

Part II. MOBILISATIONS

3. The Commanders

‘Edicts are the Sultan’s; the mountains are ours.’—Dadal Oghlu

In response to the violence of the state, and afterwards to invasion by a foreign power, the population rose up in revolt and embarked on a Holy War, a *jihad*. The mobilisation of the countryside took place in the context of local solidarity networks, organised around ‘commanders’. The social backgrounds of these leaders provide an explanation of the different kinds of organisation which were set up.

The revolt

Why was there a breach between the communists and the population? The reception given to the new regime in its first weeks was by no means consistently hostile. Indifference was the principal reaction, but certain urban groups, as well as landless peasants in such areas as Laghman, supported the reforms. Measures taken by the regime, particularly in agrarian reform and the reduction in women’s dowries, did not amount to radical change. Land redistribution had begun to be tried out under Daud.¹ The question of limitation of dowries was subject to widespread debate, with some Islamists favouring it in the interest of facilitating marriage for the poorest people. Because of the high value placed on the written word in Afghan society, such projects as the promotion of literacy never attracted fundamental objections from the rural population if they were carried out in a spirit of respect for local customs, and in particular the separation of men and women. In practice, however, teaching adults to read without prior dialogue, together with forced labour, visits by

¹ Daud’s reform in 1976 limited land holdings to 30 *jerib* for each individual in order to permit the donation of 600,000 hectares to 676,000 families. In practice there was no genuine redistribution, particularly on account of the manipulation of the land register by large landowners. Hermann-J. Wald, Asis Nadjibi, ‘Land Reform in Afghanistan’, *Internationales Asienforum* 8 (1–2), 1977, pp. 110–23.

the census authorities and agrarian reform, created considerable tension. The failure of the communists was due mainly to their administrative inadequacy, as well as to a proclivity towards regimentation which did not compensate for the absence of legitimacy. Above all it was due to their resort to violence.

In the first instance the state did not have sufficient administrators to put its reforms into practice.² It did not have any representation below the level of the *alayaqadari* (the sub-district), and the officials were mostly remote from the villagers. Because of their location on the periphery of villages and their contemporary architecture, government buildings symbolised the externality of the state. The typical official, the *mamur*, dressed in the European style and wore the *karakol* cap rather than a turban, or even went bare-headed (*sarluchi*). The officials were conduits for the importation of urban manners and professed modern values alien to the villages. To cap it all, non-Pushtuns found themselves confronted largely by Pushtun officials who were frequently suspected of privileging members of their own community. Language was a further barrier between the administration and the rural population.

The level of integration was certainly not the same in the case of the great nomadic tribes, who kept their distance from the government, as it was for the peasants of the oases, who were subject to the activity of the administration on an everyday basis. Outside the towns, however, the legitimacy of the state was unrelated to its ability to administer the population, which was undemanding other than in the provision of schoolteachers, who were often requested by the villages. In the case of rural communities, the state was held at arm's length by a profusion of 'micro-strategies', in particular by corruption, which became a means of limiting the effective influence of the administration on daily life. In some instances officials were quite simply paid not to intervene. However, this externality of the state did not present a barrier to its becoming a source of profit, particularly for the Pushtuns. The antagonism between the world of the administration and that of the tribes, in theory virulent, did not prevent nepotism and the exercise of patronage.

² Thomas Barfield, 'Weak Links on a Rusty Chain: Structural Weaknesses in Afghanistan's Provincial Government' in R. Canfield, M. N. Shahrani (eds), *Revolutions and Rebellions in Afghanistan*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984.

Links between the two worlds were necessary, but the abolition of the *arbab*, who served as intermediaries between the administration and the population, had recently removed this linkage. Attempted under Daud, this measure was rapidly abandoned, as it would also be after the Soviet invasion. Secondly, the efforts of the authorities to mobilise the population were in due course to prove counter-productive. Political life in Kabul and even the coups aroused only limited interest beyond the educated class. Some nomadic communities in the northwest still remained unaware of the overthrow of the king and the installation of the republic some years after they had happened. The regime therefore made efforts to overcome popular indifference. Radio stations throughout the country spread the new regime's propaganda, but the unfamiliar Marxist-Leninist language fell harshly on the people's ears. To the south of Kabul, in Logar, the villagers were obliged to repaint the doors of their houses red as a sign of support for the revolution and, bizarrely, to demonstrate against the Chinese invasion in Vietnam. Officials also compelled the villagers to applaud, which was considered a Russian custom and therefore *kafir*.³ At the Istiqlal lycée in Kabul, where the doors were also painted red, the Khalqis held compulsory half-hour political meetings every morning before school. Amin later abolished them.

This strategy of authoritarian mobilisation did not make up for the illegitimacy of the communists, and the aggressive atheism of their politics rapidly lost them all credibility with both the rural and urban populations. This rejection showed that religious legitimacy continued to be a determining condition for acceptance of the state. To make up for the abandonment of religious justification, the government played on Pushtun solidarity as well as on the multiple antagonisms present in a fragmented society, but the systematic nomination of Pushtuns to all key positions, and in particular the posts of provincial governors, only served to exacerbate opposition by the non-Pushtun population at a time when the language of nationalism was failing to attract even the Pushtuns themselves.⁴ For example, in

³ Interviews in Logar, autumn 1992 and February 1997.

⁴ This policy was implemented in spite of official pronouncements and a number of other measures such as the abolition of obligatory Pushtu courses and the occasional use of Uzbek and Baluchi in the official media.

the province of Wardak the government armed the Pushtuns so that they could attack the Hazaras, while in Nuristan it played on the conflict between the Pushtuns and the Nuristanis. In both cases the government's policy failed.

