

Here Stalin adhered to the Colonial Theses, where it was argued that the socialist country and its proletariat would have to exercise leadership. He had already pointed out:

"Lasting victory cannot be achieved in the colonial and dependent countries without a real link between the liberation movement in these countries and the

proletarian movement in the advanced countries of the world".

Stalin; "Tasks of the University of the Peoples of the East"; Ibid; p. 148.

Now, he insisted the immediate task in countries like Morocco, was to weld a "united national Front against imperialism":

"In countries like Morocco, where the national bourgeoisie has, as yet, no grounds for splitting up into a revolutionary party and a compromising party, the tasks of the communist elements is to take all measures to create a united national front against imperialism. In such countries, the communist elements can be grouped into a single party only in the course of the struggle against imperialism, particularly after a victorious revolutionary struggle against imperialism." *Stalin; "Tasks of University of Peoples of East"; Ibid; p. 149.*

Stalin pointed out that the national bourgeois democratic revolution, could be undertaken by even a relatively small national capitalist class, such as in [Turkey](#). In that country, Stalin emphasised that the "main axis" was the agrarian movement, and that this was halted by **Kemal Ataturk**:

"The characteristic feature .. of the Turkish revolution (The Kemalists).. is that it got stuck at the "first step", at the first stage of its development, at the stage of the bourgeois liberation movement, without even attempting to pass to the second stage of its development, the stage of the agrarian revolution."

Stalin; "The International Situation & The Defense of the USSR"; August 1 1927; "Works"; Volume 10; Moscow 1954; p.16.

But in Turkey, the party that represented the nascent bourgeoisie, the Committee for Unity & Progress, had from 1908 onwards consciously nurtured its own class:

"Fostered a Turkish entrepreneurial class by encouraging the formation of commercial companies. The Revue de Turquie, published in Lausanne in September 1918, listed some 80 joint-stock companies set up since (1914). The list included major concerns such as the Ottoman national bank with capital of 4 million lira.. By the end of the war, (there) was the emergence of a national economy dominated by Turks and the appearance of a new class which they described as bourgeoisie";

Ahmad, Feroz: "The Making of Modern Turkey"; London; 1993; p. 45.

[The situation of Afghanistan was even more precarious.](#)

As outlined above, from Lenin onwards the view was that revolutionary situations depended upon:

(i) the existence of a revolutionary working class movement in the developed capitalist

countries; and/or,
(ii) the existence of a socialist state,

But both these factors were not present following 1953 and the death of Stalin.

There is little doubt that in the absence of both these factors – the possible avenues for a country such as Afghanistan – towards socialism, are much bleaker. Contrary to the possibility in 1920, a phase of capitalist development was unlikely to be avoided by the Afghanistan people.

Moreover this capitalist development was only likely to occur in a **comprador** manner. Finally, the capitalist development tasks were complicated by **three factors**: The multi-national character of the state, with several proto-nationalities developing; the intense geo-political importance of Afghanistan; and, the failure to develop a Marxist-Leninist party free of revisionism inside Afghanistan.

11. Later Attempts to Develop the Afghani Bourgeoisie – Reliance on either the USA or Khrushchevite Revisionist Led USSR

In weak circumstances, it is not surprising that the weak national capitalist classes were forced into comprador positions, effectively submitting to an 'alliance' or dependence upon one or other foreign imperialism. It is true that in various countries, attempts were made to minimise this, and attempts were made to balance one imperialism against another. But this was ultimately futile.

After the failed Amunallah reforms, Afghanistan was ruled by **Nadir Shah** who established a new line of kings, down to **Zahir Shah**. Nadir Shah ascended the throne following Nadir Shah's assassination in 1933.

Under the ensuing monarchs, some progressive movements began to develop. In the rule of **Shah Mahmood** (1946-52) the developing intelligentsia formed the **Tehrik-i-Naujawan-an-baidar** (TNB) (The Movement for The Enlightened Youth). This declared a programme that called for liberal democracy. But it was suppressed in 1953. Around this grouping, several later activists were initially radicalised.

As imperialists vied for their positions in the Indian sub-continent, Pakistan became closely linked to the USA. Over this period, **Sardar Daud Khan** became the Prime Minister to his cousin **Zahir Shah** - who was monarch.

Daoud tried hard to strike a middle path between USA and USSR imperialism. But the USA insisted that he sign an anti-Soviet pact, at which Daoud balked. Moreover the USA pushed Afghanistan to recognise the Durand Line (*see above*) which had partitioned Pachtunistan between Afghanistan and Pakistan. The USA **Eisenhower** administration 'advised' Daoud to negotiate with Pakistan. As *Le Monde* put it:

"At the beginning of his premiership, Daoud asked the US to mobilize and equip the military forces of Afghanistan. The US made it subject to Afghanistan joining CENTO (The Baghdad Pact). Daoud despite the fact that he was an anti-Communist, did not accept the proposal ... and instead asked for military assistance from the USSR";

Cited Anwar Ibid; p. 33.

Therefore, Daoud and King Zahir Shah moved to establish Afghanistan as a **comprador state on behalf of the USSR Khrushchevite neo-imperialists**. Daoud found himself therefore aligned more with the USSR.

In January 1954 the first **Afghan-Soviet Agreement** was signed, involving long term credit. In December 1955 Bulganin and Khrushchev signed in Kabul an 'aid' agreement for \$100 million – then "the largest amount of aid committed by the USSR outside the Soviet bloc"; (*Male Ibid; p. 28*). By 1981, Afghanistan owed the USSR more than 1.49 billion dollars (*Cited Anwar Ibid; p. 35*).

In 1956 a major treaty was signed that specified the modernization and rearmament of the Afghan army (*Anwar Ibid; p.35-36*). This involved training of the officers in the USSR. This created the bedrock of an overwhelmingly pro-USSR faction within the Afghanistan military leaders and corps. The first Five-Year development plan was launched in 1956, and essentially laid the foundation for Afghanistan's industry.

It was only in 1964 that King Zahir Shah, following a Special Commission recommendation, allowed that there should be broadened political representation, in the form of elections to the Wolesi Jira (the Lower House). This spurred the development of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA).

12. Early Progressive Organisations And the Formation of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA)

The earliest progressive formations inside Afghanistan coalesced around the period of "Wish-I-Zalmayan – or "Awakened Youth" – in 1947. Despite putting out some newspapers like "Watan" (Homeland), and "Nida'-yi-Khalq" (Voice of the People); and Angar (Burning Embers) – its activity was mainly based at Kabul university.

When in Daoud became Prime Minister in 1953 all these papers and movements who had been agitating for a liberal constitutional democracy were suppressed. This drove some of the leaders into adopting an approach very influenced by Marxism. But this was inconsistent at best. The PDPA was formed on January 1 1965. The leadership consisted of members mainly from the middle-class intelligentsia and civil service, but mainly were teachers. This leadership consisted of:

Nur Mohammed Taraki came from a family of shepherds; but became a clerk in

Bombay where he became attracted to Marxism. Upon moving back to Kabul he became a low civil servant (*Male B ibid; p. 24*). Despite having worked in Angar openly, he was sent as an attaché in the Afghan embassy in the USA – from where he was recalled for an open attack on the monarchy; and given low ranking civil service appointments. He wrote progressive novels.

Hafizullah Amin was the son of a low ranking Ghilzai civil servant in the countryside, he became a teacher (*Male B ibid; p. 21*). He was especially effective in organising teachers and women.

Babrak Karmal, was a member of the Durrani Pashtun aristocracy, with close links to the royal house; (*Male B ibid; p. 22*); he was especially effective in organising the Kabul Students union and radical youth. He is said to have been converted to Marxism by **Mir Akbar Khyber**. In the Military Academy, they formed the "**Parcham**" (Flag) faction of the PDPA.

From the beginning the PDPA professed the programme of the proletariat:

"In the last two years we have fully understood the ideology of each other and our path is explicitly clear. We know that we are struggling for some classes against some classes and that we are going to build such a society on the basis of social principles in the interest of the toilers and void of individual exploitation";

Cited by Male Ibid; p. 36; Address to the First Congress of the PDPA January 1965; Kabul Times.

"The foundation stone of our party rests on those classes which produce material and moral wealth. But all the wealth is used up by the parasite and exploiting classes. If our party could get the toilers and their intellectuals together, and teach them the ideology of the workers and get them untied on the basis of this ideology it would then be certain that our dear Afghanistan will be revived from all hardship and suffering";

Taraki; Address to the First Congress; Cited Male Ibid; p. 37.

Hafizullah Amin was in the USA when the PDPA was formed, where he established a solidarity group. However in the interim a Central Committee of 11 was formed, with Taraki as Secretary General, and Babrak Karmal became the Secretary of the Central Committee. The party was still clandestine.

Early on various factions split off on ethnic grounds. But a more fundamental difference remained within the party until a later split in 1965. In the 1965 elections Babrak Karmal together with Dr. **Anahita Ratebzada** (his companion, who was married at a young age to Dr. Qamruddin surgeon to the Royal household) were elected to the **Wolesi Jirga (Parliament)**. Verbal attacks upon government in parliament, escalated tensions and

student riots occurred in 25 October 1966 where 3 students were killed. The Wolesi Jirga was adjourned.

At this stage two positions crystallized, around what attitude to take to the Zahir Shah regime. Amin and Taraki organized around **Khalq ('The People')**; and Babrak Karmal and Mir Akbar Khyber around **Parcham ('Flag')**. Karmal was attempting to make an opportunist pact with the monarchy.

The manifesto of the Khalq was issued in April 1966 and it:

"Identified the economic and political hegemony of the feudal calls as the source of Afghanistan's' misery and backwardness, and saw the immediate solution as the establishment of a 'national democratic government' – founded on " an national united front of patriotic, democratic progressive forces, viz. Workers, peasants, progressive elite, artisans, small bourgeois (small and average landowners) and national bourgeois (national capitalist) who are struggling for national independence, popularisation of democracy in social life and making the ant-imperialist and feudalist democratic movement successful";

Cited Male Ibid; p. 41-42.

It also pointed out the:

"Primary objective of creating a socialist society which is imperative for our social accomplishment"; *Male Ibid; p. 42.*

Meanwhile Karmal and 'The Parcham' on the other hand wished to:

"assure the king that we are not Communists." *Cited Male Ibid; p. 43.*

Unsurprisingly then, Karmal with his contacts in government arranged that 'Parcham' was published publicly. In contrast Khalq remained a banned paper. Babrak Karmal went on to make a speech in the Wolesi Jirga ("House of the People"; Parliament with 216 elected members – there was also a Mesharnao Jirga – an Upper House of 84 members largely appointed by the king) heavily extolling the King as:

"The most progressive king of Asia... (affirming) his sincere and abiding faith in the ling" and praising the budget presented by the Ministry on the grounds that King Zahir Shah had himself devoted time to its preparation." *Male B; Ibid; p. 44.*

When Karmal proffered his resignation to the Central Committee it was accepted and an ensuing **split** in 1967, left two groups both claiming the name of the PDPA.

Another faction of the PDPA was never quite as important, was the military faction led by Abdul Qadir.

- The 'Khalq' faction represented the joint interests of the working class, peasantry and the national capitalist class. Due to the weak working class, it was dominated by the perspective of the national capitalist class.
- 'Parcham' represented the interest of the feudal and monarchist landowners.

Independent commentators noted the divergence:

"Parcham' ... have calmed down appreciably... Babrak and 'Parcham' appear to be agreed that a milder evolutionary approach to socialism is to be preferred to violent overthrow. 'Parcham' believes that all sectors of the Afghan population can contribute to the defeat of "feudalism and imperialism" and promotes the creation of 'United Democratic Front' to work for a change within the constitutional system." *Dupree L: Cited by Male B: Ibid; p. 47.*

However, both factions of the PDPA were supported by the USSR revisionists of the former USSR:

"Even prior to the coup at least three distinct organised groups can be identified, each with their own separate links to the Soviet state: the 'Khalqi' faction, and the 'Parcham' faction, formally reunited within one PDPA in 1977, and a third body, a separate military faction headed by Abdul Qadir, that was not formally acknowledged. If the first two had links with the international communist movement, via the Iranian Tudeh Party, and the Pakistan and Indian communist parties, and directly to the International Department of the CPSU in Moscow, the third had direct ties to the GRU, the Soviet military intelligence apparatus. The main party leaders-Taraki, Khaibar and Karmal--also had direct contacts with the Soviet embassy in Kabul."

Halliday, Fred & Tanin, Zahir: 'The Communist Regime in Afghanistan 1978-1992: Institutions and Conflicts.'; Europe-Asia Studies, Dec 1998, Vol. 50 Issue 8, p1357-1380; at p.1360

Objectively, **both these PDPA factions had a pro-USSR comprador** under-pinning that did not fail to exert its long term influence.

Other Major Parties

Briefly during this period, two **Maoist** pro-Chinese organisations arose also:

In general pro-Chinese groupings resisted "Pashtunistan". In so doing they also therefore supported Pakistan.

Pakistan had long resisted any attempt to weaken its territorial integrity, by denying the nation of "**Pashtunistan**" otherwise known as 'North West Frontier Province'. These were lands that had been confiscated by the Duran Line British partition. Later they became part of the state of Pakistan.

One such Maoist organisation was Shola-I-Javid (Eternal Flame) edited by Dr. Rahim

Mahmoudi and Dr. Hadi Mahmoudi. Correspondingly their politics were anti-Pushtun.

Another pro-Chinese Maoist organisation was [Setem-I-Meli](#) (Against national oppressions) led by [Taher Badakhshi](#) – by origin a Tajik. It came to represent the views of minorities who perceived themselves to be oppressed by the Pashtuns.

From 1969, the regime of Zahir Shah became more overtly reactionary and closed down its' stooges of the 'Parcham' as well. During this period the active mobilisation of the mullah forces was encouraged by the government (*Hyman A; Ibid; p.61*).

At this stage many religious parties were formed by the pre-eminent religious family of mullahs – the [Mujaddidi](#) family – led by the [Hazrat Sahib of Shor Bazaar](#). They formed the head of the conservative group in Parliament. Fundamentalist Islamic groups heavily influenced by the Egyptian movements were founded, known as [Ikhwan al-Muslimin](#) ("Muslim Bretheren" or 'Young Muslims') and the [Jama'at-i-islami](#) of [Maulana Abu'l A'la Maudoodi](#) of India.

A liberal progressive party – the [Progressive Democratic Party](#) – led by [Maiwandwal](#) – also was formed.

A large [Social Democratic party](#) was formed as well known as the [Afghan Social Democrats](#), led by [Engineer Ghulam Mohammed Farhad](#) – proclaimed a 'Greater Afghanistan' including Pushtanistan. Both these parties objectively represented the national capitalist class.

However in the 1969 elections both Parcham and Khalq obtained seats.

The [PDPA programme](#) enabled the election of Hafizullah Amin under the slogan of a United Front:

"The PDPA decided that all progressive, democratic and national forces be united under a single banner of united front composed of patriotic elements to protest against the Zahir Shah regime." *Male Ibid; p. 49.*

But Karmal and Parcham rejected any such United Front.

13. The regime of Sardar Mohammed Daoud 1973-1978 – A Pashtun Dominated Comprador state

When [King Zahir Shah](#) displaced his cousin [Daoud](#) as Prime Minister in 1963, the state turned increasingly to an overt dictatorial right. The king refused to devolve any power, and dismissed in turn five nationalist prime ministers. In this turn, the army leaders became restless. They regretted what they saw as an ensuing change away from the USSR.

After all, they had been often in the past sent for training there, during the time that Daoud had been Prime Minister. Many of the army elite saw themselves as committed to modernisation. A pact now emerged between ex-Prime Minister Daoud, Babrak, and the higher army leaders:

"Knowledgeable circles in Kabul regarded 'Parcham' as Sardar Daoud's own "communist party." *Male, Ibid; p. 53.*

This led to an army-led coup in 1973. The character of this coup, placing Daoud as a President of a Republic, was a putsch aiming to establish a constitutional democratic republic. This aimed to establish a **land reform**, which would pit Daoud against the feudal and monarchist landowners:

"Land ceilings were fixed at 20-40 hectares for irrigated and dry land respectively – less relatively high to the average landholdings. Compensation was to be paid at an interest rate of 2% - payable over the next 25 years- payable by peasants buffeting from the reform. A full year was to elapse before this decree was to be applied ". *Hyman; Ibid; p. 65.*

However objectively - as pointed out - the national capitalist class was extremely weak. It had therefore from the beginning sought out aid in the form of 'alliances' – in reality dependence.

An early turn to the USA was rebuffed by the insistence from the USA that Afghanistan enter **CENTO** and repudiate any notion of "Pashtunistan". In other words the USA we demanded the Afghan Daoud state left Pakistan intact in its boundaries. Subsequently therefore, the first Daoud premiership turned to the USSR. Yet again, in his second government, Daoud at first attempted to obtain aid from pro-USA sources - such as Iran:

"The Shah of Iran began to drop hints in 1973 of massive offers of aid to Daud, who after some initial hesitation, signed a billion dollar loan agreement with Tehran.... However... no more than \$10 million was handed over as a part of the Treaty of Hilmand." *Anwar Ibid; p. 77*

In the interim, Daoud's moves to progressive democratic reforms prompted the **Muslim clergy to organise resistance**. During this period, many Islamic Fundamentalists fled to Pakistan. This was exploited by Pakistan whose leaders were anxious to prevent any separation of parts of Pakistan.

Pakistan's President Zulfakir Ali-Bhutto began to organise camps of Islamic guerillas along the border. They were led by **Burhanuddin Rabbani and Gulbuddin Hekmatyr** – originally from Kabul University. These camps aimed to resist the attempts of the Afghanistan national bourgeoisie to fan the nationalist movements in Northern Pakistan of the **Pathan and Baluch regions of Pushtunistan**.

From 1953 on, Daoud had been at the forefront of agitation for separation of these territories - originally ceded to British India in the Third Afghan War – and then to Pakistan. Daoud wanted them to revert to an independent Pashtunistan (*Hyman Ibid; p. 67-8*). Naturally the Pakistan government had a vested interest in this area, especially since the secession of Bangla Desh:

"**Baluchistan** was to become the largest province of West Pakistan, but the least populated, with some 40% of its area but a mere 4% of its population. Its social structure was dominated by nomadic tribalism, and the tribal chiefs dominated the tribesmen. The British had entered the regions inhabited by Baluch simply to control the frontier with Afghanistan. ... A national consciousness (had awoken) during the 30's and 40's and the high point of this was Bizenjo's speech in the Kalat Assembly. But the military intervention of the Pakistani army in 1948 was to inaugurate a forced integration with the Pakistani state."

Ali, Tariq; "Can Pakistan Survive" The Death of a State"; London 1983; p. 116.

After the **National Awami Party of Pashtuns and Baluchis** formed a government in Baluchistan in 1973, the Pakistan government of the **Pakistan People's Party** dismissed the Baluchistan government. This provided Daoud with a pretext to establish a camp for Baluchi guerillas. Daoud was attempting to create a fused Afghan society-nation by simply ignoring all the other national questions (*Hyman Ibid; p.68-69*). This served the interests of the Pashtun majority, which under Daoud wished to exert a national domination over a modernized state of Afghanistan.

Correspondingly Daoud's regime withdrew support of even minor reforms aimed at the non-Pushtuns in the smaller nationalities. Thus Daoud closed down radio stations operating in the Turkic language aimed at the northern minorities. A provincial re-organisation in the East reduced the number of provinces from 28 to 26 suppressing some ethnic groups. Although the Pushtun military elite and Tajik predominance of the administrative elite was eroded, ultimately Pashtun nationalists still dominated the army.

Although Daoud had been initially pro-USSR, he got no support from the Brezhnevite USSR to support a "Free" Pushtunistan. So he switched his wagon back to the USA.

Brezhnev preferred to support Bhutto and Pakistan. Bhutto had managed to coopt the main leaders of the Baluchi movement into the governing rule within larger Pakistan. Moreover Bhutto convinced Brezhnev that the further break-up of Pakistan was at that time a dangerous step. **Bhutto** returned from the Soviet Union in 1978 saying:

"I have cut the string which flew the Afghan kite." *Cited Anwar Ibid; p. 81.*

Daoud was forced to negotiate with Bhutto, who himself was succeeded by **Zia Ul-Haq**, who took power in a coup. When Daoud under pressure from the King Zahir Shah,

acceded to Pakistani President Zia ul-Haq's demand to curtail support of the Baluch and Pashtun militias, he sealed the change to the USA masters.

Henry Kissinger duly arrived in Kabul to cement the USA bond. This quickly meant that the army's leading echelons – trained in the USSR – re-thought their support for the Daoud regime. They began to undercut the Daoud government.

Although some 'Parcham' leaders were appointed to government after the coup, Karmal was left outside. Again, the 'Parcham' faction tried to find an easy berth in government. But a formal break between Karmal and Daoud, became inevitable in part due to Daoud's increasingly pro-USA stance.

- **Karmal had as we have seen, allied himself and 'Parcham' to the USSR.**
- **The Republic as proclaimed by Daoud, was welcomed by 'Khalq' as well.**

However 'Khalq' was ignored by government, and continued underground work and publication. All press – including the Islamic fundamentalist press - was shut down by Daoud in 1977.

During this period, the '**Khalq**' leading circles, developed the strategic position of a "short cut" that relied on the military. Its own writings proclaimed that:

"Comrade Taraki had appraised Afghan society on a scientific basis ... since the 1973 coup that it was possible for Afghanistan for the people to wrest power through a short cut as the classical way in which the productive forces undergo different stages to build a society based on socialism would take a long time. This short cut would be utilised by working exclusively within the armed forces,. Previously the army was considered as the tool of dictatorship and despotism of the ruling class and it was not imaginable to use it before toppling its employer."
Male Ibid; p. 56.

Accordingly the 'Khalq' party, especially guided by **Hafizullah Amin**, devoted considerable time to lay the foundations of their cadre in the army, in order to organise a coup. With this the 'Parcham' faction having been rejected as a strong parliamentary force by Daoud, now re-joined 'Khalq'. The two factions retained however their separate organisational structures.

This strategy was effectively envisaged as a "revolution from above". Academics have accepted this position. *Trimberger EJ, "Revolution From Above"; New Brunswick NJ, 1978; and Halliday F & Tanin, Zahir Ibid, 1998.*

Although this overall characterisation is correct, it ignores any understandings brought by previous Marxist-Leninist discussions on the matter. As discussed above, the Comintern, Lenin and Stalin had explicitly discussed the objective revolutionary

conditions under which countries with an extremely small working class could or could not undergo the national democratic revolution moving into the socialist revolution.

Under pressure from the USSR, concerned about the drift of Daoud to the USA, the two main factions of the PDAP – the ‘Khalq’ and the ‘Parcham’ re-united from negotiations begun in 1975. But their apparatuses were kept completely separate. A deal was brokered by the Iranian Tudeh leader Ehsan Tabari, and two central committees were merged in 1977.

14. The 1978 Saur (Month of Taurus the Bull [April]) Revolution

The signal for the coup was the murder of Mir Akbar Khyber, the theoretician of the ‘Parcham’ faction. In the unrest following, the leading members of the PDPA were arrested. Plans had already been made for a coup – planned for July-August 1978, and it was brought forward by two months. Hafizullah Amin had infiltrated the army and was able to lead the coup. He physically liberated both Taraki and Babrak Karmal from prison, while seizing Radio Afghanistan. There they announced the successful coup. The ‘Khalq’ faction of the PDPA had, virtually alone, coordinated the coup, while the ‘Parcham’ faction had almost no knowledge of the plans for it.

The coup resulted in power being seized by a class alliance led by a small national capitalist class. This class was in alliance with:

Those elements of the pro-feudal classes acting as compradors to the USSR – these were politically represented by the ‘Parcham’ faction of the PDPA;

A small and ineffectively organised working class who had no separate organizational backing;

A large un-organised peasant and toiler population who had no separate organisational backing.

In addition, the class take-over of the state enabled a **tribal** change in state power also. The coup displaced the Mohammadzai Durrani Pashtuns by the Ghilzai Pashtuns.

The new Government was headed by Taraki – the leader of the ‘Khalq’. But members of ‘Parcham’ (including Babrak Karmal) and ‘Khalq’ (including Hafizullah Amin) shared leading posts in the government. The programme of the new government was one of promoting elements of a national democratic revolution that would attack the fundamentals of a feudal regime:

"The broader social consequences of the Khalqi regime were also significant: it marked the end of the domination of the country by the Mohammadzai Pashtuns, who had long ruled in a coalition with Persian speakers in a secondary position. For the first time in over two centuries of Afghan history, the Ghilzai Pashtuns took control of the state. This did not, however, help the regime to maintain relations with the Pashtun tribes: the latter were angered by changes such as the

reform of rural mortgages and debts (Decree no. 6), reform of marriage and the bride price (Decree no. 7), land reform (Decree no. 8) and the literacy campaign. The reforms were designed to broaden the base of the regime: in the event, they provoked greater opposition. Not only were the reforms ill-considered, but they were also coercively implemented."

Halliday & Tanin; 1998, Ibid: p.1360.

These decrees (described more below) were reforms aimed to ensure a form of modernization, or a **primitive state democratic reform**. We use the term a form of "primitive state democracy", because the state set up was of a markedly repressive nature with a very active secret police that crushed any political opposition. Yet, the strategic goals of the government were to undercut the power of the feudal landowners, the Muslim ulema, and the monarchists. This served the interests of a broad class alliance that included the small working class and the large mass of toilers, who were being led by the national capitalist class.

The enemy was spelt out in the programme, entitled **"Basic Lines of Revolutionary Duties of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan"**. This considered that Afghanistan was:

"A feudal socio-economic system, the basic contradictions being between the feudal class and the peasants on the one hand the people of Afghanistan and imperialism on the other. The poverty and misery of the Afghan people were attributed to the economic and political hegemony of the feudal class. (Which) consisted of 'compradores, hoarders, big businessmen, corrupt bureaucrats, monopolists, and international imperialists."

Cited Male Ibid; p. 108.

The goal was to build a:

"National united front of patriotic democratic progressive forces, viz workers, peasants, progressive elite, artisans, small bourgeoisie (Small & average class landlords) and national bourgeois (national capitalists) under the leadership of the PDPA.. (With a) strategic objective of (founding) a national government to abolish the old feudal and pre-feudal relations." *Cited Ibid; Male p. 108.*

The identified allies were:

"workers, peasants, officers, and soldiers, craftsmen, intelligentsia, patriotic clergy, toiling nomads, small and medium, classes and strata, i.e. businessmen and national entrepreneurs"; *Cited Male; Ibid; p. 108.*

The **Decrees** aimed to improve the lot of the poorest sections of society:

Decree no 6 aimed to break the terrible burden of debt leading to loss of land for the peasant. It was far reaching:

"Zeary (Agriculture Minister -Ed) estimated that it benefited 81 % of rural families, returning the land of those who had lost it to money lenders, and allowing all peasants and small landowners the chance of making a decent livelihood";
Male p.109-110

The land assessments were based on cadastral survey (i.e. land tax records) by the Wolesahi Committees; working with Peasants Assisting Funds and Peasants Cooperatives.

Decree no. 7, severely restricted the practice of maher (bride price) and set a minimum age for marriage of 16 for girls and 18 for boys, These were especially liberating for those most subject to tribal feudal reactionary values.

Decree No.8, on land re-distribution was not immediate, but took longer. Even so it was declared complete by 1979 July – within 6 months. A ceiling of 30 jerebs (15 acres) of prime irrigated land or equivalent – only affected a small minority of landowners but was able to redistribute half the arable land to the "deserving" families – defined as those owning ten jerebs or less, who made up 81% of the population (Male *ibid*; p. 112).

These fundamental decrees were buttressed by educational reforms, and judicial and bureaucratic controls.

Opposition naturally arose from the ulema and big landlords, and tribal leaders.

15. The "Eid Coup" – The Break-up of the Ruling Alliance

Although the 'Parcham' faction supported the 'Khalq' led coup, differences continued. Given the subsequent events it appears that the dividing issue was the **degree to which to turn the state dependency towards the USSR.**

The 'Parcham' led by Babrak Karmal was the strongest supporter of this strategy while Hafizullah Ali of the 'Khalq' faction, was the strongest opponent of this:

"Amin was concerned to press three points: the independence of the Afghan revolution; Afghanistan's commitment to non-alignment and its need for "aid without strings" for all possible sources and the government's determination to press ahead with rural reform that would destroy the tribal-feudal authority structure." *Male Ibid; p 131.*

"Afghanistan was interested... in friendship with all countries that support the Saur Revolution with a spirit of friendship and the utilisation of economic assistance rendered to Afghanistan With no regard to the socio-economic

system of the aid-giving country, provided that the aid is unconditional and in accord with the principle of non-interference." *Amin Cited by Male Ibid; p. 132.*

In the middle to some extent was Taraki of the 'Khalq' faction.

By July 1978, the 'Parcham' leaders had been side-lined, by the strategy of sending them to be ambassadors abroad. Nonetheless, 'Parcham' correspondingly made plans for a coup to coincide with the Eid holidays marking the end of Ramadan. The plans for the "Eid Coup" were discovered and Amin expelled several Parchamites and arrested some officers.

In the midst of this the Islamacists led by the reactionary mullahs and ulema also began organising, finding some support within the armed forces also:

"However, the influence of the Islamist groups increased after April 1978, seemingly as a reaction to the... the impact of the regime's reforms. The sympathy of non-Khalqi officers towards the newly formed resistance movement, mainly consisting of Islamist groups, was a factor in the mutinies that became more prevalent: that in Herat on 16 March 1979 was followed by revolts in Jalalabad, Asmar, Ghazni and Nahrin and, in August, by that in the Bala Hisar citadel in Kabul. Each revolt was followed by arrests: Amin sought to remove 'counterrevolutionaries' from the armed forces and place his own men in key positions." *Halliday F & Tanin, Z; 1998 Ibid, p.1362*

Following the temporary defeat of the 'Parcham' faction, Taraki who had been a founding member of the PDPA and had sided with the 'Khalq' faction, also reverted to a more overtly comprador position to the USSR state.

Accordingly, Amin was increasingly challenged by Taraki. The latter came to another peace with 'Parcham' – many of whose leaders were abroad in counters of the Warsaw Pact. The Parchamites kidnapped the USA ambassador Adolph Dubs - in a 'mysterious' attempt to besmirch Amin, which was successful (*Male Ibid p.148*). The USA withdrew its support for Amin, and stopped all aid (*Male Ibid; p. 154*).

In addition very close in time to this, the rebellion at Herat noted above, led by Islamic fundamentalists broke out in March 1979. USSR advisers were especially sought out and massacred. Herat is in a predominantly Shi'i area, close to the Iranian border. This rebellion was supported by **Pakistan and Iran – both comprador states of the USA.**

Pakistan's state basis is generally well understood. That of Iran is not so immediately clear. The leadership of post-Shah Iran was a complex class alliance between representatives of the pro-USA comprador and feudal classes led by **Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini** and the national capitalist class led by **Abolhassan Bani-**

Sadr (See *Compass* article: 'War By Proxy'; October 1980; contained in *Alliance Marxist-Leninist Issue 2: April 1992. Placed On Web October 2001. The Gulf War - The USA Imperialists Bid To Recapture World Supremacy*; at: <http://ml-review.ca/aml/AllianceIssues/ALLIANCE2-GULFWAR.htm>). The USA was attempting to destabilize the Taraki PDPA government. This policy in the words of Presidential National Security Adviser **Zbigniew Brezhniski** was: "Sowing shit" - in Russia's backyard." *Cited Male Ibid*; p. 173

The vehicles for this policy, were the numerous **fundamentalists Islamic groups**. Of these the most important included:

"The Jamaat-I-Islam led by Buhanuddin Rabbani and Sigbhatullah Mujaddidi, based in Peshawar, the Hizb-I-Islami led by Gulbuddin Hekmatyr; the National Islamic & Revolutionary Council led by Syed Ahmed Gailani (who concentrated on organising the Hazara); and the Nuristan Front led by Mohammad Anwar Amin who organised in Kumar, Nuristan." *Male Ibid*; pp.171-174; & *Hyman Ibid*; p. 125

Pakistani secret services aid to the Afghan fundamentalists, in reality were channeling USA support, and was critical in this period. The rebels managed to incite riots inside Kabul itself. The rebel activity led to an even heavier Soviet military presence.

Having succeeded in isolating Hafizullah Amin by provoking the USA to cut ties, 'Parcham' and Taraki, met in Moscow, and launched a plot to assassinate Amin: This had the open approval of the USSR Ambassador Pusanov. *Male Ibid*; p. 185

Despite the plot, Amin survived and took power from Taraki in a counter-coup in September 1979, becoming Secretary-general of the PDPA and President of the Revolutionary Council. Taraki shortly afterwards, was later murdered. Amin then began a purge of the Army pro-USSR elements:

"After the elimination of all non-Khalqi elements, Amin began his last, and fatal, struggle, this time against those Khalqi officers whom he suspected of not supporting him. This led to opposition by a group of Soviet-educated officers, who were encouraged by Moscow's concern at Amin's "adventurism'." *Halliday F & Tanin Z; 1998, Ibid, p.1362.*

Meanwhile, preoccupied by the Herat Uprising, Amin had no choice but to seek further "aid". He attempted to engage the USA again, and entered negotiations with the USA stooge Pakistani state led by **General Zia ul Haq**. At this stage, the USA government provoked a series of events in Iran aimed to unseat the alliance of the Iranian comprador and landlord classes and national bourgeoisie – and enable a military dictatorship of the comprador agents. This resulted in the taking of hostages at the USA embassy. Following this, Iran cancelled all treaties with both the USA and the USSR. As the USA led by **President Carter** mobilised troops and naval forces in the Arabian Sea, the USSR pushed Hafizullah Amin for bases in the Herat area, at Shindbad. However Amin

refused. *Cited Male Ibid; p. 203*

The stage was set for the USSR's open invasion of Afghanistan authorized by **Leonid Brezhnev**.

16. The Comprador USSR Presidency of Babrak Karmal

As early as 7 December USSR troops were placed on alert on the Afghanistan border. On 20 December following a failed attempt to poison Amin and remove him without harm, the USSR troops entered the country and on December 27th December Amin was murdered. Karmal had entered the country secretly in October, and was installed into power by USSR troops.