However, it was finally the policy of repression undertaken by the authorities which alienated the governing class, the non-communist intelligentsia and, before long, the entire population. Going beyond anecdotal explanations and immediate causes of the uprising, it was the violence of the state rather than its reforms that lay at the root of the crisis. As often with revolutionary movements, a degree of paranoia on the part of those in control unleashed a cycle of increasingly violent repression. When the doctrinaire vision of the Khalqis, which in any case ran contrary to their own system of patronage,⁵ failed to arouse any social response, they were obliged to impose their reforms through a widespread resort to violence. Repression first affected political opponents identifiable as such. Certain generals who had been close to Daud and two former Prime Ministers, Musa Shafiq and Nur Ahmad Etemadi, were immediately executed by the Khalqis. The Islamists already imprisoned under Daud were executed *en masse* on 4 June 1979 in Pul-i Charkhi prison. Similarly, 18 January 1979 saw the assassination of ninety-six men from the Mujaddidi clan, who were potential opposition leaders, while forty-two women and children were arrested.

In proportion to the growth of opposition, the Khalqis took a hostile attitude to entire classes of the population. Indeed, although the communists were not the inventors of political violence, it had hitherto been targeted against declared enemies of the authorities. The communists broke new ground, launching campaigns of liquidation against the *khans* and the *mullahs* where there was no infraction or open hostility. In early November 1979 a list of 12,000 victims of the Khalqi period was published by Yaqubi, the Minister for Security, which gave an idea of the scope of the massacres carried out in the prisons.⁶ Following the fall of the regime, mass graves

⁵ For example, from the spring of 1978 Afizullah Amin armed the members of his tribe (the Kharuti) more on the basis of tribal patronage than on political affiliation.

⁶ No precise count exists, but the policy of suppression during the Khalqi period was probably the cause of tens of thousands of deaths. For the Pul-i Charkhi

were discovered, notably at Bamyan and Herat, which provided evidence of the severity of the repression. Since the numerous notables carried off and executed without trial, including *mullahs* and landowners, had been leading members of their community, their disappearance brought in its wake expressions of solidarity.

During the spring of 1978 revolts multiplied.⁷ They did not have an openly political dimension and mostly took the form of the capture of the nearest government outpost, the disarming of troops and sometimes the execution of officers, mostly without any attempt by the rebels to broaden their movement. Nevertheless, after some months the countryside was out of control.

The geography of the rebellion illustrated two important phenomena. First, the role of the tribes was not a determining factor. The myth which represents the uprisings as a new phase of the confrontation between them and the state must be set aside. The eastern Pushtun tribes, although since 1929 they had originated the principal rebellions, maintained their calm till the spring of 1979, and in some places even later. Their wait-and-see policy can perhaps be explained by the attitude of the Khalqi officials, who were able to contain them due to the existence of tribal solidarities. In Kandahar the revolt did not occur till very late, just before the arrival of the Soviets. The rebellion of 1978 was radically different from previous ones since its mobilisation took place within all the communities, both rural and urban. The rejection of the regime was universal, a phenomenon yet more evident after the Soviet invasion.

Secondly, the uprisings were not organised: there was no overall plan and there were no networks which would enable a revolt originating in one community to spread to the national level. Nevertheless, in the province of Badakhshan a number of Islamists, and in

prison alone Mike Barry suggests a figure of 27,000 executed during this period, *op. cit.*, p. 264.

⁷ The first revolt took place in Nuristan in May. See Vincent Schneider, 'La guerre de libération au Nuristan', *Les temps modernes*, special issue July–Aug. 1980. For a list and a chronology of the uprisings see *amir* Etemad Daneshiyar, *Jang-i Afghani-stan wa shuravi amel-forupashi jehani komunizm* (The war between Afghanistan and the Soviets, a Factor in the Fall of the Communist World), Peshawar: Markaz-i taqiqiyat-i enqelab-i islami Afghanistan (Centre for the Study of the Islamic Revolution in Afghanistan), 1992, p. 83.

particular Basir Khan, provided the impetus, while to the south of Kabul, from Logar to Ghazni, the networks of *mullahs* linked to the Khodam ul-Forqan coordinated the uprisings, though at the provincial level at most. Three examples will show the diversity of the different situations: the rebellion in Herat, that of the Shi'ites in Hazarajat and Kabul, and the student movements.

The Herat rebellion. The uprising in Herat in March 1979 was unique in the Khalqi period. Although other provincial towns experienced uprisings, especially the mutinies of the garrisons in Mazar-i Sharif and Kabul, nowhere did power fall entirely into the hands of the insurgents. The government here suffered a severe psychological blow and became aware that it faced opposition even within the towns. In addition the suppression of the uprising led to the intervention of Soviet air power directly from the Soviet Union, in an anticipation of the invasion which was to take place in December. The Herat rebellion showed the complexity of the mechanisms of mobilisation and in the end demonstrated their broad spontaneity.⁸

Agrarian reform was not a determining factor in the Herat rebellion. This had in essence been completed before the uprising began, with little opposition due to the absence of ties of solidarity between the large-scale landowners, who were often townsmen, and the farmers.⁹ On the other hand, the persecution of the religious élites and the notables by the communist authorities seems to have been a decisive factor. The *pirs* and the *ulema*, who represented the religious tradition in its most 'retrograde' aspects, were the prime targets of the Khalqis. Many were killed or imprisoned, while others went into exile in Iran or Pakistan.

⁸ Essentially, these events have been reconstructed on the basis of interviews undertaken during stays in 1988, 1989 and 1993.

⁹ R. Grønhaug, 'Scale as a Variable in the Analysis: Reflections Based on Field Materials from Herat' in F. Barth (ed.), *Scale and Social Organisation*, New York: Wenner-Gren, 1973; and Olivier Roy, *Afghanistan, Islam and modernité politique*, *op. cit.*, p. 143. According to the government press, 50,000 hectares were distributed to 25,000 families up to the summer of 1979 (*Kabul New Time*, 6 August 1979); in that year fifty-one cooperatives were formed, of which thirty-four remained in 1984 (*Kabul New Time*, 10 March 1984). The later disappearance of most of the cooperatives is explained by the action of the *mujahidin* and the lack of government support.

Shortly before the uprising in the city, revolts took place in a number of villages in the province, including Salimi, Ghoryan and Zindajan. However, these were not organised and differed in their immediate causes: a census in Salimi and forced labour on a road in Gharyan. On the morning of 15 March the peasants of the surrounding area gathered around the mosques together with the townsmen and, encouraged by the *mullahs*, converged on Herat, attacking all the symbols of the state and of communism indiscriminately. The revolt of the 17th division, which began immediately after that in the town, brought the army on to the side of the rebels. This reinforcement enabled them, in the course of the day, to gain control of all the government buildings. The success of the revolt in Herat was probably due to the confluence of two separate phenomena. First, the city formed part of an urban agglomeration which ran from Zindajan in the west to the Pushtun Zargun in the east. There was no clear geographical or ethnic separation between the town and the neighbouring villages. The rebellion therefore had at its disposal a wider arena than in most instances, with the government unable to prevent villagers from the surrounding regions entering the city. At Ghazni, by contrast, the clear separation between the Pushtun countryside and the Tajik bazaar hampered effective coordination and therefore the capture of the town. The second factor related to the participation of the troops. The rebels, who did not have arms, would probably have been scattered by a military contingent that had remained loyal to the government.

The city remained in the hands of the rebels for a week, and according to witnesses these were days of total anarchy. The bazaar was repeatedly looted, contradictory rumours circulated, and no organisation appeared able to control events. A number of Soviet advisers were killed although, contrary to what is sometimes said, their bodies were neither mutilated nor dragged through the streets.¹⁰ Although, according to one eyewitness, this explosion of violence was a 'revolution without a leader', a number of individuals nevertheless stand out. Among the soldiers of the 17th division Sardar Khan, a Maoist artilleryman, and Gholam Rasul Khan, an officer, played a significant role in such coordination as existed. The future leaders of the prov-

¹⁰ It is likely that between 150 and 200 Soviet advisers were killed during the revolt. Other foreigners in the city were spared.

ince, Captain Ismail Khan and Allauddin Khan, had a lower profile. On the civilian side an impression prevails that there was great confusion. Gul Muhammad, a *khan* from Gozargah, a Barakzai Pushtun, came to the city with a number of rifles and headed one of the earliest armed groups, while two former convicts, Kamar-i Dozd and Shir Agha Shongar, set up their own band.¹¹ A committee was also set up during the week of the town's liberation, and in spite of sometimes contradictory reports it appears that Shir Agha Shongar and Kamar-i Dozd were its dominant personalities. Outside the city all the *uluswali* (districts) were captured, except for the command posts at Obeh and Pushtun Zargun. The surrounding provinces also rose in revolt. The uprising of the Badghis followed that of Herat several days later, and because news of the events had come rapidly to Qala-i Naw, the provincial capital, was directly connected to it. In the south, in Farah, most of the *uluswali* were captured several days before the events in Herat, but there seems to have been no link between these two uprisings.

After the onset of the rebellion, the Kabul government accused the Iranians of having encouraged it because of a speech made by Shariat Madari and an attack on the Afghan consulate in Mashad. Around half the inhabitants of Herat are Shi'ites, and the government suspected them of being influenced by the Iranian revolution. The return of Afghan labourers from Iran also prompted a propaganda move by Kabul, which claimed that 4,000 Iranians disguised as Afghans had entered the country. Having denounced the foreign role in the uprisings, the government embarked on a particularly brutal programme of repression. The commander of the base at Kandahar, Major-General Sayyed Mukharam, organised a force of some thirty tanks and around 300 men to re-take the town. The soldiers arrived at Herat on 20 March, waving Qurans and green flags, and the rebels, convinced that the revolt must have spread to the whole of Afghanistan, allowed the contingent to enter the town, while the suburbs were bombed by aircraft which came both from the Soviet Union and from the neighbouring air base at Shindand. It is still difficult today to know how many people were killed in 1978-9, but

¹¹ Kamar-i Dozd was a thief, as is indicated by his nickname 'Dozd' Shir Agha, on the other hand, was from a rich family, but had squandered his inheritance and spent several periods in prison. He was known for his extravagant tastes and predilection for prostitutes, male and female.

the discovery in 1992 of a mass grave containing 2,000 bodies north-east of the town enables a guess to be made. A figure of 25,000 victims was the estimate of government officials.¹²

This spectacular rebellion has been the subject of various analyses. Giorgio Vercellin suggests an ethnic interpretation, stressing the secular opposition between the Pushtuns and the other communities.¹³ He refers to the observations of a 19th-century Hungarian Jewish traveller, Arménius Vambéry, according to whom there were sharp antagonisms at that time between the newly-arrived 'Afghans', i.e. the Pushtuns, and the local populations.¹⁴ However, the same evidence also acknowledges the assimilation of Pushtuns previously resident in the country, and it may be supposed that this process had continued, since none of the eyewitnesses questioned spontaneously suggested that there had been an ethnic clash. In addition, the personalities of some of the leading figures, such as Gul Muhammad, a Pushtun Barakzai, appears in itself to rule out such motivations, while the first uprising took place in Salimi, a Pushtun village. Finally, nothing in the state of inter-ethnic relations in the province would allow the supposition that the Pushtuns of Herat, often well assimilated into the urban environment, might have been the object of resentment from the Persian-speaking majority. However, though research does not permit the hypothesis of a rebellion directed against the local Pushtuns, there remains the fact that the Khalqi period was characterised by a takeover of the state by the Ghilzai and by eastern Pushtun tribes. In this sense the rebellion of Herat, a Persian-speaking town, did have anti-Pushtun implications. In a similar interpretation, Richard Newell argues that the rebellion was Shi'ite and anti-Pushtun,¹⁵ but this runs up against the same obstacles, with the additional difficulty of explaining the uprisings outside the city, where the Shi'ites are very much in the minority.

¹² Interview with a Parchami expatriate in Germany, 1989. Olivier Roy gives a wide margin, estimating there were between 5,000 and 25,000 victims: *Afghanistan, Islam et modernité politique*, *op. cit.*, p. 146.