Karmal made the announcement on radio on the night of 27th December, declaring himself a follower of Taraki. He named **Dr. Muhammed Najibullah** as General Secretary of the Party.

The PDPA held its 9th Congress under Karmal's presidency and announced increased USSR aid that would fund 70% of a Five-year plan aimed at increasing industrial production by 38% and agricultural production by 14.6% (*Cited Anwar Ibid; p. 206*).

The character of the new state was now quite un-equivocally a **comprador state to the USSR**, with an invading and occupying army in place. However another aspect of it was the change within the leadership from the Ghilzai Pushtun *back* to the Durrani Pushtun:

"The change of regime at the end of 1979 also produced a shift in ethnic composition. The 'Khalqi' era of Pashtun Ghilzai domination, evident in leadership and party as a whole, ended. The 'Khalqis' had not only tried to pursue a new ethnic policy, but had tried to replace the Persian language with Pashtu: in contrast to all previous Afghan leaders, Taraki made all his speeches in Pashtu. Under Babrak Karmal, the regime moved back to the status quo ante: Pashtun domination persisted within the new coalition, but it incorporated a Persian-speaking Kabuli milieu. In an unprecedented step Karmal appointed Sultan Ali Kistmand, a member of the minority Hazara community, as prime minister. Although the party leadership continued to have strong Ghilzai Pashtun representation, the Pashtun membership of the party as a whole was much lower, around a third, while over half the members were now Tajiks, a proportion far higher than their one-third representation in the population as a whole. The ethnic composition also reflected demographic changes brought about by the war and emigration."

Halliday F & Tanin Z; 1998, Ibid, p.1363

The USSR occupation was **oppressive** and rapidly inflamed all elements of the country. But in the absence of independent working class leadership – the initiative was seized

by the reactionary Islamic elements, supporters and members of the [old feudal landowning classes](#).

A **Jihad** was launched in 1979, proclaimed by the **National Islamic Front**. Jihad means holy war, but as originally defined by Prophet Muhammad – it had two parts. The "greater Jihad" meant an internal personal search for salvation and self-improvement. While the 'lesser jihad' was the rebellion against unjust temporal rulers (*Rashid Ahmed: "Jihad -The Rise of Militant Islam In Central Asia"; New Haven; 2002; p.2*). It is now most commonly used to mean the "lesser jihad". The Afghanistan Islamic fundamentalists remained largely – but not entirely, organised out of Pakistan. They continued to wage guerilla war on the Afghanistan State. Several groupings were formed. Seven major ones united as the **Peshawar Seven** – being their base. These included:

- Hizb-I-Islami Afghanistan (HIA) led by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar also known as the Akhwanul Mulimin (Muslim brotherhood); this was the largest;
- The Jamiat-I-Islami (Islamic Association) led by Burhanuddin Rabbani;
- Hizb-I-Islami (HI) led by Younis Khalis;
- Islamic unity for the Liberation of Afghanistan (IULA) led by Abdur Rasaul Sayaf;
- Harkat-I-Inquilabi Islami (Islamic revolutionary Movement) led by Mohammed Nabi Mohammadi;
- Mahaz-I-Milli Afghanistan (National Islamic Front) (NIFA) led by Mohammad Gilani and
- Jabhe-ye Nijate Milli Afghanistan (National Liberation Front) led by Sibghatullah Mujadidi.

These were all led by Durrani Pashtuns. This coalition divided into two broad groups by 1983 – the Traditionalists (where the influence of the ulemas was more dominant – preserving traditional tribal structures such as the Jirga) and the Fundamentalists.

In total it is thought the Mujahadeen were some 100,000-200,000 members strong.

By February 1980, a national Islamic anti-government movement called Allah-au-Akbar (God is great) was organised, and held major rallies.

Karmal was soon faced with not only the disgust of the population at large, but also internal resistance from the old 'Khlaqi' elements who resisted 'Parchamite' attempts to exact revenge. In particular the army. Although these elements contained a large pro-USSR comprador faction, they also contained a strong nationalist faction that had been fostered by Hafizullah Amin:

"The presence and conduct of Soviet forces also had conflicting results: while it helped to protect major cities and lines of communication, it inevitably provoked patriotic resentment amongst Afghans. It was also widely felt by Afghans that

they were acting under Soviet orders. As a consequence, the army, in the initial period after the invasion, lost a considerable number of its officers: they either went over to the opposition or left the country." *Halliday F & Tanin Z; 1998 Ibid, p.1364*

They wished that the state defenses and apparatuses were turned over again to Afghan representatives. They were led by Sarwari, and Karmal simply exiled him as an ambassador to Mongolia. (*Anwar; Ibid p.210*). But an army mutiny on 27 December 1980 signaled the bitterness of the struggle. By 1984 the number of USSR troops stationed in Afghanistan was 150,000 and in addition there were 10,000 non-military "advisers". (*Anwar ibid; p.223*)

In an attempt to widen his base of support, Karmal attempted a widened recruitment of the PDPA. He revealed that till then in 1981, there had been virtually no peasants or workers as member of the PDPA:

"The absorption of a considerable number of workers and peasants is a new phenomenon in the history of the Party." *Cited Anwar Ibid; p. 214*

But despite this:

"The PDPA remained a party of urban educated recruits and of personnel in the armed forces and the KhAD (the secret service): an estimated 60% of the armed forces and 99% of KhAD were PDPA members." *Halliday F & Tanin Z; 1998, Ibid; p.1363.*

So, a retreat of the national democratic revolution was signaled by a series of exemptions to the agricultural reforms of the Taraki-Amin government (*Anwar Ibid; p. 215*). He offered the return of the landlords confiscated lands on condition of a cessation of anti-government activities. By 1983 an amnesty was being offered to rebels.

A Loya Jirga was held in 1985 that was heavily packed with representatives of the traders, big businessmen and tribal chiefs. (*Anwar Ibid; p.221*)

In reprisal at the Soviet take-over of the Afghanistan state, the **Carter** USA government promulgated the **Carter Doctrine** that described the Persian Gulf as "integral to American strategic interests" (*Cited Anwar Ibid; p. 199*). As Afghan refugees entered into Pakistan, numbering 80,0000 by 1979, Pakistani aid to the Islamic rebels escalated sharply, financed by the USA.

By now the Mujahhadeen – were well developed and had split into numerous warring factions. By 1985:

"The US had invested nearly 625 million dollars in the Afghan rebels, In that year alone, the Reagan administration provided them with 250 million dollars..... The Washington Post reported .. "this is the largest CIA military support application

since the Vietnam war." *Cited Anwar Ibid; p. 232.*

A close liaison between the Chinese Government led then by **Deng Xiao-Ping**, and the USA ensured exchange of vital information.

In the midst of all this, the USSR was quite aware that the PDPA was simply not convincing the masses:

"At a meeting of the CPSU Politburo in 1986. Marshal Akhromeev pointed out that the Kabul regime now had substantial military forces at its disposal: 160 000 in the army, 115 000 in the Sarandoy (Gendarmerie) and 20 000 in the security organs. The problem... was that military strength was not matched by political results: "... We control Kabul and the provincial centres, but we cannot establish authority in conquered areas. We have lost the struggle for the Afghan people. A minority of people supports the government". Deputy Foreign Minister Vorontsov went further: quoting PDPA Politburo member Salih Muhammad Ziari, Vorontsov pointed out that the rural population, who made up 80% of the population, had gained nothing from the revolution.... only five million out of 18 million Afghans were under the control of the government, and of these three million were in cities. In many cases, peasants in the rebel-controlled areas were better off than those under government control." *Halliday & Tanin;1998, p. 1367.*

By December 1984, [Izvestia](#) carried the first official admissions that:

"There were serious casualties and shortage at Soviet garrison in Afghanistan".
O'Ballance E: Ibid p. 135.

By 1986, although there were no official figures, it was thought that the number of USSR personnel "missing in action" exceeded 400 (O'Ballance Ibid; p. 160).

17. Gorbachev and Najibullah – A Change of Guard

As Karmal failed to appease either the nationalist army officers or the Afghan Islamacists forming the Mujahhadeen, the **Soviet social-imperialists** looked to other leaders. They first tried to wean Karmal into a more overt opportunism:

"It was against this background that Gorbachev summoned Karmal to Moscow in October 1985 and, to the latter's apparent amazement, told him of a change of Soviet policy: By the summer of 1986 you will have to begin to defend yourselves. We shall help, but with arms, not soldiers. If you want to survive, broaden the base of the regime, forget about socialism, share power with those who have real influence, including with mujahidin leaders and organisations that are at the moment opposed to you, revive Islam in the laws ... operate on the basis of traditional authorities, and try to act so that the people will see that it is

getting benefits from your revolt. Also, turn the army into an army, increase payments to officers and mullahs. Encourage private trade--you are a long way from creating any other kind of economy." *Halliday F & Tanin Z; 1998, Ibid p.1374*

But Karmal refused to modify his approach. When **Gorbachev** came to power in 1985, he fostered **Dr Mohammed Najibullah**. At the 19th PDPA Plenum of the Central Committee, Najibullah took control. Karmal was forced to resign as President by November 1986. Attempts at conciliation, and grants of money and land continued, aimed at defusing discontent:

"Najib's regime was the attempt to broaden its rural base, not, as under Karmal, by seeking to recruit tribesmen to the PDPA but by a more traditional policy of inducements (arms and money). Initially proclaimed as the policy of "National Reconciliation" in January 1987, this initiative was accompanied by offers of cease-fires and longer-running truces." *Halliday F & Tanin Z; 1998, Ibid p.16369.*

Najibullah offered a "national government" to the Mujahhadeen, who rejected any such advances. However continued discussions, including with the ex-King Zahir Shah, led to interest in the Majaheed. However the USA was anxious to sabotage any such peace. The **USA State Department report** of 1987 typified the USA strategy:

"Teaching the Soviets a lesson in Afghanistan, the Mujahhadeen resistance will remain steadfast... They are prepared to fight for a decade or more." *Anwar; p. 250.*

In a 1998 interview with **Zbigniew Brzezinski**, (National Security Adviser, with *Le Nouvel Observateur*, Paris, 15-21 January 1998) he made clear that the CIA's intervention in Afghanistan preceded the 1979 Soviet invasion, under the Carter Administration:

Question: The former director of the CIA, Robert Gates, stated in his memoirs ["From the Shadows"], that American intelligence services began to aid the Mujahadeen in Afghanistan 6 months before the Soviet intervention. In this period you were the national security adviser to President Carter. You therefore played a role in this affair. Is that correct?

Brzezinski: Yes. According to the official version of history, CIA aid to the Mujahadeen began during 1980, that is to say, after the Soviet army invaded Afghanistan, 24 Dec 1979. But the reality, secretly guarded until now, is completely otherwise. Indeed, it was July 3, 1979 that President Carter signed the first directive for secret aid to the opponents of the pro-Soviet regime in Kabul. And that very day, I wrote a note to the president in which I explained to him that in my opinion this aid was going to induce a Soviet military intervention. We didn't push the Russians to intervene, but we knowingly increased the probability that they would.

Question: When the Soviets justified their intervention by asserting that they

intended to fight against a secret involvement of the United States in Afghanistan, people didn't believe them. However, there was a basis of truth. You don't regret anything today?

Brzezinski: Regret what? That secret operation was an excellent idea. It had the effect of drawing the Russians into the Afghan trap and you want me to regret it? The day that the Soviets officially crossed the border, I wrote to President Carter. We now have the opportunity of giving to the USSR its Vietnam war. Indeed, for almost 10 years, Moscow had to carry on a war insupportable by the government, a conflict that brought about the demoralization and finally the breakup of the Soviet empire."

<http://www.globalresearch.ca/articles/BRZ110A.html> , *Le Nouvel Observateur* cited by Bill Blum.

Accordingly, the USA, and its various allies in the Middle East and Pakistan, were all stoking the anti-PDPA coalition of the various Mujahadeen (holy warrior):

"Among the more potent weapons the U.S. supplied to the Mujahadeen were shoulder-fired surface-to-air missiles which helped counterbalance the effectiveness of Soviet combat helicopters. The Islamic Republic of Iran, along with many other Muslim nations and groups, gave aid and sent volunteers to aid the Mujahadeen. Among these Islamic volunteer fighters was a Saudi millionaire named Osama bin Laden; he and the other Arab volunteers came to be known as "Afghan Arabs", and they would later play significant roles in Islamic guerrilla wars in Algeria, Egypt, Bosnia, Tajikistan, Chechnya and in attacks on American and other Western targets." http://www.historyguy.com/afghan_civil_war.html; accessed last August 28, 2021

As the USSR burdens mounted, the pressures of the USSR home population against an un-popular imperialist war rose. On 25 April 198, **General Lizichev** – head of the USSR Armed Forces Political Directorate announced in Tass that:

"Since December 1979 USSR casualties in Afghanistan were '13,310 killed in action; 35,478 wounded; and 311 missing in action". These figures were lower than most 'guess-timates' by Western analysts." *Cited O'Ballance ibid; p. 183.*

The USSR wished to withdraw, and forced Najibullah to the negotiating table in the Geneva Accords of 1998:

"He was summoned to Moscow twice in 1987 for discussions with Gorbachev, and in April 1988 Gorbachev flew to Tashkent, .. to convince Najib to sign the Geneva accords that led to a Soviet withdrawal even without a US agreement to cut off weapons supplies to the mujahidin." *Halliday F & Tanin Z; 1998, Ibid p.1375*

"By 1988, the dragging war and internal changes in Soviet politics prompted Moscow to agree to the 1988 Geneva Accords, which led to the withdrawal of the Soviet army in February of 1989. By this time, nearly five million Afghans had fled to Iran or Pakistan and lived as refugees. The war in Afghanistan was over for the Russians, but not for the Afghans, who continued their civil war."

http://www.historyguy.com/afghan_civil_war.html

So the Civil War continued – but without the USSR troops.

Very soon the PDPA quickly split up into numerous factions. Part of the fall of the Najibullah regime was linked to the tribal conflicts between Pashtun and non-Pashtun elements. When the USSR further stopped sending financial support in 1991, Najibullah was forced to resign, as a number of anti-Pashtun elements had by now combined together:

"Najibullah himself (said) after his fall, (that) it was General Baba Jan, ... who in the end turned against him. ... Baba Jan's were among a group of non-Pashtun armed forces units that, in April 1992, defected a couple of days before the fall of the regime, in an alliance with the guerrillas of Ahmad Shah Masud. The catalytic moment, however, did not occur in Kabul at all, but in the north: this was the rebellion earlier in 1992 of the northern commanders, Dostom and Momin, following the nomination by Najibullah of a Pashtun commander to replace General Momin, commander of the Hairatan garrison. If there was a moment when the regime entered its final crisis, this was it. Dostom, Momin and the Ismaili forces under the Naderi family then began to form an alliance with Masud and Shi'ite groups. This then provoked the disaffection amongst generals in Kabul who began to make their own deals with guerrilla forces."

Halliday F & Tanin Z; 1998, Ibid; p.1370.

"the demise of his regime was associated with the emergence, at three separate points, of intra-regime disputes: the Tanai, Khalqi, attempted coup of March 1990, the revolt of the Uzbek militia under General Dostom in January 1992, and, finally, the fragmentation of the armed forces into Pashtun and non-Pashtun elements in April. The Pashtun elements who broke ranks in April included the Defence Minister, Aslam Watanjar, the Interior Minister, Raz Mohammad Paktin, the vice-president, General Rafai, and General Asak: they took the Sarandoy and the main Khalqi military into an alliance with Hekmatyar's Hizb-I-Islami. On the non-Pashtun side the mainly Tajik and Uzbek forces were under Generals Dostom and Momin in the north, the Ismaili forces under General Mansur Naderi, and Generals Nabi Azimi, deputy minister of defence, Asef Delawar, chief of the general staff, and Yor Mohammad, number two in the security forces, and Baba Jan in the Kabul region. These elements sided with Masud, and later the Shi'i Hizb-i Vahdat during the final days of the regime in April 1992. The pro-Tajik forces also included PDPA civilian elements: these

were Parchami elements in the executive council of the party such as Karmal's brother, Mahmud Baryalai, and cousin and foreign minister, Abdul Wakil, as well as Najib's three party deputies Farid Mazdak, Najmuddin Kawiani and Suleiman Laiq, and significant parts of KhAD." *Halliday F & Tanin Z; 1998, Ibid p. 1370.*

On April 15, 1992, Kabul finally fell to a rebel Mujahadeen offensive.

18. The Economic Status of Afghanistan At the End of the Soviet Comprador regime

Under the rule of Najibullah, the most overt manifestation of a neo-imperialist USSR comprador state had been set up. Moreover this was within the confines of a continuing intense guerrilla war, imposing a stringent further limitation on development. This all did have however, one further predominant economic effect. Before the Soviet occupation, the cash economy had been minimal:

"As late as 1972, economists estimated that the cash economy constituted slightly less than half of the total. This figure probably increased later in the 1970s, as a result of the expansion of the national market after completion of the nation-wide ring road and a rise in remittances from labor migration to Persian Gulf countries after the 1973 oil price rise".

Barnett Rubin; Political Economy of War and Peace in Afghanistan; In: AFGHANISTAN

RESOURCES: at: <http://www.eurasianet.org/resource/afghanistan/links/rubin99.shtml>

This was accessed in 2000. On Aug 28, 2021; accessed at: <https://eurasianet.org/excerpts-from-the-political-economy-of-war-and-peace-in-afghanistan>

Over the period of the Soviet occupation,

"During the Soviet occupation (1979-1989) a number of new phenomena also emerged:

dependence of competing leaders on opposing flows of politically motivated military assistance;

growing dependence of the population for subsistence on politically motivated humanitarian aid;

destruction of the rural subsistence economy through counter-insurgency; rapid urbanization, including internal displacement to Afghan cities and the flight of millions of mainly rural refugees to camps and cities in Pakistan and Iran; the consequent creation of refugee-warrior communities in Pakistan and Iran and of a region-wide Afghan Diaspora; and the rapid monetization of the economy."

Barnett Rubin; Political Economy of War and Peace in Afghanistan; In: AFGHANISTAN

RESOURCES: at: <http://www.eurasianet.org/resource/afghanistan/links/rubin99.shtml>

All these resulted by the end of Najibullah's era - in the following situation of an utter destruction of the infra-structure – both rural and urban of the state:

"By the Soviet withdrawal, nearly all of Kabul's food and fuel was donated by the USSR and distributed by the government through a coupon system.
 A different culture of dependency developed in the other sector of the society, with different social effects. Soviet counter-insurgency devastated the rural economy in much of the country (Swedish Committee for Afghanistan, 1988: 37). Rural trading networks were also badly disrupted, and food production fell by half to two thirds. The destruction not only impoverished the rural population but also weakened the elites whose power depended on control of agricultural and pastoral resources. In some areas, notably the irrigated plains north of the Hindu Kush under government control, the government pressured the peasants to grow cash crops such as cotton and sugar beets for sale to government factories, increasing dependence on the state, as well as the role of cash in the economy."
Barnett Rubin; Political Economy of War and Peace in Afghanistan; In: AFGHANISTAN RESOURCES: at: <http://www.eurasianet.org/resource/afghanistan/links/rubin99.shtml>

Naturally under these circumstances a large émigré refugee population fled the ravaged country:

"Much of the rural population fled, largely to Pakistan and Iran, where it depended on international aid... In Pakistan, access to aid was largely controlled by the Islamic parties recognized by the Directorate of Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) as recipients of US - and Saudi - supplied military assistance. The humanitarian aid thus funded a stable rear base for the mujahidin, just as the Soviet aid to Afghan cities constituted a stable base for the Soviet-supported regime. It was in these refugee warrior communities that Afghans also came in contact with the international Islamist groups, mainly Arab, who supplied both humanitarian and military aid, as well as fighters."
Barnett Rubin; Political Economy of War and Peace in Afghanistan; In: AFGHANISTAN RESOURCES: at: <http://www.eurasianet.org/resource/afghanistan/links/rubin99.shtml>

19. The Wars of the Mujahadeen

Now the civil war became intense as the various groups and factions of the Mujahadeen began a long lasting war. The lines of division were complicated by ethnic, tribal and religious affiliations:

"While the different rebel factions were united in their goal of ousting the Soviets and the Communist Kabul regime, they were quite different from one another. Groups represented distinct geographic regions of the country, while others represented ethnic or religious groups. The four main ethnic groups are the Pashtuns, from the south and west, and the Tajiks and Uzbeks who dominate in the north and east. Also, the Hazari minority accounts for most of the country's Shiite Muslims. Pashtuns, Uzbeks and Tajiks are mostly Sunni Muslims. The Taliban began in the Pashtun area of Kandahar, while the forces of Rabanni

and Massoud are primarily Tajik. Dostum is from the Uzbek region around the city of Mazar-i Sharif." http://www.historyguy.com/afghan_civil_war.html

When Kabul – the central seat of Pashtun power for 300 years – fell to the Tajik led forces of Rabbani & Masud, this further fueled the on-going civil war:

"Much of Afghanistan's subsequent civil war was to be determined by the fact that Kabul fell, not to the well-armed and bickering Pashtun parties based in Peshawar, but to the better organized and more united Tajik forces of Burhanuddin Rabbani and his military commander Ahmad Shah Masud and to the Uzbek forces from the north under General Rashid Dostum. It was a devastating psychological blow because for the first time in 300 years the Pashtuns had lost control of the capital. An internal civil war began almost immediately as Hikmetyar attempted to rally the Pashtuns and laid siege to Kabul, shelling it mercilessly."

Rashid Ahmed: "Taliban: Militant Islam & Fundamentalism In Central Asia"; New Haven 2000; p. 21

The situation was one of a virtual disintegration with geographical 'fiefdoms' across the country:

"Afghanistan was in a state of virtual disintegration just before the Taliban emerged at the end of 1994. The country was divided into warlord fiefdoms and all the warlords had fought, switched sides and fought again in a bewildering array of alliances, betrayals and bloodshed. The predominantly Tajik government of President Burhanuddin Rabbani controlled Kabul, its environs and the north-east of the country, while three provinces in the west centering on Herat were controlled by Ismael Khan. In the east on the Pakistan border three Pashtun provinces were under the independent control of a council or Shura (Council) of Mujaheddin commanders based in Jalalabad. A small region to the south and east of Kabul was controlled by Gulbuddin Hikmetyar. In the north the Uzbek warlord General Rashid Doumn held sway over six provinces and in January 1994 he had abandoned his alliance with the Rabbani government and joined with Hikmetyar to attack Kabul. In central Afghanistan the Hazaras controlled the province of Bamiyan. Southern Afghanistan and Kandahar were divided up amongst dozens of petty ex-Mujaheddin warlords and bandits who plundered the population at will. With the tribal structure and the economy in tatters, no consensus on a Pashtun leadership - and Pakistan's unwillingness to provide military aid to the Durrani as they did to Hikmetyar, the Pashtuns in the south were at war with each other."

Rashid Ahmed: "Taliban: Militant Islam & Fundamentalism In Central Asia"; New Haven 2000; p. 21

An attempt was made to weld together the differing factions, under an umbrella [Islamic Council of Mujahadeen](#), but this excluded both Shi'ites and the faction led by Hekmaty. This led to attacks from Hekmaty upon the Kabul base of the new Government:

"Several rebel groups formed a governing coalition, called the Islamic Council of Mujahadeen and elected Rabanni as the Interim President of Afghanistan for a term of one year, beginning in 1992. He held onto the office until the Taliban seized Kabul in 1996. This council excluded the parties of the... Shiites, as well as the armed group called Hizb-i Islami, which was led by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar. During the Soviet war, the Hizb-i Islami was one of the factions supported by neighboring Pakistan and also received significant weaponry from the United States. Hekmatyar's guerrilla career began even before the PDPA coup; his rebel group carried out attacks on the regime of President Daoud as well. Hekmatyar did not accept his exclusion from the new government and sporadically bombarded Kabul with artillery for nearly three years. January, 1994 found Hekmatyar forming an alliance with General Abdur Rashid Dostum in an attempt to overthrow President Burhanuddin Rabbani (who led the Jamiat-e Islami-e faction in the Soviet war) and his defense minister, Ahmad Shah Massoud. Dostum began his career as a "warlord" in command of the ethnic Uzbek Junbish militia in northern Afghanistan during the Soviet occupation. He joined forces with Najibullah in 1985. By 1992, he had moved back to the Mujahadeen."

http://www.historyguy.com/afghan_civil_war.html

Hekmatyar was driven back. In the general chaos of the civil war, the war-lord regimes were set up, while many of the toiling masses were simply slaughtered:

"In the fighting that followed, nearly 25,000 civilians died in Kabul. One-third of the city was destroyed. Hekmatyar's forces were forced out of the Kabul area in 1995. While Hekmatyar was attacking from outside the city, other factions also battled each other. Two groups, the Hizb-i Wahdat and another Mujahadeen faction, the Ittihad-i Islami, engaged in urban warfare in Kabul which led to thousands of deaths and disappearances. By 1994-1995, the various armies and militias of the former Mujahadeen fought each other throughout the country and ruled their areas of control as if they were warlords. In effect, Afghanistan had no central government to speak of."

http://www.historyguy.com/afghan_civil_war.html

20. The Economy of the Mujahadeen War-Lords

The Mujahadeen leaders themselves obviously exerted themselves for both ideological and economic goals. What were these economic goals? There were at least four main sources of revenue that enabled the leaders to transform themselves into a **new elite dealing in:**

The arms trade, the humanitarian foreign 'aid'; opium trade, and the smuggling and money-laundering trade.

In this process all the old rural feudal structures were destroyed as a new elite arose that had little connection to the old landlords. As a further consequence of this rural erosion,

in the absence of any sustained safe growth of the towns, an illicit cash economy arose. This in turn drove a hyper-inflation with the injection of huge amounts of cash into the economy.

Fairly soon both the party leaders of the Mujahadeen, and their commanders at a lower level, were allied to corrupt Pakistani officials, and all were investing much of their money overseas:

"This segment of the population came under the control of two related elites: the mujahidin party leaders outside the country and the commanders inside the country. Both became important economic actors, displacing both the prewar state and the notables, mainly landowners, who had dominated village life. The party leaders were completely dependent on foreign aid initially, but some of them succeeded in turning it into personal fortunes. Some of these were invested abroad (in London real estate, Australian tire factories, etc.), but some was laundered into the regional war economy, especially into arms and drug trafficking and other forms of smuggling. Within Pakistan, both officials of the mujahidin parties and Pakistani officers involved in the arms pipeline became rich." *Barnett Rubin; Political Economy of War and Peace in Afghanistan; In: AFGHANISTAN RESOURCES: at: <http://www.eurasianet.org/resource/afghanistan/links/rubin99.shtml>*

Neither for the 'humanitarian aid' nor for the arms aid was there any degree of accountability:

"A considerable amount of cash was transferred directly through multiple channels to pay for the expenses of war, and there was never the slightest degree of accountability for these transfers. The humanitarian aid that supported the 3-4 million Afghan refugees in Pakistan also passed through many international, Pakistani, and Afghan hands before reaching its intended beneficiaries. Intermediaries ... skimmed off cash and resold commodities. Profits from both the arms trade and the humanitarian business were laundered through various avenues, including the Bank of Credit and Commerce International, the Dubai-based, Pakistani-owned institution that collapsed in 1992. But the arms pipeline itself was also porous. Arms were sold off at all stages of the pipeline by both Pakistanis and Afghans, feeding the existing large arms markets in the area.. The transport of the arms and supply of goods to the refugees directly expanded the existing infrastructure for smuggling and money laundering."

Barnett Rubin; Political Economy of War and Peace in Afghanistan; In: AFGHANISTAN RESOURCES: at: <http://www.eurasianet.org/resource/afghanistan/links/rubin99.shtml>

Trade had long been compounded by smuggling. Arm trading was a natural additional pay-load for the smugglers:

"While the arms were delivered to mujahidin parties by Pakistan military trucks (which were also used for smuggling on return trips), the arms and other supplies were then transported to the border region, and, where possible, into Afghanistan, by private trucks, the same fleet that was used for the drug trade and other smuggling, The basis for Pakistani-Afghan smuggling had long been the Afghan Transit Trade Agreement (ATTA). Under this agreement, a variety of listed goods could be imported duty-free in sealed containers into Pakistan for onward shipment to land-locked Afghanistan. Much if not most of the goods were instead sold in smugglers' markets (bara bazaars) in Pakistan.The trucks used in this lucrative trade were in turn converted for the arms and drug trade, which in turn made more money available for investment in smuggling linked to the ATTA."

Barnett Rubin; Political Economy of War and Peace in Afghanistan; In: AFGHANISTAN RESOURCES: at: <http://www.eurasianet.org/resource/afghanistan/links/rubin99.shtml>

The commanders of the Mujahadeen quickly enriched themselves. They were not the same as the old landlord class, but quickly established their own bazaars insisting on levies of 'protection' from the more wealthy and simply Islamic taxes such as "zakat and ushr" from others:

"the main economic actors were the commanders. these commanders were by and large not the "traditional" (i.e. tribal or landowning) elites favored by the royal regime, which had been weakened by destruction of the rural economy, but a group of new elites that benefited from US, Pakistani, and Saudi policies of supporting only Islamist parties rather than the nationalist former elite". *Barnett Rubin; Political Economy of War and Peace in Afghanistan; In: AFGHANISTAN RESOURCES: at: <http://www.eurasianet.org/resource/afghanistan/links/rubin99.shtml>*

"Some commanders originated outside the mujahidin party structures and launched local insurgencies initially relying on local resources: zakat and ushr (Islamic taxes) levied on agriculture, flocks, trade, and wealth, and "contributions" from traders and other wealthy individuals, as well as the plundering of government supplies. As the war intensified, however, commanders increasingly depended on foreign aid relayed by the parties, and subsequently they too became more autonomous from local society."

Barnett Rubin; Ibid

These commanders naturally wished freedom to develop their own economic base away from the party leadership:

"The commanders sought economic strategies that would increase their autonomy from the party leaderships as well. In a number of areas far from the Soviet-controlled main roads they established bazaars selling items mainly imported from Pakistan and Iran. They also provided security to traders in return for tribute. Where possible they sought aid from Western or Islamic humanitarian

organizations engaged in cross-border assistance from Pakistan. Such aid provided services and employment that increased resources under their control as well as their prestige."

Barnett Rubin; Ibid

Even during the occupation of the USSR, some of the war-lords were granted privileges. Thus Ahmad Shah Massoud – the only Mujahadeen to have a "Truce" with the USSR – also had a trading relation with the USSR:

"Starting in 1987, after the introduction of Stinger missiles and the Soviet decision (still secret) to withdraw, and a consequent change in military tactics, roads became much more secure.Ahmad Shah Massoud, the "Tajik" commander in northeast Afghanistan who built up the most extensive resistance organization inside the country, controlled the emerald and lapis lazuli mines of his native valley, Panjsher. He levied a tax on each shipment of gems. After 1984 or so, Massoud also apparently enjoyed a protection income from the Soviets: he allowed convoys from the USSR to pass by his area to Kabul unmolested in return for a share of their content. At the same time, smaller commanders could accept the monetary payoffs offered by Kabul without renouncing their local power or allowing government administration into their areas."

Barnett Rubin; Ibid

Opium production was a huge monetary boost, and was closely tied to the destruction of the old rural nexus of relationship and the development of a cash economy. In addition because of the returns on a ridiculously easily grown crop, credit ("salaam") was readily forthcoming to the impoverished peasant:

"In some areas they pressured the peasants to grow opium, a cash crop they could tax. It was also during this period that the production of opium started to increase. The production of opium was related to one of the major macro-economic changes induced by the war: a rapid increase in the supply of money, which, combined with the destruction of the much of the subsistence economy, induced an apparently large, if as yet unmeasured, monetization of economic and social relations, as well as hyper-inflation. The foreign supporters of the mujahidin supplied them with millions of dollars in cash, and the associated smuggling enterprises in Pakistan produced large cash profits that had to be laundered".

Barnett Rubin; Ibid

"The ease of marketing opium made it an obvious target for taxation and predation by local power holders. Equally important, however, is that unlike any other crop available to the peasants, its cash value as an export was so certain that the buyers – commanders or international syndicates – would advance credit for it in advance of planting under a system known as salaam. The Afghan

peasants receive a mere fraction of the eventual street value of the opium. In the provinces with the highest yield (Farah, Qandahar, Nimroz, Helmand), the income per hectare from opium is less than 2.5 times that from wheat, and in some it is substantially less than that. But a peasant who plants opium can obtain a cash advance to see his family through the winter, even if the implicit annual interest rate in the salaam system (estimated at as high as 100 percent) substantially lowers the realized income. Opium substitutes for credit as well as income and is thus one of the few reliable alternatives to dependency on humanitarian assistance."

Barnett Rubin; Ibid

The withdrawal of the USSR troops led to an intensification of the cash economy since the Government now had no basis for obtaining services other than pure cash. Meanwhile its main trading partner had withdrawn 'aid':

"The Kabul government, however, accelerated the emission of currency after the decision to withdraw Soviet troops. Not only did the government have to pay for expanded security forces, including militias recruited on a strictly mercenary basis, but it also lost its principal sources of revenue. Soviet aid declined, and natural gas revenues fell after 1986, due to poor maintenance and lack of investment, and ended when the Soviet troops left, taking with them the technicians who ran the gas fields. Money supply data published by the IMF shows that beginning in 1987 and until the fall of Najibullah the value of banknotes in circulation increased by an average of 45 percent per year. Observers spoke of food prices rising by factors of five or ten. The Afghani rapidly lost value against the dollar, trading at 1000 to the dollar, or about twenty times the official rate, by the summer of 1991."

Barnett Rubin; Ibid

All this enabled the continuing civil war to rage on, despite the obvious toll it was taking:

"As a result of these opportunities, commanders substantially expanded their autonomy from the parties, from Kabul, and from the local population during the period after the Soviet withdrawal but before the fall of the Najibullah government. Different commanders made different use of this new situation. A few (Massoud, Herat commander Ismail Khan) used these resources, as well as Western and Islamic humanitarian assistance, to build territorially based institutions inside the country. Gulbuddin Hikmatyar, the extremist then favored by Pakistani intelligence, used revenue from the drug trade to build up an enlarged military force based in Pakistan and south of Kabul. Others enriched themselves through payoffs, investment in trade, and predation, especially collection of arbitrary tolls on trade passing through their area. Battles broke out from time to time over control of key trade routes, in particular those used for the

transport of opium. The war economy, like the political structure, remained largely fragmented among small, largely predatory actors each of whom maintained an interest in sustaining the chaos that permitted his predation. At the same time, the overall lack of security of both person and property blocked the expansion of even this criminalized economy."