¹³ Giorgio Vercellin, *Afghanistan 1973–1978. Dalla repubblica presidenziale alla repubblica democratica*, Venice: Università degli studi di Venezia, 1979, pp. 61–4.

¹⁴ Cf. Arménius Vambéry, *Voyages d'un faux derviche en Asie centrale*, Paris: You Feng, 1987, pp. 240–1.

¹⁵ Richard Newell, 'The Government of Muhammad Mussa Shafiq: the last chapter of Afghan Liberalism', *Central Asian Survey*, 1982, p. 92.

Was the Herat rebellion at least partly the result, as Olivier Roy believes, of the work of the Islamists?¹⁶ Although there were contacts between the militants of the Jamiyat-i Islami and the officers of the 17th division, it is incorrect to suggest an infiltration of the army by the Islamists. The Jamiyat-i Islami office in Mashad, whose activities were favoured by the Iranian revolution, had begun to make contacts among the more senior officers of the 17th division in Herat, including Ismail Khan, Allauddin Khan and Abdul Ahad, some weeks before the rebellion. After the rebellion's spontaneous outbreak the officers joined the rebels, with whom—and this is the crucial point—there had been no prior dialogue, for the good reason that there had been no pre-existing organisation on the civilian side. Furthermore, some of the leaders from the army side were Maoists, such as Sardar Khan, which ruled out a mutiny organised by a group of officers belonging to the Jamiyat-i Islami. The *ulema* also did not seem to have been connected in any particular way with this group, since the majority of them afterwards joined the Harakat-i Enqelab. The disparity in the personalities of the leaders—*khans*, fugitives from justice and officers—allows the hypothesis of a rising organised by a political movement to be excluded. The evolution of the rebellion was rather an indication of the weakness of political and other organisations in Herat.¹⁷ In this perspective the reticence of the *ulema*, who took only a minimal part in the rebellion's active phase, seems to have been especially revealing. In the end those who took part—peasants, *ulema* and students—are convinced of the spontaneity of the movement. The eyewitnesses of the episode, who were also participants, stress the indiscriminate nature of the mob, the disorder, the air of acute crisis sometimes degenerating into arbitrary violence. The one cry which echoed through the city was '*Allahu Akbar*' (God is the greatest), while many of the inhabitants huddled in their houses in fear of being denounced as pro-government or Maoists, or falling victim to the hunt for those who were *sarluchi*—with uncovered heads, indicating lack of piety.

¹⁶ Olivier Roy, *Afghanistan, Islam et modernité politique*, *op. cit.*, p. 145.

¹⁷ S. C. Stack notes the relative absence in the pre-war period of trade unions or associations in local life: 'Herat, a Political and Social Study', unpubl. Ph.D. thesis, University of California, Los Angeles, 1975.

The Shi'ite uprising. In Hazarajat a number of notables took an optimistic view of the communist coup: it at least delivered them from Daud, whose aggressively nationalistic policy had led to the widespread installation of Pushtun officials.¹⁸ However, troubles were rapidly unleashed by the announcement of the reforms brought in by the regime, locally represented by young officials who were both inexperienced and arrogant. These reforms were never to be applied in reality, but the uprising was prompted by the provocative attitude of the young Khalqis and by the victimisation of the *khans* and the Shi'ite clergy in both Hazarajat and Kabul. Notables of the former regime were particularly targeted, as was shown by the imprisonment of many former parliamentarians. In response government buildings and especially schools, which were seen as centres of communist indoctrination, were destroyed by the rebels. In Hazarajat the rebellion took on a character of unequivocal opposition to the state and to the Pushtuns. It began prematurely in October 1978 immediately after that in Nuristan. Following the winter which severs all communication in Hazarajat, local uprisings directed against the administrative centres began in March and April. By June the entire region was free of government control, which from then on was restricted to the fringes of Hazarajat, in the bazaars of Jaghori and of Bamyan which is only partly Hazara. This success resulted particularly from the minimal administration present in Hazarajat, as well as from the mountainous terrain and the lack of means of communication. The rebellion was in general both spontaneous and unanimous: the entire population would participate in attacks on governmental administrative posts. In some places *khans* led the rebels, in the tradition of Bacha-yi Gaw Sawar, but a hitherto unobserved phenomenon was the role played by the *ulema*, often the heads of private *madrasas*, who thereafter formed the backbone of the new political class of Hazarajat.

In the spring of 1979 the first signs of rebellion also appeared among the Shi'ite community of Kabul. In this period of crisis the indiscriminate repression practised by the government reinforced

¹⁸ To qualify this statement somewhat, it may be seen that certain *khans* still look back with some affection to the era of Daud, which marked the onset of the modernisation of Hazarajat, in contrast with the characteristic of Zahir Shah's administration.

the solidarity between the two Shi'ite communities of the capital, the Hazara and the Qizilbash. **The Shi'ite religious élites were decimated by the Khalqis in 1978–9, especially in the towns.** Religious authorities such as the *ayatollahs* Waez and Akay Alem were incarcerated in the regime's prisons, as were young intellectuals such as Binesh, Muhseni's deputy. In reprisal for this persecution, the Hazaras, who controlled this market, prevented the supply of wood to the capital. At the end of May 1979 Amin met the leaders of the Hazara community, but evidently no agreement was reached since riots took place in Shendawal, the Shi'ite quarter of Kabul. **An attempt by four Hazaras to capture a police post caused the death of a Soviet officer and unleashed extremely brutal measures of repression.** The army used light armour, and several dozen died. Three hundred Hazaras, picked up at random, were taken to the Pul-i Charki prison and executed the same day. Helicopters dropped leaflets alleging Iranian involvement. It is true that on 21 June Iranian radio broadcast a message from *ayatollah haji* Sayyed Hasan Tabatabay, urging the Afghans to 'continue their resistance'. The roster of the 12,000 victims who died under Taraqi, published by Amin on 10 October 1979, shows that 7,000 Hazaras were shot at Pul-i Sharki in a few months. The fiercest suppression of the Shi'ites was the result of fear of Iranian influence, widely overestimated, and of traditional contempt for the Hazaras.