Barnett Rubin; Ibid

The Kabul regime led by the alliance of Masood and Rabbani could not last long in these circumstances. There was no possibility of establishing a country-wide, unitary and stable state:

"The fall of the Soviet-supported government of Najibullah in April 1992 brought mujahidin groups, and in particular Massoud, to power in Kabul, but rather than establish a new form of state power that would provide the conditions for peacetime economic development, the new Islamic State of Afghanistan reinforced the growing pattern of regional-ethnic war economies embedded in transnational networks. Despite its name, the new power enforced virtually nothing Islamic, did not organize itself as a state, and covered only parts of Afghanistan. ...Pakistan supported and instigated attacks on Kabul by Hikmatyar and others, assuring that the authorities could concentrate on little but military affairs. An uneven pattern of regional consolidation partly replaced the previous fragmentation, but no power could create a national state or market. Massoud's organizational power enabled him to occupy and hold Kabul (or most of it), but he could not extend his direct control beyond parts of the city and the northeastern region that constituted his ethnic base. The fall or defection of former regime forces to local mujahidin groups in the rest of the country effectively removed the last obstacles to warlordism and economic predation.

The blockade of the southern and eastern routes into the city by Pakistan-supported forces, first Hikmatyar and then the Taliban, impeded the commercial supply of food."

Barnett Rubin; Ibid

The destruction of the feudal landlord based economy and its replacement by a cash economy had been achieved. But this had been achieved in a manner that had destroyed any working class base, and had even destroyed the peasant base.

The character of the new comprador economy was one of an illicit nature heavily dependent upon foreign imperialism – mainly USA imperialism operating via its Pakistani stooges.

21. The Rise, Ideology and Backers Of the Taliban

It was during this intense civil war and chaos that the Taliban was formed in 1994. The word derives from the singular of Talib – meaning Islamic student – "one who seeks

knowledge". This reflects their background – the madrassas (Islamic schools) that had proliferated, especially in the area of Peshawar and Quetta of Pakistan. These disillusioned ex-Mujahadeen and students became quickly dominated by **Mullah Mohammed Omar**. He was originally born near Kandahar in a village in 1959, the son of poor, landless peasants. Ethnically he was a Hotak tribesman, of the Ghilzai branch of the Pashtuns. He had joined the Hizb-I-Islami led by Maulvi Younis Khalis, and fought under Commander Nek Mohammed against the Najibullah government and USSR troops. This network was based on the Durrani tribesmen.

Their initial apparent agenda derived from an expressed wish for the restoration of peace, disarmament of the population, and to enforce **Sharia Law** (i.e. an Islamic derived law, usually justified as being derived from the Koran – although this is often contested by differing Islamic scholars). While the large majority of the madrassa students were indeed feeling this way, the political economy of the Taliban shows it to have been a comprador force on behalf of the USA imperialists and their Pakistani stooges. (This is discussed in more detail below). The ideological basis of the Taliban movement was unique, but can be traced to the **Deobandi** movement: an Islamic trend that by origin in India – was an "adaptive" reaction to the British oppression.

Although Rashid below terms this "progressive" – it is viewed by Marxist-Leninists, as a form of accommodation and modernisation whilst retaining the reactionary nature of Islam:

"But they did have an ideological base - an extreme form of Deobandism which was being preached by Pakistani Islamic parties in Afghan refugee camps in Pakistan. The Deobandis, a branch of Sunni Hanafi Islam has had a history in Afghanistan, but the Taliban's interpretation of the creed has no parallel anywhere in the Muslim world. The Deobandis arose in British India, not as a reactionary but a forward-looking movement that would reform and unite Muslim society as it struggled to live within the confines of a colonial state ruled by non-Muslims. Its main ideologues were Mohammed Qasim Nanautawi (1833-77) and Rashid Ahmed Gangohi (1829-1905), who founded the first madrassa in Deoband in central India.In the aftermath of the Indian Mutiny (of 1857) several philosophical and religious trends emerged amongst Indian Muslims in a bid to revive their standing. They ranged from the Deobandis to pro-Western reformers who set up colleges such as the Aligarh Muslim University based on the British model which would teach Islam and the liberal arts' and sciences, so Muslim youth could catch up with their British rule and compete with the growing Hindu elite. All these reformers saw education as the key to creating a new, mode Muslim. The Deobandis aimed to train a new generation of learned Muslims who would revive Islamic values based on intellectual learning, spiritual experience, Sharia law and Tariaqath or the path. By teaching their students how to interpret Sharia, they aimed to harmonize the classic Sharia texts with current realities. The Deobandis took a restrictive view of the role of women, opposed all forms of hierarchy in the Muslim community and rejected the Shia - but the

Taliban were to take these beliefs to an extreme which the original Deobandis would never have recognized." *Rashid: "Taliban"; Ibid; p. 88.*

By 1967 the Deobandis had established 9,000 Deobandi madrassas across the Indian sub-continent including in Afghanistan. But in Pakistan they developed apace after 1947. They set up the **Jamiat-e-Ulema Islami** (JUI) – a religious movement only – to propagandise. But in 1962 they became overtly politicised as a party:

"In 1962 its leader in the North West Frontier Province Maulana Ghulam Ghaus Hazarvi turned the **Jamiat-e-Ulema Islami (JUI)** into a political party, as a result of which it quickly split into several factions. Maulana Mufti Mehmood, a dynamic leader, took over the Pashtun faction of the JUI in the NWFP and remoulded it in a populist form. Mufti Mehmood's JUI played a leading role in the 1970 elections mobilizing support against military rule. He propagated a 22-point Islamic agenda, which included a progressive social programme, and a strong anti-American, anti-imperialist stance." *Rashid: "Taliban"; Ibid; p. 89.*

It was this organisation that was to influence the Taliban, through the madrassa movements. An early link to the Pakistani secret service the ISI was established through this. The focus on the madrassas was to lead to overcome the larger rival groups led by Hikmetyar. Initially the JUI was minimised by the ISI:

"During the 1980s Pakistan's Afghan policy was conducted with the help of the Jamaat-e-Islami and Hikmetyar's Hizb-e-Islami, who were also the main rivals of the JUI inside Pakistan. The ISI's connection with the Jamaat-e-Islami was an important policy instrument in the distribution of aid to the Mujaheddin. The JUI, which was now run by Mufti Mehmood's son, Maulana Fazlur Rehman, was given no political role and the small pro-Deobandi Afghan Mujaheddin groups were largely ignored. However, the JUI used this period to set up hundreds of madrassas along the Pashtun belt in the NWFP and Baluchistan where it offered young Pakistanis and Afghan refugees the chance of a free education, food, shelter and military training. These madrassas were to train a new generation of Afghans for the post-Soviet period. Even though the Deobandis received no political support, the military regime of President Zia ul Haq funded madrassas of all sectarian persuasions. In 1971 there were only 900 madrassas in Pakistan, but by the end of the Zia era in 1988 there were 8,000 madrassas and 25,000 unregistered ones, educating over half a million students. As Pakistan's state-run educational system steadily collapsed, these madrassas became the only avenue for boys from poor families to receive the semblance of an education." *Rashid Ibid; p.89.*

One of the most significant madrassas was run by **Maulana Samiul Haq**:

"The most important breakaway faction of the JUI is led by Maulana Samiul Haq, a religious and political leader who has been a Member of the National Assembly and a Senator and whose madrassa became a major training ground for the Taliban leadership. In 1999 at least eight Taliban cabinet ministers in Kabul were graduates of Haq's Dar-ul-Uloom Haqqania and dozens more graduates served as Taliban governors in the provinces, military commanders, judges and bureaucrats. Younis Khalis and Mohammed Nabi Mohammedi, leaders of the traditional Mujaheddin parties, both studied at Haqqania..... Samiul Haq is in constant touch with Omar." *Rashid; Ibid; p.90; 91.*

The rural nature of the mullahs subverted the original reforming trend within the Deobandi creed. It now hewed closer to the tribal code – **Pashtunwali**. In this the link to a Saudi creed – the **Wahabii Islamic** creed – was established. Saudi Arabian funds had already been flowing:

"Most of these madrassas were in rural areas and Afghan refugee camps and were run by semi-educated mullahs who were far removed from the original reformist agenda of the Deobandi school. Their interpretation of **Sharia** was heavily influenced by Pashtunwali, the tribal code of the Pashtun while funds from Saudi Arabia to madrassas and parties which were sympathetic to the Wahabii creed, as the Deobandis were, helped these madrassas The JUI was politically isolated at home, remaining in opposition to the first Benazir Bhutto government (1988-90) and the first Nawaz Sharif government (1990-93)." *Rashid; Ibid; p. 90.*

It was not until **Benazir Bhutto's** victory with the **Pakistan People's Party PPP** that the JUI achieved recognition:

"However in the 1993 elections the JUI allied itself with the winning **PPP led by Benazir Bhutto**, thus becoming a part of the ruling coalition. The JUI's access to the corridors of power for the first time allowed it to establish close links with the army, the ISI and the Interior Ministry under retired General Naseerullah Babar. Babar was in search of a new Pashtun group which could revive Pashtun fortunes in Afghanistan and give access to Pakistani trade with Central Asia through southern Afghanistan and the JUI offered him that opportunity. The JUI leader Maulana Fazlur Rehman was made Chairman of the National Assembly's Standing Committee for Foreign Affairs...He was to use his position to visit Washington and European capitals to lobby for the Taliban and Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states to enlist their financial support." *Rashid "Taliban"; Ibid; p. 90.*

The rise of the Taliban is directly attributable to the support of the **USA and their client states Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia.**

The link to Saudi Arabia was facilitated by the historical links via a relationship between the mystical credo of Islam, **Sufism** - long influential in Afghanistan and the **Wahabbi** credo of Saudi Arabia. Sufism, is well described below by Rashid as an attempted retreat from the realities and bitterness of the real world, into a world of invocations, trance and dance:

"Another moderating factor for Islam in Afghanistan was the enormous popularity of Sufism, the trend of mystical Islam, which originated in Central Asia and Persia. Sufi means 'wool' in Arabic and the name comes from the rough woollen coats worn by the early Sufi brethren. The Sufi orders or Tariqah, which means 'the way', was a medieval reaction against authority, intellectualism, the law and the mullah and thus immensely appealing for poor, powerless people. The Sufis build their faith on prayer, contemplation, dances, music and sessions of physical shaking or whirling in a permanent quest for truth." *Rashid "Taliban"; Ibid; p.85*

Osama Bin Laden as a **Wahabbi**, exercised an initial influence in the Mujahadeen with this, considerably helped by his wealth:

"Before the Taliban, Islamic extremism had never flourished in Afghanistan. Within the Sunni Hanafi tradition were the Wahabbis, followers of the strict and austere Wahabbi creed of Saudi Arabia. Begun by **Abdul Wahab** (1703-1792) as a movement to cleanse the Arab bedouin from the influence of Sufism, the spread of Wahabbism became a major plank in Saudi foreign policy after the oil boom in the 1970s. The Wahabbis first came to Central Asia in 1912, when a native of Medina, Sayed Shari Mohammed set up Wahabbi cells in Tashkent and the Ferghana valley. From here and from British India the creed traveled to Afghanistan where it had miniscule support before the war. However, as Saudi arms and money flowed to Saudi-trained Wahabbi leaders amongst the Pashtuns, a small following emerged. In the early stages of the war, the Saudis sent an Afghan long settled in Saudi Arabia, Abdul Rasul Sayyaf, to set up a Wahabbi party, the Ittehad-e-Islami, Islamic Unity, in Peshawar. The Wahabbi Afghans who are also called **Salafis**, became active opponents of both the Sufi and the traditional tribal-based parties but they were unable to spread their message because they were immensely disliked by ordinary Afghans, who considered it a foreign creed. Arab Mujaheddin, including Osama Bin Laden, who joined the jihad, won a small Pashtun following, largely due to the lavish funds and weapons at their disposal." *Rashid; Ibid; p. 85.*

However, the Taliban got some initial help, in September 1994, from the opposing Mujaheddin factions. Mutta Mohammed Kabbani, a founding member of the Taliban,

visited Kabul and met President Rabbani. The government was then isolated and Kabul was under attack from Hekmatyr. Accordingly, the Rabbani government:

"wished to support any new Pashtun force that would oppose Hikmetyar, who was still shelling Kabul, and Rabbani promised to help the Taliban with funds if they opposed Hikmetyar." *Rashid Ibid; p, 26*

But undoubtedly the main source of support both financial and otherwise – was the **Pakistani** government:

"However the Taliban's closest links were with Pakistan where many of them had grown up and studied in madrassas run by the mercurial Maulana Fazlur Rehman and his Jamiat-e-UL-im Islam (JUI), a fundamentalist party which had considerable support amongst the Pashtuns in Baluchistan and the North West Frontier Province (NWFP). More significantly Maulana Rehman was now a political ally of Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto and he had access to the government, the army and the (Pakistani Secret Service) **Interservices Intelligence (ISI)** to whom he described this newly emerging force." *Rashid Ibid; p.26*

A significant support also came from **Saudi Arabia** – again a comprador state to the USA imperialists. Later, after 1998, this was officially stopped. However both Osama Bin Laden's personal fortune and the resources of the Persian Gulf were still open to the Taliban:

"Until late 1998 the Taliban also received direct financial assistance from Saudi Arabia, which provided subsidized fuel, as well as cash grants. These were ended in protest over the Taliban's failure to expel or curb Usama bin Ladin. Bin Ladin himself is reputed to have put some of his wealth at the Taliban's service, paying, according to some reports, for the capture of Kabul in September 1996. It is not known how much income the Taliban may still derive from supporters in the Persian Gulf, though their leaders tour mosques there and raise what appear to be significant contributions, especially in the UAE (some from Arabs and some from expatriate Afghans active in the transit trade)." *Barnett Rubin; Political Economy of War and Peace in Afghanistan; In: AFGHANISTAN RESOURCES: at: <http://www.eurasianet.org/resource/afghanistan/links/rubin99.shtml>*

Pakistan it will be remembered was also a client state on behalf of the USA imperialist. Over this time it was becoming clearer that a major area of **oil reserves** – largely untapped - lay in so-called Central Asia. The intent of the USA imperialists was to get at this. Initially the USA and Pakistan had hoped to use the Hikmatyr forces. However this policy was faltering in the face of Hikmatyr's inability to win the population:

"Pakistan's Afghan policy was in the doldrums. After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, successive Pakistani governments were desperately keen to open up direct land routes for trade with the **Central Asian Republics (CARs)**. The major hindrance was the continuing civil war in Afghanistan, through which any route passed. Pakistan's policy-makers were thus faced with a strategic dilemma. Either Pakistan could carry on backing Hikmetyar in a bid to bring a Pashtun group to power in Kabul which would be Pakistan-friendly, or it could change direction and urge for a power-sharing agreement between all the Afghan factions at what ever the price for the Pashtuns, so that a stable government could open the roads to Central Asia. The Pakistani military was convinced that other ethnic groups would not do their bidding and continued to back Hikmetyar. Some 20 per cent of the Pakistan army was made up of Pakistani Pashtuns and the pro-Pashtun and Islamic fundamentalist lobby within the ISI and the military remained determined to achieve a Pashtun victory in Afghanistan. However, by 1994 Hikmetyar had clearly failed, losing ground militarily while his extremism divided the Pashtuns, the majority of whom loathed him. Pakistan was getting tired of backing a loser and was looking around for other potential Pashtun proxies."

Rashid Ibid; p, 26.

The accession of **Benazir Bhutto** to the Presidency of Pakistan, in 1993, lent urgency to securing safe passages to the Central Asian republics:

"When Benazir Bhutto was elected as Prime Minister in 1993, she was keen to open a route to Central Asia. The shortest route was from Peshawar to Kabul, across the Hindu Kush mountains to Mazar-e-Sharif and then to Tirmez and Tashkent in Uzbekistan, but this route was closed due to the fighting around Kabul. A new proposal emerged, backed strongly by the frustrated Pakistani transport and smuggling mafia, the JUI and Pashtun military and political officials. Instead of the northern route the way could be cleared from Quetta to Kandahar, Herat and on to Ashkhabad, the capital of Turkmenistan. There was no fighting in the south, only dozens of commanders who would have to be adequately bribed before they agreed to open the chains". *Rashid Ibid; p, 26.*

Naturally a prerequisite for assuring the safe passage by road was the mandate of safety in general. This is what the Taliban took on with a vengeance:

"In 1994, the Taliban attacked and defeated local warlords and began to gather a reputation for order and military success. Pakistan soon began supporting them, partially as a means of establishing a stable, friendly government in Kabul. The continual fighting between the former Mujahadeen armies caused waves of refugees to flood Pakistan's border

regions and interfered with Pakistani trade in the region. In late 1994, the Taliban took control of Kandahar, acquiring a large supply of modern weapons, including fighter aircraft, tanks and helicopters. In January of 1995, the Taliban approached Kabul, putting Hekmatyar's forces in a vise between themselves and Massoud's army in Kabul. From that point onward, until they seized Kabul in September, 1996, the Taliban fought against several other militias and warlords, eventually defeating them all. This is the fourth and current phase of the ongoing civil war. Massoud and Rabanni fled to the north with their forces to continue their war against the Taliban." http://www.historyguy.com/afghan_civil_war.html

"The Taliban advance was partly accomplished militarily: with Pakistani assistance, they have built up the largest more or less centralized armed force in the country. But the accomplishment was also financial. Like Najibullah and the mujahidin parties before them, much of the allegiance professed to them was purchased for cash. In areas that are frequently reported to change hands between the Taliban and their opponents, the common change of events is the payment of a commander by one side or another, who then announces a change in allegiance. The Taliban captured Kabul after paying of a Hizb-i Islami commander (Zardad, in Sarobi) who blocked their advance up the narrow defile from Jalalabad." *Barnett Rubin; Political Economy of War and Peace in Afghanistan; In: AFGHANISTAN RESOURCES: at: <http://www.eurasianet.org/resource/afghanistan/links/rubin99.shtml>*

The Taliban renamed the state as – "**the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan**". They proceeded to lay a version of the **Sharia** law on the country:

"Other former Mujahadeen leaders of Pashtun background joined with the Taliban as this new group sought to impose law and order on the country. The particular law they sought to impose was an extreme version of Islamic law. Under Taliban-imposed law, women are not allowed to work outside the home or attend school. Men are expected to grow beards and attend religious services regularly. Television is banned, and religious minorities such as the Hindus, are required to wear some sort of identifying clothing. Also, in 2001, the Taliban ordered the destruction of all non-Islamic idols and statues in areas under their control. They also attracted the support of Osama bin Laden and his organization." http://www.historyguy.com/afghan_civil_war.html

But this interpretation of Islamic law was unique even within the Afghanistan circumstances. The Taliban in fact revolted and oppressed the non-Pashtun and a large segment of the Pashtun population, and of course all women:

"The Taliban had set out as an Islamic reform movement. ... The Taliban were thus acting in the spirit of the Prophet's jihad when they attacked the rapacious warlords around them. Yet jihad does not sanction the killing of fellow Muslims on the basis of ethnicity or sect and it is this, the Taliban interpretation of jihad, which appalls the non-Pashtuns. While the Taliban claim they are fighting a jihad against corrupt, evil Muslims, the ethnic minorities see them as using Islam as a cover to exterminate non-Pashtuns. The Taliban interpretation of Islam, jihad and social transformation was an anomaly in Afghanistan because the movement's rise echoed none of the leading Islamicist trends that had emerged through the anti-Soviet war. The Taliban were neither radical Islamicists inspired by the Ikhwan, not mystical Sufis, nor traditionalists. They fitted nowhere in the Islamic spectrum of ideas and movements that had emerged in Afghanistan between 1979 and 1994. It could be said that the degeneration and collapse of legitimacy of all three trends (radical Islamicism, Sufism and traditionalism) into a naked, rapacious power struggle created the ideological vacuum which the Taliban were to fill. The Taliban represented nobody but themselves and they recognized no Islam except their own."

Rashid; "Taliban"; Ibid; p. 87.

We have previously condemned *Fundamentalism* (See: *Compass: Journal Of The Communist League* No. 109; January 1994: "Fundamentalism And Political Reaction"; <http://ml-review.ca/aml/CommunistLeague/CL-Fundamentalism.htm>)

22.What Is the Class Basis of the Taliban?

The Taliban's victory allowed a transnational trade network, linked to smuggling and drug trading, especially in Pakistan. Furthermore it linked, northeast Afghanistan linked to Central Asia, and West Afghanistan to the Gulf, Dubai and Iran. The Taliban emphasised '**security**', since this was their **economic motivation**. It has enabled safety for passage of goods and persons – and therefore has provided further stimulus to smuggling, and the growing of crops and therefore of opium:

"The key achievement of the Taliban is what they call "security," meaning above all the suppression of virtually all forms of predation by local power-holders, including tolls, banditry, and exaction of exorbitant tributes. Taliban officials often describe this situation by telling visitors they can now drive from one end of the country to the other even at night with a car full of gold, and no one will disturb them. This method of describing their achievement illustrates its important economic motivation, as well as the principal beneficiaries: those driving from one end of the country to the other with trucks full of valuable goods. The security provided by the Taliban has greatly reduced the cost of long-distance trade and provided the peasantry with greater confidence that they will

enjoy the fruits of their labor. This is one reason for the rise in recent years of not only the transit trade but the production of both wheat and opium in Taliban dominated areas. The provision of security of travel along the entire route from Torghundi, on the Turkmenistan border, through Herat and Qandahar, and out to Pakistan via Spin Boldak has opened a major corridor for the smuggling of duty-free consumer goods from Dubai to Pakistan and beyond."

Barnett Rubin; Political Economy of War and Peace in Afghanistan; In: AFGHANISTAN RESOURCES: at: <http://www.eurasianet.org/resource/afghanistan/links/rubin99.shtml>

It is not surprising that the businesses related to transportation that had arisen, supported the Taliban:

"Significantly, the Taliban's first major operation was to free a Pakistani trade convoy, led by an ISI officer, heading for Turkmenistan via Qandahar and Herat, along the projected oil pipeline route, from a blockade set up by tribal (Achakzai) militia, who were demanding exorbitant tolls... the Taliban also request special contributions from the truckers when funds are needed for an offensive. The Peshawar and Quetta trucking associations were key financial backers of the Taliban, as they greatly profited from the latter's abolition of predatory tolls and raids along the road... It was these trucking interests more than the Pakistani ISI and military who urged the Taliban to capture Herat in September 1995. The truckers also donate significant sums to the madrasas... The transit and drug trades are complemented by service industries. A network of fuel stations has grown up... controlled by members of the families of some important figures in the Taliban leadership... Much of the fuel, of course, is smuggled from Iran, where its subsidized price is approximately \$0.03 per liter, considerable less than a soft drink. The Taliban have this made a transition from localized predatory warlordism to a weak kind of rentier state power based on a criminalized open economy. The benefits of this new economic activity are evident in increased prosperity in Qandahar, Jalalabad, and Herat. The trade also appears to have shifted more toward the Taliban's home base in Qandahar."

Barnett Rubin; Political Economy of War and Peace in Afghanistan; In: AFGHANISTAN RESOURCES: at: <http://www.eurasianet.org/resource/afghanistan/links/rubin99.shtml>

This entire trade activity has an enormous dollar value attached to both parts of this economy:

"A **World Bank** study estimates that this trade amounted to at least \$2.5 billion per year in 1997, the first year after the Taliban capture of Kabul, equivalent to nearly half of Afghanistan's estimated GDP and around 12-13 percent of Pakistan's total trade. Diplomatic sources in Central Asia

reported that truck traffic through Torghundi tripled within two weeks after the Taliban capture of Mazar-i Sharif in August 1998, so the figure now might be significantly higher. These figures exclude trade in illegal goods such as drugs and arms, which would also raise the figures significantly. This transit trade has provided an important mechanism for the laundering of profits from the drug trade. The drug trade is also a major source of Taliban revenues. In recent years Afghanistan has been the world's largest producer of opium, with a harvest estimated at 2,800 tons of raw opium gum in 1998. While the farmers receive little for this crop, it sells for thousands of dollars per kilogram at the Afghan border. The Taliban levy zakat of 20 percent on this trade, yielding revenues in the vicinity of \$100-200 million per year. The funds raised in this manner do not fund the expenses of the Taliban government based in Kabul but go directly to a war treasury controlled directly by the Taliban leader, Mulla Muhammad Umar, in Qandahar."

Barnett Rubin; Political Economy of War and Peace in Afghanistan; In: AFGHANISTAN RESOURCES: at: <http://www.eurasianet.org/resource/afghanistan/links/rubin99.shtml>

Barnett Rubin cited extensively here, characterises the economic-class basis of the Taliban as being a "**weak kind of rentier state power based on a criminalized open economy**". But this is inadequate as a full description in our view, leaving out the nature of the **comprador** relations.

Appropriately enough for a comprador state, the Taliban was not even interested enough by 1999, to ensure its own currency!:

"Interestingly, the Taliban have not begun printing their own currency, though they now control the head office and all major regional branches of Da Afghanistan Bank (the central bank). Banknotes apparently continue to be delivered to Afghanistan from American Banknote via the Massoud-Rabbani forces, and the Taliban continue to recognize these notes, despite their protest against this funding of their enemies. From the Taliban capture of Kabul in September 1996 to May 1999, the Afghani lost about 60 percent of its value against the dollar in Kabul and over 70 percent of its value in Mazar-i Sharif. The Taliban have forbidden the use of "Dostum" currency. Hence unlike all previous governments, the Taliban cannot finance their operations through the printing press, while their opponents can undermine their finances by printing money." *Barnett Rubin;*

Political Economy of War and Peace in Afghanistan; In: AFGHANISTAN RESOURCES: at: <http://www.eurasianet.org/resource/afghanistan/links/rubin99.shtml>

Therefore, on the basis of all the above, we contend that the **objective class character of the Taliban led Afghanistan** was - as it had been for the prior period of the Mujahadeen wars – that of an illicit economy dependent upon **comprador** relations with **client states of the USA – primarily Saudi Arabia and Pakistan**.

23. Consolidation of Taliban Victory – Embroiling of Central Asian Republics In War

It took a little while after the capture of Kabul, for the Taliban to satisfactorily exert control over the whole country. This was achieved in steps. The victory was not assisted by the fact that the Mujahadeen enemies of the Taliban were gaining some support from their ethnic neighbors – now at least in the North, free of the USSR state apparatus to some extent. So the Tajiks of Massoud were assisted by Tajikistan.

"From his loss of Kabul until 1999, Massoud's forces remained within artillery range of the capital city, which he attacked regularly. After his pullout from Kabul, Massoud also began receiving military supplies from both Russia (now non-Communist) and Iran, both of whom feared the growing power of the Taliban. Russia has fought Muslim rebels in its own Chechnya region and on behalf of the government of Tajikistan. Moscow fears the Taliban as a source of aid and support for the rebels it is fighting in Chechnya and Tajikistan. Iran, dominated by Shiite Islamic fundamentalists, is at odds with the Sunni Muslim Taliban, largely over the treatment of the Afghan Shiite minority called the Hazaris."

http://www.historyguy.com/afghan_civil_war.html

But steadily the Taliban won all parts of Afghanistan. As they did so, they gained some - albeit limited - international credence as the government:

"During the internecine warfare in Kabul over the years, General Dostum retained his power base in the northern five provinces of Afghanistan. In 1997, the Taliban began a major offensive against him. On May 19, 1997, one of Dostum's deputies, Gen. Abdul Malik Pahlawan (better known as "Malik"), formed an alliance with the Taliban and turned over the city of Mazar-i Sharif. At this point in the conflict, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates recognized the Taliban as the legitimate government of Afghanistan. Pakistan's role in the Taliban success is controversial, as it is generally believed that several Taliban military victories are directly attributable to armed Pakistani intervention."

http://www.historyguy.com/afghan_civil_war.html

But they were continued to be plagued by resistance – led primarily by a new coalition of the forces that were as yet un-crushed. This called itself the **Northern Alliance**. This gained support especially from **Iran** which was brutally oppressed by the Taliban Sunnis:

"After seizing Mazar-i Sharif, the Taliban provoked the hostility of the area's Shiite Hazari minority .. and General Malik ended his dalliance with the Taliban. The result was the execution of at least 3,000 captured Taliban soldiers by Malik and the Hazaris. In August, 1998, the Taliban retook Mazar-i Sharif and summarily massacred at least 2,000 Hazaris.

Also, several Iranian citizens, including diplomats, were killed, nearly touching off an Iran-Taliban war. As this crisis heightened, Iran massed nearly 250,000 troops on the Iran-Afghan border. Throughout the years of the Taliban's ascendancy, Iran supplied arms and military training to the "United Front/Northern Alliance" forces in Northern Afghanistan who were fighting the Taliban. The Northern Alliance includes the Uzbek forces of General Dostum, the Tajik troops of President Rabbani and the Shiite Hazaris led by Haji Mohammed Mohaqiq."

http://www.historyguy.com/afghan_civil_war.html

But the USA which had been till recently the supporters of the Taliban had begun to change its tune after 1998. This was signaled by the reaction of the USA to the bombings of the Bin-Laden Al-Qaida group, directed at [USA embassies in Africa](#):

"In 1998, following the terrorist bombings of American embassies in Africa, the United States launched a cruise missile attack on training camps belonging to bin Laden's Al-Qaida organization in Afghanistan." http://www.historyguy.com/afghan_civil_war.html

Canadian Class Struggle previously condemned the war maneuvers of the USA under Clinton (*See Issue Number 4: September 1998: "Clinton Changes Talk From Monica - Bombs Of Imperial Arrogance"; not on-line*)

The subsequent recent disclosure by the former **Saudi Finance Minister Prince Talal bin Abdel-Aziz**, in a recent interview that the USA had refused the assistance of the Sudanese government in capturing Bin Laden – [confirms](#) the view that the USA was allowing a dangerous situation to develop to the point of a casus belli:

"Subject: Tidbits: January 29, 2002: Quote of the Day;

"Q. Is the West aware that bin Laden posed more of a threat to Saudi Arabia than he did to anyone else?

"A. The West confused us.

"Q. How was that?

"A. Because the West never told us exactly what it wants. Now we know that Sudan offered to hand bin Laden over to the US, but the Americans refused and opposed his extradition. After the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania were bombed, the Americans accused the Sudanese of engaging in terrorism. Only then did they ask Khartoum to hand bin Laden over, but it was too late: he had already flown the coop to Afghanistan. Now, the Americans are spending untold amounts of money and a lot of effort in trying to track him down. But he was virtually in their grasp when he was in Sudan. Why didn't they agree to receive him from the Sudanese? Now the West, led by America, is accusing our Palestinian brethren, who are fighting occupation, of being terrorists. What kind of talk is this? It is clear that we are all targeted, no doubt about it."

Extract from an interview by Hisham Aldiwan in the Daily Star of Lebanon with former Saudi Finance Minister Prince Talal bin Abdel-Aziz, currently, special UNICEF envoy and president of the UN Development Organization's Arab Gulf Program."

Cited in Digest Number 377: Date: 1 Feb 2002; From: portside@yahoogroups.com

24. Prelude To The New USA War

Alliance has analysed the events of the aircraft attacks on the World Trade Centre characterising these and ensuing events, as forming part of an overall agenda of the USA aimed at finding an adequate **casus belli** to enable the USA to launch a new war (See: *Alliance 44: October 3rd 2001 Down With USA Imperial Attempts To Create A New World War!*; at <http://ml-review.ca/aml/AllianceIssues/ALLIANCE-44-WTC.htm>; and: "An Assessment of 11th September Action By Cmde M; Written 18 September 2001"; Published by Alliance on 10 October, 2001; was originally at <http://www22.brinkster.com/harikumar/AllianceIssues/WTC.htm>)

We wrote at that time that it was very likely that the USA had been privy to the details of the forthcoming attack, but that it was allowed to proceed as it served the interests of the USA imperialist. The details are still awaited of all this, but there are disturbing parallels to the Lockerbie Pan Am bomb explosion (See *W.B.Bland for the Marxist-Leninist Research Bureau Report No. 6; 1994; "The Lockerbie Disaster" at: http://ml-review.ca/aml/MLRB/MLRB6-Lockerbie.htm*)

Slowly, further details are emerging, that still require confirmation – but tend to confirm the overall view that the USA imperialists had a hand in "**setting up Afghanistan**" for a devastating "reprisal". The following item is an early indication of this:

"At Democracy Now! we have often called the **Bush** administration the Oilgarchy. Vice-President Dick Cheney of course was the president of Halliburton, a company that provides services for the oil industry. For nearly a decade, National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice worked with Chevron, while secretaries of commerce and energy, Donald Evans and Spencer Abraham, worked for another oil giant. Many of the US officials now working on the administration's Afghanistan policy also have extensive backgrounds in the world of multinational oil giants. An explosive new book published originally in France is revealing some extraordinary details of the extent to which US oil corporations influenced the Bush administration's policies toward the Taliban regime prior to September 11th. The book is called "Bin Laden: The Forbidden Truth". And it paints a detailed picture of the Bush administration's secret negotiations with the Taliban government in the months and weeks before the attacks on the World Trade Center. It charges that under the influence of US oil companies the Bush administration blocked U.S. secret service investigations on terrorism. It tells the story of how the administration conducted secret negotiations with the Taliban to hand-over Osama bin Laden in exchange for political recognition and economic aid. The book

says that Washington's main aim in Afghanistan prior to September 11th was consolidating the Taliban regime, in order to obtain access to the oil and gas reserves in Central Asia. The authors claim that before the September 11th attacks, Christina Rocca, the head of Asian Affairs in the US State Department, met the Taliban Ambassador to Pakistan Abdul Salam Zaeef in Islamabad on August 2. Rocca is a veteran of US involvement in Afghanistan. She was previously in charge of contacts with Islamist guerrilla groups at the CIA, where she oversaw the delivery of Stinger missiles to Afghan mujahideen fighting the Soviet occupation forces in the 1980s. The book also reveals that the Taliban actually hired an American public relations' expert for an image-making campaign in the US. What's amazing is that the PR officer was a woman named Laila Helms, who is the niece of former CIA director Richard Helms. Helms is described as the Mata Hari of US-Taliban negotiations. The authors claim that she brought Sayed Rahmatullah Hashimi, an advisor to Mullah Omar, to Washington for five days in March 2001 - after the Taliban had destroyed the ancient Buddhas of Bamiyan. Hashimi met the Directorate of Central Intelligence at the CIA, and the Bureau of Intelligence and Research at the State Department. The book also says that the Deputy Director of the FBI, John O'Neill, resigned in July in protest of the Bush administration's obstruction of an investigation into alleged Taliban terrorist activities. O'Neill then became head of security at the World Trade Center. He died in the September 11th attacks. Jean-Charles Brisard, co-author of *Bin Laden: The Forbidden Truth*. He has worked for the French Secret Services and wrote a report for them in 1997 on Bin Laden's Al Qaeda network. Guillaume Dasquie, co-author of *Bin Laden: The Forbidden Truth*. He is an investigative journalist and publisher of *Intelligence Online*."