The student movements. In the towns, and particularly in Kabul, the presence of secondary school and university students, sometimes Maoist or Islamist militants, gave a particular character to the protests.¹⁹ In the capital the student demonstrations were incited by leaflets (*shabname*) and appeals to *jihad* proclaimed at night from the roofs of the houses. In particular the Maoists planned an action on 21 April, the Day of the Flag: the anniversary of the replacement of the old red, black and green flag by the red flag of the revolution. Leaflets were circulated on 19 and 20 April, and on 21 April the first demonstration took place.

¹⁹ The focus here, for analytical reasons, is on the students. However, the general atmosphere of the city was one of resistance even before the arrival of the Soviet forces. Kabul would later be mobilised in its entirety against the Soviet occupiers between 21 and 24 February.

By 26 April the strike at the university was near-total. On 28 April the police took severe action against a student march, leaving many dead and wounded. The girls of the Surya and Rabe Balkhi Schools then took the initiative of beginning strikes at school and encouraged the boys of the Ghazi School to follow suit. On 29 April a demonstration set off towards the university buildings. Six students died under Parchami fire and some thirty were wounded. A girl from the Rabe Balkhi School, shot dead by the Parchamis, became the symbol of the student revolt. In another development the garrison at Bala Hisar, south of the town, rose up on 5 August 1979 at the instigation of Maoist groups which had infiltrated it. The government then used its MiGs to bombard the fortress and rapidly retook the base. In the following months police controls would increasingly forbid open opposition.

These three cases demonstrate that despite a lack of organisation there was unanimity among the population during this first phase. The educated class and the town-dwellers in particular sided largely with the opposition. A further factor was that the authorities failed in their attempts to exploit communal antagonisms. This unanimity was due in particular to the religious significance which had been attached to the rebellion.

Jihad

At the outset the uprisings were fuelled by the multiple demands of the population, and their moral rejection of political authority; later their various justifications coalesced under the banner of *jihad*, which served to legitimise the rebellion. *Jihad* is a religious concept which veiled the political perception of the struggle, since it is an exchange between man and God, and not between two adversaries. In 1978–9 the people did not mobilise against the communist government in the name of an ideology: militants were rare among the rural population, and their rhetoric—including that of the Islamists—was incomprehensible to a population whose literacy was as undeveloped as its politicisation. The political parties had not made themselves known, or indeed were not established at all, until after the uprising, which they exploited but did not initiate.

The religious interpretation was imposed on events thanks to a conjunction of factors. Historical memory enabled Islam to appear

as the legitimization of popular rebellions against the invading *kafir*, as had been the case with the British in the 19th century, and against the state, as in 1929. With the Soviet invasion resistance was also seen as patriotic, and the parallels between Babrak Karmal and Shah Shoja²⁰ became common currency in the pamphlets calling for *jihad* against the occupier. In addition, Islam remained an essential component of individual identity. Religious practice was general in the pre-war period, while atheism was practically unthinkable, at least in the countryside, though the Uzbeks and the Hazaras were often less observant than the Pushtuns. For the Pushtuns Islam was tightly linked to tribal values, even when these did not have a religious origin, for example in the case of the concept of 'honour' (*namus*). Finally, the establishment of an Islamic republic in Iran, which had not resonated only with the Shi'ites, presented a contemporary model of religious revolution. In this initial phase there was no contradiction between these multiple references.

This religious interpretation of the rebellion was promoted by the *ulema* and the *mullahs*, a group strongly united in their struggle against the communist authorities, who had proclaimed a *jihad* against the regime. Represented everywhere in the country, they constituted an informal but efficient network for the transmission of information, as the rebellion of 1929 had already shown. In instances where the uprising was coordinated, for example in Logar or in Ghazni, the *ulema* played the leading role. In most insurrections the sermons of the *mullahs* were crucial: the people often assembled at the mosque before marching on the government command post. In the mosques, the habitual scene for discussion among the villagers, the *mullah* would use his influence to put forward a religious exegesis of resistance to authority, and his intervention often served to convince the hesitant by removing their doubts as to the illegitimacy of the authorities. Later the *mujahidin* gathered in military centres, but in villages far from the combat zones the mosque played a central role up to the 1990s in bringing combatants together. Lastly the religious leaders often enabled communal antagonisms to be overcome, but this unanimity was only temporary, and the former splits, often interpreted in political language, later came to the fore again.

²⁰ From the name of the *amir* put on the throne by the British in 1839, who became a symbol of collaboration with foreign imperialism.

With the proclamation of *jihad* by the *ulema* the rebellion took on a universal nature, aiming thereafter at the overthrow of the illegitimate authorities. The justification in terms of Islam gave a direction to individual efforts: *jihad* is experienced as both a personal obligation and a religious duty.²¹ The concepts of *mujahid* and of *shahid* lie at the heart of the conceptions of individuals in relation to the nature of their commitment.²² The declaration of *jihad* in particular justifies emigration (*hijrat*) and the special treatment of *mujahidin*, whose status is defined by the religious texts as a balance of duties and privileges. The rules relating to purification, especially in the funeral ceremony, are modified. In contrast to the normal practice, the corpse is not washed, since the body of one who dies as a *shahid* is pure, and paradise has already been promised to him. In another illustration, according to a poster outside a mosque in Badakhshan, *mujahidin* in combat are permitted to enter a mosque wearing shoes, in accordance with an ancient legal principle dating from the era of the Muslim conquests.

Following a long-standing tradition great fighters who have died in battle become the object of popular veneration comparable to that given to the *pirs*: 'In pre-war Afghanistan, martyrs were not distinguished from other holy men whose tombs were the object of visitation.'²³ Thus at certain mosques in Herat prayers are still said for the martyrs of 19th-century wars against the British. Frequently a 'Front' would retain the name of its first commander and in this way place itself under his patronage. The exploits of the great *mujahidin* who have died in combat are recounted, and placards about them are displayed throughout the country. The prestige attached to the destiny of a *shahid* reconciles those left alive to their loss. This may explain the willingness of the *mujahidin* to sacrifice themselves, and the high morale of the population up to the Soviet withdrawal—i.e. the exact moment when the concept of *jihad* became less relevant.

²¹ *Jihad* (etymologically 'effort') is the act of participating in the defence of the Muslim community or in its expansion. See *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1960, p. 551.

²² In the tribalised Pushtun regions the ideal of the warrior, who obeys the Pushtun tribal code, replicates that of the *mujahid*, which nevertheless offers stronger legitimisation.

²³ 'Dans l'Afghanistan d'avant guerre, les martyres ne se distinguaient pas des autres saints hommes dont on visitait les tombeaux,' Pierre Centlivres, Micheline Centlivres-Demont, *op. cit.*, p. 58.

'Qowm' and commanders

Conflicts, provided they are short, do not necessarily bring with them any profound change in social organisation, and may even fulfil certain functions. Confrontations which occur at regular occasions in the year, outside the periods reserved for agricultural labour, and which rarely occasion more than a few fatalities, are sometimes seen as demographic controls. This functionalist approach, though distinctly underestimating both real disturbances of the social balance and the regulatory role of the state, does offer an explanation of the repetitive aspect of such confrontations.²⁴ However, from 1978 onwards violence had unprecedented effects. The state withdrew from the countryside, and the consequences of minimal administration and of military constraints meant that the *mujahidin* became progressively less identified with the general population. A new social role appeared: the commander.²⁵ This was an individual, attached to a party, who fulfilled at the local level the functions of military and political leadership. In the 1980s there were several thousand commanders in Afghanistan, whose influence varied substantially, ranging from Masud, the organiser of an army of more than 10,000 men, down to a village notable at the head of a handful of *mujahidin*. However, the commanders were aware of belonging to groups which fought or collaborated to achieve the same goals.

What was the relationship between belonging to a *qowm* and the process of mobilisation? Before the war elections displayed the mobilisation and coalition of ethnic groups for the election of deputies

²⁴ On this, see Louis Duprée, 'Tribal Warfare in Afghanistan and Pakistan: a reflection of the segmentary lineage system' in A. Ahmed, D. Hart (eds), *Islam in Tribal Societies*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984. Nevertheless, historical studies demonstrate the frequency of serious disruption in Afghan history. In Afghan Turkestan the population accepted the arrival of the Kabul government in the 19th century, since the continual conflicts between *khans* were giving rise to serious disorder and were perceived as unacceptable. In addition, a functionalist account brings up all the criticisms usually aroused by an approach of this type, and in particular the fact that war is only one possible means of demographic control (in competition with such means as birth control and emigration), so that why it occurs historically in this particular society remains to be explained.

²⁵ It is also interesting that this word, *Commandant*, was itself new, and of foreign origin. *Amir* is sometimes used of important commanders, but has not gained its place in the common language to designate of this new social role. An analysis of the local and regional organisations is given in Barnett R. Rubin, *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan*, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, chapter 10.

(*wakil*) on the basis of local issues: for example, the Hazaras of Qala-i Naw got their *khan* elected ahead of the Pushtun candidate, an Uzbek might be elected by non-Pushtuns against a Pushtun candidate, and so on. In other cases concrete interests or a common way of life, independent of ethnicity, provided a basis for electoral mobilisation.²⁶ On the contrary, social classes were not groups with solidarity, nor could they be mobilised: there was no peasantry, and still less a working class conscious of itself as such.²⁷ During the war it was possible to distinguish two situations: one where mobilisation was within the framework of an existing *qowm*, and another where the commander had mobilised several *qowms* or parts of *qowms*.

If mobilisation took place within the framework of an existing *qowm*, the network of solidarity collectively sustained a party and a commander. At what level is a *qowm* capable of itself becoming the framework of mobilisation? Over-broad sources of solidarity, such as macro-ethnic affiliation (i.e. Pushtun, Tajik and so on), do not constitute a framework for mobilisation, and nor do tribal confederations such as the Durrani or the Ghilzai. In the latter case Ghilzai identity had become a 'historical relic', as Anderson remarks.²⁸ In fact the Ghilzai confederation was broken up by the appearance of the Durrani confederation, and the political context no longer accommodated it. During the war this identity was not an active basis for mobilisation, even though the Ghilzai were over-represented in the Harakat-i Enqelab. The absence of extended *qowms* capable of political mobilisation is accounted for in part by the action of the state, which had destroyed the tribal structures.

A network of solidarity on a smaller scale, not necessarily of a territorial nature, generally served as the primary framework for mobilisation. Among the eastern Pushtun tribes or the Ghilzai, the mobilised *qowm* was generally the clan, several thousand individuals at most. In the mountains the field of action of the commanders was often

²⁶ See particularly Micheline Centlivres-Demont, 'Types d'occupation et relations inter-ethniques dans le nord-est de l'Afghanistan', *Studia iranica* (Paris), 5 (2), pp. 269–77.

²⁷ The analyses offered by Richard Tapper seem here to assume rather than to demonstrate a transition to a class-based structure, 'Ethnicity and Class: Dimensions of Inter-Group Conflicts in North-Central Afghanistan' in R. Canfield, M. Shahrani (eds), *op. cit.*, pp. 230–47.

²⁸ 'Tribe and community among the Ghilzai Pashtuns', *Anthropos*, 70, 1975, p. 596.

dictated by geography: from one valley to another, or at different altitudes in the same valley, the solidarity networks differed. Similarly a fraternity of artisans practising the same trade could serve as the basis for the establishment of a group.