From: Progressive Economics pen-l@galaxy.csuchico.edu; PEN-L digest 30; Date: Sat, 12 Jan 2002; Subject: Bin Laden: The Forbidden Truth About Bush, Oil And Washington's Secret Negotiations With The Taliban.

Just prior to the attack on the World Trade Centre, Ahmad Shah Massoud was assassinated, possibly as a prelude:

"Through the Autumn of 2001, the Taliban continued to pressure the Northern Alliance, often with the aid of Osama bin Laden and his Arab forces. On September 9, 2001, the Northern Alliance leader Ahmad Shah Massoud was mortally wounded in an assassination attempt carried out by two Arab men posing as journalists. This attack is believed to be the work of bin Laden's organization as a possible prelude to the airline hijackings and terrorism in the United States on September 11. The Northern Alliance responded to Massoud's killing with an aerial attack on

Kabul the night of September 11."

http://www.historyguy.com/afghan_civil_war.html

As the USA used the world reaction of horror at the attack to its advantage, it was able to blunt the humanitarian objections of the world's population, and to blunt the potential resistance of the more wary of the imperialist rivals it had to face for world supremacy. The largest potential opposition was that of the Europeans – formerly of the European Economic Community – now termed the . The USA was helped in this by the blatant toadying of Prime Minister of the UK, Tony Blair of the British Labour Party. The stage was set for the new phase of USA domination.

25. The USA Led War Against the Afghanistan State

A quick and brutal war was launched by the USA on October 7, 2001. This was almost exclusively conducted by very high altitude carpet bombing. Naturally in these circumstances, civilian casualties are high. This is the euphemistically termed "collateral damage" as **US Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld** calls it. The figures are secret, but are thought to number at least 3,500 – far greater than the number of actual dead in the World Trade Centre events:

"The fifth and current phase of the civil war opened on October 7, 2001 with the beginning of punishing aerial bombardments, missile attacks and special forces commando missions against the Taliban and bin Laden's forces by the United States and the United Kingdom (the Allies). An informal alliance between the Northern Alliance and the Allies developed, with coordination between Allied air attacks and ground attacks by the Northern Alliance. These attacks led to the fall of Kabul on Nov. 13, 2001, as the Taliban retreated from most of northern Afghanistan. By November 25, 2001, the last Taliban/Al-Qaida stronghold in the north, Konduz, had fallen to the Northern Alliance. American and British special forces, numbering only in the hundreds, are on the ground in Afghanistan to liaison with the Northern Alliance as well as to conduct raids, ambushes and reconnaissance in order to destroy the Taliban and Al-Qaida forces."

http://www.historyguy.com/afghan_civil_war.html

It was never in doubt that the USA led coalition would completely destroy the Taliban resistance and be enabled to erect its' own puppet regime. The links provided in the reference section to the Guardian (UK)'s Special Report on Afghanistan are adequate further references for the reader interested in the daily events over this period.

26. Motives For The USA Led War

It is not surprising that the USA had decided to change its support of the Taliban.

However the stated reasons – to attack Terrorism – are clearly **laughable**, from a state that has supported the massive cruelties it has worldwide. We cannot reprise these adequately here, but refer the reader to the well documented book by W.Blum. ("*Rogue State, A Guide to the World's Only Superpower*"; Common Courage Press; Monroe Maine USA; 2000; and a small snapshot of the USA hypocrisy contained in: C.Hitchens: "*The Trial of Henry Kissinger*"; Verso Press; New York; 2001).

The USA as is perfectly clear from all of the above – had been the main instigator of reducing the state of Afghanistan to abject poverty and condemning its peoples to living amongst rubble, hiding their daughters and wives, subject to the whim of war-lord fanatics. What was the real reason for this new open form of a renewed assault of the USA on the peoples of Afghanistan?

It was once more – as so often for this geo-political 'Roof of the world'- the realities around the borders of Afghanistan:

The disintegration of the former USSR, the emergence of the Central Asian states of former USSR into a form of independence;
the steadily gaining emergence of China as a force to be reckoned with;
Finally.... There is the matter of OIL:

"The independence of the Central Asian states transformed the economic stakes in Afghanistan. The oil and gas-rich Central Asian states, in particular Turkmenistan, saw Afghanistan as a possible pipeline route to connect them to world markets without having to reverse US sanctions against Iran. Pakistan saw commercial and political connections to Central Asia via Afghanistan as key to the development of "strategic depth" in its confrontation with India. Pakistan also needed natural gas, and the Daulatabad field in Turkmenistan, just north of the Afghan border, was well positioned to be connected to the Pakistan national network via a pipeline though Herat and Qandahar to Baluchistan. This, in turn, placed Pakistan in opposition to Iran, which aspired to be the outlet to the south for the resources of the entire Caspian region, both Central Asia and the trans-Caucasus. The US began to define a national interest in promoting the national independence and economic diversification of the Central Asian and Caucasian states, without relaxing its sanctions on Iran. Pipelines through Afghanistan would nicely meet both goals."

Barnett Rubin; Political Economy of War and Peace in Afghanistan; In: AFGHANISTAN RESOURCES: at: <http://www.eurasianet.org/resource/afghanistan/links/rubin99.shtml>

Everyone knowledgeable about either oil or the Central Asian Republics recognise the huge stake that is being fought over currently:

"The energy resources of the Caspian Sea and Central Asia, (which we shall now call the Caspian region and includes Kazakhstan,

Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan), have been described with breathless hyperbole over the past few years. In the early 1990s the USA estimated that Caspian oil reserves were between 100 to 150 billion barrels (bb). That figure was highly inflated and possible reserves are now estimated to be less than half that or even as low as 50 bb. The Caspian region's proven oil reserves are between 16 and 32 bb, which compares to 22 bb for the USA and 17 bb for the North Sea, giving the Caspian 10-15 times less than the total reserves of the Middle East. Nevertheless, the Caspian represented possibly the last unexplored and unexploited oil-bearing region in the world and its opening-up generated huge excitement amongst international oil companies. Western oil companies have shifted their interest first to Western Siberia in 1991-92, then to Kazakhstan in 1993-94, Azerbaijan in 1995-97 and finally Turkmenistan in 1997-99. Between 1994-98, 24 companies from 13 countries signed contracts in the Caspian region. Kazakhstan has the largest oil reserves with an estimated 85 bb, but only 10-16 bb proven reserves. Azerbaijan has possible oil reserves of 27 bb and only 4-11 bb proven reserves while Turkmenistan has 32 bb possible oil reserves, but only 1.5 bb proven reserves. Uzbekistan's possible oil reserves are estimated at 1 bb. Proven gas reserves in the Caspian region are estimated at 236-337 trillion cubic feet (tcf), compared to reserves of 300 tcf in the USA. Turkmenistan has the 11th largest gas reserves in the world with 159 tcf of possible gas reserves, Uzbekistan 110 tcf, Kazakhstan 88 tcf, while Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan have 35 tcf each. Central Asian leaders became obsessed with projected pipelines, potential routes and the geo-politics that surrounded them."

Rashid Ahmad, "Taliban"; ibid; p. 144.

It is entirely natural, that the American companies have been falling over themselves to insert themselves into this situation! They have been led by **UNOCAL**, and have faced rivalry from the Argentians and the Saudis. All companies have been busy bribing their way into contracts. The Taliban had not been able to, or been willing to consolidate any real degree the necessary state security for **pipeline** deals:

"Various companies, including the US-based UNOCAL, the Saudi company Delta, and the Argentine firm, Bidas, began negotiations with the Rabbani government and various de facto powerholders. Bidas paid the Rabbani government \$1 million for a contract signed in January 1996 awarding it the right to the pipeline route (none of which was then controlled by that government). There were reports of payoffs in Pakistan as well. The pipeline projects have since languished as a result of political uncertainty and the turn of US policy against the Taliban as a result of their harboring of the accused Saudi terrorist, Usama bin Ladin, but some of the effects of early competition over pipeline routes have persisted.

Pipeline politics formed an important part of the strategic and economic context in which the Islamic Movement of Taliban arrived on the scene in October 1994."

Barnett Rubin; Political Economy of War and Peace in Afghanistan; In: AFGHANISTAN RESOURCES: at: <http://www.eurasianet.org/resource/afghanistan/links/rubin99.shtml>

This is naturally not a new strategic priority facing the USA imperialists.

Alliance has pointed to this in the course of **condemning three wars:**

The Gulf War of Bush I;

the Chechnyan War – still going on;

and the NATO-USA War against the Kosova and Serbian People.

We briefly reprise relevant sections upon the latter two wars.

In **Alliance 13** we have previously pointed out that a major part of the background of the war raging in Chechnya was oil. (*Alliance (Marxist-Leninist) Number 13 January 1995; Special Issue: Chechnya, Oil And The Divided Russian Capitalist Class; p.10; at <http://ml-review.ca/am/AllianceIssues/ALL13-CHECHNYA95.HTM>*)

As we said in that article:

"2. What Lies Behind This War? The Oil Background

Data from recent trade negotiations over oil indicate something is more at stake in Chechnya than simple autonomy. **Azerbaijan**, itself a victim of recent aggression launched by Russian imperialist forces, tried to exert national rights. The suppression of these rights was directly linked to the oil reserves. Prospects of oil prompted fervent bargaining by Russian capitalists with foreign imperialism. But the deal cut, antagonised a section of the Russian capitalist class, enough to spur them on to struggle with foreign imperialism:

"A leaked letter sent by **Andrei Kozyrev**, Russia's Foreign Minister to **Viktor Chernomyrdin**, his prime minister, reveals that Russia plans to prevent Western oil companies from going ahead with a \$8Bn (PS 5bn) agreement to exploit offshore field in the Caspian The agreement advertised as "the deal of the century", was signed by Azerbaijan and a consortium of Western oil companies led by British petroleum.. Mr. Kozyrev stresses the importance of Russia retaining its share of the Caspian reserves.. and proposes that Russia will impose economic sanctions on Azerbaijan if it does not back down.. Russia is unlikely to retreat because the way it deals with Azerbaijan sets a precedent for Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan, the two other republics with long Caspian coast lines and growing oil industries."

The Independent; London UK; 3.11.94. p.14.

This agreement would link the British owned **British Petroleum**, owning 30% of shares; with the US Oil companies of **Pennzoil and Amoco** which together holding 40% of shares; and Azerbaijan's Socar Company holding 20%, and Russian owned Lukoil owning 10%. The Carnegie Endowment For International Peace commented:

"If the Russians throw a monkey wrench in the oil deal there will be a strong reaction here in Washington because so much money is involved." A diplomat said: "It shows Russia will not allow any of the ex-Soviet states to move towards full economic independence."

Independent, Ibid, 3.11.94. p.14.

The War in Chechnya shows that this interpretation is correct.

But who is Mr. Chernomyridin, the prime minister, And why does the above concern Chechnya ?

"The oil and gas lobby is very powerful with Mr. Viktor Chernomyridin, former head of **Gazprom**, as prime minister. Ensuring that oil and gas from Central Asia is transported to Europe via Russian pipelines and ports is an obsession. the main oil pipeline from the Caspian Sea to the oil export harbour of Novorossiisk passes through Chechnya.. at stake is.. control over the main rail, road and gas rich Caspian sea and the central Asian republics." Financial Times, London, UK, 7-8.1.95. p.2.

Thus, Chechnya is critical as a conduit for the oil reserves of the Caspian coastal areas. Naturally Chernomyridin has financial interests stemming from his previous job, to protect."

Secondly: In our condemnation of the USA war on the Kosovan and Serbian peoples, launched under the cover of NATO, we also pointed out that oil played a large role in that war. (See *Alliance 33 Part 6. (2) The Second Underlying Real Reason For War: Oil In The Near East*; this was at <http://www22.brinkster.com/harikumar/AllianceIssues/All33-pt6.htm>). There we said:

"The Progressive Labor Party (PLP) of the USA..... identified (oil) as being a real underlying reason for the war. In broad terms we agree with this: [http://www.plp.org/cd99/cd0414.html#Why Kosovo?](http://www.plp.org/cd99/cd0414.html#Why_Kosovo?) ... **First** the PLP identify the valuable resource of oil, and point out both that the USA have engaged in deadly war in the Middle East for this; and that the former Soviet Union has oil resources on the fringes of the "Middle East":

"A ruthless battle for control over oil, the lifeblood of imperialist industry, lies at the heart of Clinton latest atrocities and "humanitarian" lies. The Middle East now includes the vast oil and gas reserves of the Caspian region to the North and East in Central Asia. Some of these resources are Russian; some of them lie in former Soviet republics. The oil reserves alone could amount to 200 billion barrels, with a value somewhere between \$2 and \$4 trillion. This is a prize for which the

imperialists will fight to our death." PLP: "Clinton bombing campaign against Yugoslavia has managed only to spread more mass terror than Milosevic could create in his wildest dreams." **Second** the PLP have identified a key infra-structural component – a pipeline transport to the Balkans:

"Oil in the ground or under the sea is one thing. Building the infrastructure to refine and transport it is something else. This is where the Balkans come in. Who will control the pipelines? Will they flow through U.S. competitors Iran and Russia, or will they flow through U.S. ally Turkey? .. In any event, the oil that reaches Europe over land has to go through the Balkans. It turns out that Russian, Bulgarian, and Greek companies are building an oil pipeline through the Balkans that could supply one-fourth of Europe needs..... One pipeline is due to run from Skopje to Kosovo. Kosovo itself also has strategic military value to U.S. imperialism. Journalist Diane Johnstone writes: "Thanks to Kosovo, the U.S. can control eventual Caspian oil pipeline routes between the Black Sea and the Adriatic, and extend the European influence of favored ally Turkey"; PLP: "Clinton bombing campaign against Yugoslavia has managed only to spread more mass terror than Milosevic could create in his wildest dreams."

Thirdly: The PLP identify a temporary reason for the EEC imperialists to participate in the scheme of USA imperialism:

"So the U.S. is bombing Yugoslavia to prevent Russian and other oil companies from replacing Exxon-Mobil and friends as Europe major suppliers, since if Russian bosses succeed, they can quickly once again become a dominant imperialist force. The threat to Total and Elf, French oil companies as well as to the British-Dutch Shell, explains in part why France and other NATO bosses are going along with the bombing for now." PLP: "Clinton bombing campaign against Yugoslavia has managed only to spread more mass terror than Milosevic could create in his wildest dreams."

Alliance previously identified in the split in the Russian capitalist classes, that **Chubais and Chernomyrdin** were members of those whose interests lay in allying itself to the Western imperialist powers. We also identified the "Communists" of the Zhuganov faction as representing the interests of a "national" capitalist wing of Russian capital (See *Alliance Number 13 January 1995: "Chechnya, Oil & The Divided Russian Capitalist Class"*; [athttp://ml-review.ca/aml/AllianceIssues/ALL13-CHECHNYA95.HTM](http://ml-review.ca/aml/AllianceIssues/ALL13-CHECHNYA95.HTM))

It is true as the PLP argue that the Russian oil companies are formidable forces, but they are unable to develop their profiteering visions without recourse to foreign capital. And currently they are closer to EEC capital both geographically and in terms of linkages. In addition the Barents sea and the Arctic provide un-tapped territory thus far, potentially lucrative to

both the EEC and Russia:

"Norway, Sweden and Finland also wants to define disputed national boundaries in the oil-rich but remote Barents sea. ... The arctic dimension is also important to Russian oil companies and to Gazprom which will supply Western Europe with arctic gas from the Yamal peninsular in the decades ahead. Gas will be delivered to Germany through a large capacity export gas pipeline through Belarus and Poland while Russian oil companies are still debating whether to build a new port at Primorsk north west of St Petersburg to supply oil from the arctic region of Timan Pechora or merely build new pipelines to the Latvian port of Ventspils."

"Baltic Sea Region: Potential Sighted Through 'Window On The West': by Anthony Robinson in Moscow: The first steps are being taken to integrate more closely with potentially one of Europe's most dynamic economic areas";

Financial Times ; 11-Jun-1999.