To take a particular example, the fraternity of the delinquents of Kandahar, the *payluch* (the shoeless ones), functioned as the framework of mobilisation under the leadership of Abdul Latif, an innkeeper before the war but now leader of the *payluch* and as such responsible for relations with the local authorities. Little is known of this brotherhood, which is similar to that of the *koka* in Kabul, the *luti* (from *lut*, 'hooligan') in Iran, or the *shabab* in Tripoli (Lebanon).²⁹ The brotherhood brought together the young men of the bazaar, often the sons of butchers, innkeepers and such like—all professions lacking prestige. Their distinguishing signs of membership were a large knife, a yellow robe and distinctive slippers. The *payluch* were obliged to observe a code of honour and solidarity between members, and therefore constituted a *qowm*. They organised dogfights near a *ziarat* close to the town and smoked quantities of hashish.³⁰ Given the responsibility for the security of certain streets, probably as some kind of racket, they sometimes also acted as contract killers. Though on the margin of legality, the *payluch* formed part of the social life of the bazaar in Kandahar and today former members are not stigmatised. The son of the chief of the *payluch*, Gul Agha, who had been educated up to the top class at the secondary school in Kandahar, had been a government official before the war. At the moment of the Soviet invasion the *payluch* were massively mobilised behind their leader to take part in the fighting against the occupiers. They seemed afterwards to have disappeared as an organised group, since many were killed in the early years of the war.

²⁹ Interview with a former *payluch* (Kandahar, 1992). The organisation of young men from popular urban origins into *futtuwa* was an invention of the caliph Nasr, of which the *payluch* are perhaps a survival. Cf. E. Ashtor, *A Social and Economic History of the Near Middle East in the Middle Ages*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976, p. 234.

³⁰ There is a link stronger than that of mere geography between these three activities: the visit to the *ziarat*, the use of hashish and the dogfights. Pressing the point somewhat, it could be said that the urban style of Kandahar is here perfectly expressed—to which should be added music, which was ubiquitous in the town before the arrival of the Taliban.

Although political mobilisation brought solidarity networks into play, it was not a mechanical transposition of various *qowms*.³¹ Mobilisation might sometimes not be ascribable to a *qowm*, since a commander may benefit from the support of a number of networks or partial networks. In some instances the *qowm* may support more than one commander, the better to protect itself from political events. Political mobilisation in existing networks is autonomous, but whether mobilisation takes place within an existing *qowm* or whether it brings into existence a new structure, its mode of operation continues to be that of a network of solidarity.

The social profile of the commanders

The social origin of the commanders mainly corresponded to four ideal types: the holy man (the *pir* or the *sayyed*), the *alem*, the *khan* or the educated man. These were not primarily political or military figures, but could become so through a capacity to mobilise men and resources. These different types of status were related to resources of different kinds: respectively religious charisma,³² religious knowledge, wealth, and the modern education sanctioned by the state. In addition, the *khan*, the *pir* and the *alem* were all important figures in their local communities; the influence of the educated class was less definite. However, the prestige attached in the villages to learning was undeniable, and social contacts made at school or at university opened up access to political networks. For those lacking initial resources social mobility was limited: ordinary fighters could assert themselves at the local level through their courage or their organisational abilities, but very few went on to run larger groups.

These four 'ideal types' did not exist in the real world, where for the most part the situation was more complex. A single individual could bring to bear a diversity of resources, such as his status as an

³¹ For example, A. Shalinski studied a group of *muhajirin* of Fergana and noted that they belonged simultaneously to the Hezb-i Islami and to the Jamiyat-i Islami: 'Ethnic reaction to the current regime in Afghanistan', *Central Asian Survey* 3 (4), 1985.

³² It should be recalled, following Max Weber, that charisma is a social and not a psychological phenomenon. It is the recognition by a group of disciples of the exceptional quality of an individual, in this case a religious quality. *Economie et société*, vol. I, Paris: Presses Pocket, p. 320.

alem, his territorial inheritance which might earn him a role as a *khan*, and his membership of a family of *pirs*. So the principal commander in Kunduz, Aref Khan, an educated man who was the son of the former mayor of Kunduz and a major landowner, had at his disposal a number of different resources. Men of the educated class who became commanders often belonged to notable families, and it is therefore difficult to distinguish between what they owed to those connections and to their scholarly achievements. Where an educated man did not belong to the dominant branch of an influential family, such as Amin Wardak or Fazlullah, his educational status might allow him to be preferred to other candidates for the position of commander. In other cases *pirs* were often also significant landowners and acted as *khans*, to whom they might up to a point be assimilated. *Pirs* and *sadat* might also be *ulema*, at least in the regions such as Herat and Ghazni that were dominated by orthodox Sufism. In Hazarajat *khans* often gave their daughters in marriage to *sadat*.³³ On the other hand, *ulema* and *khans* were normally distinct categories in pre-war Afghanistan, especially among tribal populations.³⁴

The emergence of the new élites allows these types of resources to be re-evaluated in the context of social upheaval. As a result of the *jihād*, religious personalities—*ulema*, *pirs* and *sadat*—found their legitimacy enhanced. In addition, local social structures governed the probability that an individual of a particular social background might become a commander. In fact, the political map showed regional patterns in the social origins of the commanders, to an extent which rules out a random distribution: for example the *ulema* were dominant in the province of Ghazni and in Hazarajat, and the *khans* maintained their hold among the Baluchis of Helmand. In some sense the value of religious prestige or scholarly achievement, and their capacity to be transformed into a political resource, varied from region to region. Afghanistan was not socially homogeneous, and this was especially true after the disappearance of the state.

³³ R. Canfield has described the relations between *pirs* and *mullahs* in the Bamyan region, 'Ethnic Regional and Sectarian Alignments in Rural Afghanistan', in Ali Banuazizi, Myron Weiner (eds), *Religion, the State and Ethnic Politics*, Syracuse University Press, 1986.

³⁴ However, Jamal Malik, *op. cit.*, p. 244, on the basis of a study of the social origins of students in the *madrasas* of the NWFP (some of whom were Afghans), points to a not insignificant number of sons of *khans* in the recent period (11.3%).