Of course the **Gulf War of Bush I** was transparently about oil. (See *Alliance:Marxist-Leninist Issue 2*: April 1992. Placed On Web October 2001. *THE GULF WAR - THE USA IMPERIALISTS BID TO RECAPTURE WORLD SUPREMACY*. <http://ml-review.ca/aml/AllianceIssues/CommunistL83-Feb1991-Gulf3.htm>)

27. The New Comprador Regime of Hamid Karzai

There can be little doubt that Karzai is a representative of a **comprador** section of the dominant **Durrani (or Popalzai)" community**, who has had a long and deep relationship with USA intelligence:

" Hamid Karzai, the US-backed Pashtun tribal leader from the south is now the prime minister in the UN-brokered new interim government of Afghanistan..... a representative of the dominant Pashtun community that has always produced, apart from two short-lived exceptions, the ruling class of Afghanistan, In the 1980s, Karzai, whose father 'headed the Pashtun tribe of the Popalzais in the south, acquired a degree in political science from the university in Simla, India, and helped channel aid from the CIA and the ISI to the Mujahideen fighting in the anti-Communist jihad. For two years from 1992, he was the deputy foreign minister in the short-lived post-Communist government of Mujahideen leaders in Kabul. Like many Pashtuns, he welcomed the Taliban as they went about imposing Pashtun rule over Afghanistan. He and his brothers run a chain of Afghan restaurants in Chicago, San Francisco, Boston, and Baltimore; his familiarity with America led the Taliban government in 1997 to name him as their representative to the United States before Mullah Omar canceled the appointment on the grounds that Karzai did not have a Taliban-style beard. Two years later, his father was assassinated,

allegedly on the orders of the Taliban. Karzai, who has lived in exile in the Pakistani city of Quetta since 1994, renewed apparently longstanding links with the US government when he entered Afghanistan in October, in order to provoke an anti-Taliban rebellion in the south, during which attempt he once had to be ... rescued by American Special Forces. He has also apparently maintained friendly contact with officials in the Pakistani government, which, made anxious by the anti-Pakistan positions of most of the Northern Alliance leaders, is somewhat reassured by the presence of a Pashtun leader in Kabul."

Mishra, Pankaj: "The Afghan Tragedy"; New York Review of Books; January 17 2002; p.48.

He sees his main problem as being to engender a stable enough situation to allow the USA to exploit the geographic links to the Central Asian Republics. The strategy will be to bribe the remaining war-lords into cooperation:

"One of these warlords, who later controlled Afghanistan's predatory economy of road tolls, smuggling, and opium cultivation, is Gul Agha Shirazi, who was the much-feared governor of Kandahar until his expulsion by the Taliban in 1994. Agha fought with American assistance against the Taliban in the recent battle for the city and was nominated to his old post by Karzai after a tense stand-off with a rival pro-Taliban mullah that almost erupted into a violent battle. It is hard to predict that the temptation of receiving foreign patronage-the billions of dollars that Western nations have promised to pour into Afghanistan if the conditions of a stable, broad-based government are met-would turn such war profiteers into moderate politicians, and how large a role the Northern Alliance, itself largely led by warlords, would allow them in the complicated process of governing Afghanistan."

Mishra, Pankaj: "The Afghan Tragedy"; New York Review of Books; January 17 2002; p.48.

Karzai has continued to support further US air strikes and an indefinite presence of imperialist armed forces in Afghanistan. The goal of the USA now will be to foster the exploitation of the Central Asian Republics, and to build a bulwark against **China**.

The latter is in preparation for the coming new world war of re-division, in which the Chinese are likely to be the major antagonists of the USA. A parallel Islamic vehicle in this context has been the **Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) led by Juma Namangani**. This will be dealt with in more detail in a forthcoming issue of Alliance. Here we should note that China's attitude to the area has been more interventionist due to its own internal national problems, which it has long been treating in a non-Marxist-Leninist manner. In this context the national oppression relates to the **Uighurs**:

"China: An Old Player Returns to Central Asia: China's role in Central Asia remains the most unpredictable of the three superpowers, but Beijing may be the most important player in the future. Since 1991 China has built close bilateral trade and investment ties with all the Central Asian states, but until recently it avoided becoming involved in military and security pacts and tried to distance itself from the U.S.-Russia rivalry in the region. That is swiftly coming to an end as the IMU and the Taliban recruit Uighur Islamic militants and separatists from China's only Muslim majority province, Xinjiang, and create growing political unrest through their guerrilla attacks against Chinese security forces. Throughout the 1990's China's main strategic aim was to ensure that the Central Asian governments kept a tight lid on Uighur political activities on their soil, stopping the Uighur minorities from helping the Uighurs in Xinjiang Province. The Central Asian states obliged China by shutting down Uighur publications and offices, arresting Uighurs; who criticized Chinese policies, and keeping their borders with China open for trade whilst guarding against the export of arms, propaganda, or funds for Uighur separatists in Xinjiang."

Rashid, Ahmed: "Jihad: The Rise of Militant Islam in Central Asia"; New Haven 2002; p. 201-202

In preparation for this coming contest between world imperialisms, the Chinese government has been forming various alliances named progressively the **Shanghai Five, the Shanghai Forum, and latterly the Shanghai Cooperation Organization:**

"China's other major strategic interests have been to end the tension on its long borders with Central Asia and Russia, reduce the vast numbers of Chinese troops stationed on these borders, and settle the multiple claims and counterclaims on one another's territories that were inherited from tsarist times and continued to plague relations between China and the Soviet Union. Starting in the mid-1990s China set up joint border commissions with Russia, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan that over the years have resolved most of the hundreds of border disputes. Territorial disputes with Tajikistan remain unresolved, however. Beijing claims some 30 percent of Tajikistan's territory along their common border in Gorno-Badakhshan, where there are huge gold deposits. It was with the aim of settling these disputes that China took its most significant step in Central Asia, calling a summit meeting in Shanghai in 1996 between the five states that shared common borders: China, Russia, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan.The Shanghai Five has steadily become a wide-ranging military, security, and economic pact. At the end of the summit the five leaders signed a declaration to enhance cooperation in "fighting international terrorism, the illegal drugs trade, arms trafficking, illegal migration, separatism and religious extremism." They also pledged to create a "multi-polar world" -a Russian-inspired formula that basically meant **opposition to U.S. hegemony**. The following year (2000) in Dushanbe the Shanghai Five became the **Shanghai Forum** as Uzbekistan was given observer status even though it shared no borders with China. The summit agreed to add a military

dimension for the first time- the creation of a joint counter-terrorism center in Bishkek in order to meet the threat from the IMU and the Taliban. By now the Forum had become the most important geo-strategic alliance in the region, developing joint programs for security as well as economic, political, and other agendas. **Countries such as India, Pakistan, Mongolia, South Korea, and Iran clamored to join, whilst Uzbekistan insisted on full membership.** At the summit in Shanghai in mid-June 2001, Uzbekistan became a full member, although the other countries were kept out. The Forum again changed its name, to the **Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)**. The leaders signed a new security cooperation pact and pledged to increase trade and investment between their countries.";

Rashid, Ahmed: "Jihad: The Rise of Militant Islam in Central Asia"; New Haven 2002; p. 201-202; (emphases added-Alliance).

The recent events from September 11th 2002 have radically changed the balance of power in the regions away from China. Now China is playing catch-up:

"During the past few weeks, China relaxed its stance on Taiwan's ruling party, engaged India and Pakistan to reduce tensions in South Asia and played down a leaked story suggesting U.S. intelligence operatives bugged China's new presidential jet. A year ago, China was the first nation mentioned in discussions of the global economy, Northeast Asian stability and counter-hegemony, but for good or ill, it no longer holds a key spot in the international policy arena. Beijing is now doing anything it can to regain political weight."

Stratfor Analysis: "China: Seeking Lost Influence "; 1 February 2002 http://www.stratfor.com/fib/fib_view.php?ID=203012

But in the **uneven development of imperialism**, China will soon "catch up" as recent economic indicators suggest:

"Hong Kong: With their economies moving in opposite directions, China is set to overtake Japan as Asia's biggest market for personal computer sales in 2003, research firm International Data Corp said on Wednesday. Kitty Fok, hardware analyst at IDC in Hong Kong, said China was on track for sales of 13.2 million PCs in 2003, compared with a forecast 12.7 million unit sales in Japan. Leapfrogging Japan would make China the world's second-biggest PC market after the United States. For 2001, China is expected to have moved 8.9 million PCs, increasing to 10.8 million in 2002, Fok told Reuters. Recession-wracked Japan is expected to have seen 13.3 million PC sales in 2001, with a forecast drop to 11.7 million in 2002 before a recovery in 2003, IDC said. "The market is pretty bad at the moment," Fok said of Japan, while demand continues to grow in China."

*The Times of India; January 09, 2002. "China to surpass Japan as top Asian PC market";
Reuters, January 09, 2002*

A United Front of all progressive and anti-imperialist forces must be urgently directed at agitating against the subservience of Afghanistan to USA imperialism, and building the reserves that will be needed in the forthcoming inter-imperialist world war

Conclusions: Prospects for the Workers and Peasants of Afghanistan:

The Afghan industrial working class was always small. But it is now even more fragmented – if it exists as a class at all. The domination of the illicit economy is not a fruitful environment for the maturation and growth of a true working class.

The petty-bourgeois intelligentsia may still remain, although many will have fled as émigrés. It is likely that the **medium term** socialist future of the Afghan toilers may be accelerated or retarded according to the ability of the workers and peasants movements of neighboring countries – Pakistan, India, the central Asian Republics of former USSR, and Iran – to move their revolution forward.

But of course no progress in Afghanistan can occur without the formation of the **independent Communist Party of Afghanistan**.

Therefore it is **urgent** that all progressive and militants and Marxist-Leninists create the subjective factor – the united Marxist-Leninist party of Afghanistan free of all revisionist trends.

We are not aware of any **single** Marxist-Leninist party that can claim to be in a leading hegemonic position inside Afghanistan. But there are elements that can form a **United Front** – in the struggle of which and for which a party must and will be built. This United Front will have to grapple with the national (and tribal) question as well as the weak numerical strength of the working class. But it must begin to urgently resist imperialism.

We are aware of these groupings that call themselves Marxist-Leninists:

Pro-Hoxha Groupings:

1) The "Afghanistan Liberation Organization"; that is linked to the CPG-ML see: <http://www.a-l-o.org/index.html> and also: <http://www.a-l-o.org/wolfgang12000.htm>, see their history of the ML-ist movement in Afghanistan at <http://www.a-l-o.org/historical.htm> *These sites accessed 2000.*

2) An organisation called: "Workers Front (Front des Travailleurs)" which we believe is pro-Enver Hoxha (Train-spotters e-list message of Oct 11, 2001 citing the newspaper of Belgium Parti Travail, Solidaire);

Pro-China or Mao Groupings:

1) Remnants of various Maoist organizations are probably the largest Marxist-Leninist groupings, such as typified by the United Front Grouping: Revolutionary Afghan Women:

"The group RAWA, which is based in Pakistan and claims to promote a women's rights agenda, has lately expanded its fundraising activities in the West by portraying itself as a vanguard pro-democracy and "revolutionary" organization with some activities inside Afghanistan. Within the Afghan communities in Pakistan and in the West, RAWA is known as a fringe organization backed by strong Pakistan-based publicity, and is alleged to be run by ... the former Afghan Maoist (pro-Chinese Shohla communist party) groups."

From: MP to Trainspotters e-List: Date: Sat Dec 1, 2001: Subject: Re RAWA); See RAW web-site: <http://www.rawa.org/>

2) The Maoist "Afghanistan Liberation Organization (Sazman-e Reha'i-ye Afghanistan, ALO)" at: <http://www.a-l-o.org/> owing allegiance to Mao (Train-spotters e-list message of Oct 11, 2001 citing the newspaper of Belgium Parti Travail, Solidaire);

3) Affiliated to RIM: "Communist Party of Afghanistan" (Hizb-e Komunist-e Afghanistan) <http://afghanistan.cp.50megs.com>

Note: Many of the LINKS cited here are from: <http://www.geocities.com/bivernico/antirevi.html>

DOWN WITH IMPERIAL MANIPULATIONS IN AFGHANISTAN!
USA AND ASSOCIATED GANG OF IMPERIALISTS –OUT OF
AFGHANISTAN!
TO THE MARXIST-LENINIST WORKERS AND TOILERS PARTY OF
AFGHANISTAN

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APPENDIX: Victims of USA and Afghanistan Display Solidarity

Date: Tue, 15 Jan 2002 22:58:48 -0800 (PST)

From: portsideMod <portsidemod@yahoo.com>

Subject: US Jittery at Symbolic Meetings of Grieving USA & Afghan Families

"I would like to make clear that my family and I take no comfort in your words of rage. If you choose to respond to this incomprehensible brutality by perpetuating violence against other innocent human beings, you may not do so in the name of justice for my husband."

US Jittery at Symbolic Meetings of Grieving Families; by Kim Sengupta in Kabul. Published on Tuesday, January 15, 2002 in the New Zealand Herald (Not from A USA paper)

<http://www.commondreams.org/headlines02/0115-02.htm>

Americans who lost members of their families in the 11 September attacks will arrive in Kabul to meet Afghans whose loved ones were killed by US bombs. The meeting is seen by the grieving Americans as a step towards building something good out of profoundly shattering events. But they also bring with them a message of reconciliation that has provoked apprehension in the State Department and among US diplomats in Afghanistan.

[Also See: Bridging Sorrow: September 11 Victims' Families Will Travel to Afghanistan to Meet with Afghans Who Lost Loved Ones During the Recent Conflict global Exchange Press Release 1/9/02].

The four American visitors will spend eight days in Afghanistan, not just meeting

families but also learning about the devastation that has befallen this poorest of poor nations. They will meet Hamid Karzai, the leader of the interim Afghan government, as well as Colin Powell, the US Secretary of State, who is due to arrive on Thursday. They say they will forcefully put across their view that America should now engage in reconstruction and not revenge.

The visit has been organized by Global Exchange, a human rights organization whose founding director, Medea Benjamin, is traveling with the visitors. He asked: "The people of the US have shown tremendous compassion for the families of the victims of 11 September. Shouldn't our hearts and helping hands also go out to those Afghans who are every bit as innocent as the victims of 11 September? Don't we, as citizens of a wealthy nation that unleashed deadly force against Afghanistan, have a moral responsibility to help the innocent victims?"

The visitors will represent families who suffered in the different attacks On 11 September. Derrill Bodley, a 56-year-old professor of music, lost his daughter Deora on United Airlines flight 93, which crashed in Pennsylvania. Deora's stepsister Eva Rupp will accompany him. Rita Lasar, 70, a retired businesswoman, lost her brother Abe Zelmanowitz in the attack on the World Trade Center. Kelly Campbell, 29, who co-ordinated environmental campaigns, lost her brother-in-law Craig Amundson in the Pentagon attack. Ms Campbell is making the trip on behalf of Craig's widow, Amber Amundson, who is at home looking after their two small children. Mr Amundson had a distinguished career in the US army, but he liked to say that his job was to maintain the peace rather than wage war. His widow said: "I have heard angry rhetoric by some Americans, including many of our nation's leaders who advise a heavy dose of revenge and punishment. To those leaders, I would like to make clear that my family and I take no comfort in your words of rage. If you choose to respond to this incomprehensible brutality by perpetuating violence against other innocent human beings, you may not do so in the name of justice for my husband."

Ms Rupp, who works in Washington DC at the Department of Commerce, had been close to Deora since the age of five. She said: "I am going to Afghanistan because I hope to build more understanding between Afghans and Americans."

Mr Bodley, a professor of music at the University of the Pacific at Stockton, California, composed a piece of piano music which he called "Steps to Peace for Deora". He was asked to perform this later at the White House and a recording of the piece was presented to President George Bush.

The heroism of Abe Zelmanowitz was praised by the President during a speech honoring the victims at the National Cathedral. Mr Zelmanowitz was on the 27th floor of the north tower of the World Trade Center. when it was hit by the first plane. He could have escaped, but he chose instead to stay with his friend, a quadriplegic who could not have fled. His sister Rita said: "I am sure Abe would have wanted me to come. He always believed it is our duty to help those in need."

The first family the visitors will meet will be the Amiris at their tiny, cramped flat at the Old Makroyan suburb of Kabul. Abdul Basir and Shakila lost their five-year-old daughter, Nazila, during an American air strike on the morning of 17 October. She was playing with

her younger brother and sister in a building 20 yards from their home when it was hit by a bomb. The pilots may have been trying to blast an army base a mile away. The Amiris do not know, no one has bothered to explain to them what went wrong. All their savings went on the funeral, they now live hand to mouth, facing eviction because of unpaid rent. "I am very glad the Americans are coming to see us," said Mr Amiri, a 34-year-old former police officer sacked by the Taliban because he refused to enforce their punitive policies. "An innocent life lost is a terrible thing, wherever it is. The life of my daughter was precious, but so were the lives of all those who died in America. "The terrorists did something evil, and then a pilot dropped a bomb which killed Nazila. I do not know why Allah allows such things to happen, perhaps they feel the same way about their God. We can only grieve for each other." Three-year-old Shwata and Sohrab, six, were with their sister when the Bombs landed. They managed to get away, but they were there 90 minutes later when a bulldozer scooped out Nazila's little body from the rubble. They both have nightmares and constantly cry and ask their mother for her. "She was such a beautiful little girl, my Nazila, people used to stop me on the street and say how beautiful she was," said Mrs Amiri, 33, stroking a faded photograph of her daughter. "I would like to show the Americans this photo of her and try to explain how sad we feel. Maybe they will talk about the people they lost. It is a long way for them to come, and also very kind of them. We all suffer because of the terrible things men do."