What tendencies emerged? First the sweeping scale of the changes must be stressed. The national élites were virtually eliminated. The presence of the *ulema* was the most novel factor, together with the rise of the educated classes. Regional differences were a factor: in different areas pride of place was taken either by the educated or the *ulema*. The changes also had a generational aspect: most of the commanders were born in the 1950s, since the material conditions and the high mortality rate favoured younger fighters, who were physically capable of guerrilla warfare. Among the *khans* the new generation took the form of a transfer of power to heirs who had received an education. These points will become clearer through individual analysis of each of the four categories defined above.

The ulema. In a number of places *ulema* or *mullahs* became commanders, and this direct and long-term exercise of power was something new in Afghan history. Two factors tend to explain this development: their legitimacy in the eyes of the rural populations and their capacity for organisation. The retreat of the *ulema* to the countryside in the two or three decades before the war restricted their influence to rural areas. The example of the Mujaddidi family, which transferred its principal *madrasa* from Kabul to Ghazni, typified a long-term sociological change: the tendency for the *ulema* to become displaced from urban centres, especially if they had not come from the government *madrasas*. Sometimes financially dependent on their congregations, the *ulema* were only rarely major landowners in the pre-war period, and at least in the rural context they remained strongly rooted in their community, the majority of them exercising their functions in the region of their birth.³⁵ This close link explains why men of religion have often acted as spokesmen for the population, e.g. in Badakhshan where they occupied the position of an alternative authority.³⁶ In addition, when the state withdrew from the countryside after 1978, the *ulema*, in their capacity as religious scholars, had at their disposal a legitimate and recognised field of knowledge which

³⁵ Some tribal communities, however, made a point of choosing their *mullah* from outside their own group.

³⁶ M. N. Shahrani, 'Causes and Context of Differential Reactions in Badakhshan to the Saur Revolution' in M. N. Shahrani, R. Canfield (eds), *op. cit.*, p. 152.

allowed them to establish legal relationships between individuals. The war therefore had the effect of giving the *ulema* a monopoly in the field of justice, which reinforced their influence.

The second factor was related to the existence of structures and networks. The *ulema* and those *mullahs* who had followed a course of religious teaching formed part of an institution held together by the strongest personal ties. An *alem* would remain faithful to the master who had given him his *ijaza* (licence to teach), and to his fellow pupils. If he was the director (*mudares*) of a *madrassa* he could also rely on his students (*taliban*) and their families. Further, outside the traditional *madrassas*, where the teaching was rigid and repetitive, the government *madrassas* and a number of private *madrassas* educated *ulema* who were of a modern tendency and more aware of political issues, who would become effective administrators.

The *ulema*-commanders, who existed throughout Afghanistan, were dominant in Ghazni, in the north of Helmand, in Badghis, to the south of the town of Mazar-i Sharif, and in Hazarajat.³⁷ What were the social structures which facilitated their success? First of all, the weakness of the *khans* favoured the emergence of the *ulema* on the political scene, as is seen in Ghazni. In this province there were numerous *khans* of the Andar tribe, but they had little influence as individuals. The weakening of the ties of patronage therefore had its effect, and the *mullahs* had not faced strong competition. In the deprived regions of Helmand, which were very different from the central regions where irrigation projects had brought about a profound social transformation, the local *khans* were unable to mobilise a significant clientele. On the other hand, deep-seated segmentation was a brake on the appearance of the *ulema* as political leaders, so that the *khans* were dominant among the eastern Pushtun tribes, despite the exception represented by *mawlawi* Haqqani of the Jadran tribe. In addition, the rural nature of the communities concerned made the establishment of the *ulema* easier since there were no alternative urban élites. In the second place, the presence of a prestigious *madrassa*, such as the Nur ul-Mudares at Ghazni, was a factor common to most of the regions dominated by *ulema*-commanders, such as Waras and Nili in the Hazarajat. These *madrassas* were the centres of networks of

³⁷ In Logar, the *ulema* were in competition with the educated class.

ulema who were able to coordinate their activities over what were sometimes far-flung regions.

The pirs and the sadat. In Afghanistan, as in the rest of the Muslim world, particular individuals or objects may enjoy the reputation of possessing a beneficial spiritual quality, *barakat*, which reflects on to those who come to view them. The *pirs* and the *sadat* are the two categories of individuals who enjoy this spiritual quality. These possessors of religious charisma have substantial social effects, since their disciples (*murid*) are potentially available for mobilisation in a political cause.³⁸

The *sadat*, descendants of Muhammad through his daughter Fatima and his son-in-law Ali, enjoy no particular privileges in Islam. They are not automatically recognised as the bearers of *barakat*, but nevertheless command a certain prestige³⁹ and may enjoy a privileged economic position, though there also exist poor *sadat*. Villagers may ask *sadat* to live among them in exchange for gifts, in order to benefit from their *barakat*.⁴⁰ Sometimes specialising in pious rituals, they serve as intermediaries and as arbiters, for example in the case of a conflict within a tribe. Their status varies: in the east they have little prestige, while in Hazarajat they are influential.

The *pirs* are spiritual masters, normally within the context of a Sufi brotherhood.⁴¹ Their relationship with their disciples may be ritualised through participation once or twice a week, often during the night of Thursday or Friday, in a *zikr*—a mystical exercise consisting of a recitation of the names of God under the *pir's* leadership. Professional solidarity may also be expressed through the cult of a deceased *pir*, who may be adopted as the patron of a group of artisans practising the same trade. Popular religion is also expressed, though

³⁸ Louis Duprée, 'Saint Cults in Afghanistan', *American Universities Field Staff Report, South Asia Series XX* (i), May 1976.

³⁹ The *khwaja*, descendants of the first Caliph Abu Bakr, have a lesser degree of religious legitimacy but often play a comparable social role.

⁴⁰ Micheline Centlivres-Demont, 'Types d'occupation et relations inter-ethniques dans le Nord-Est de l'Afghanistan', *Studia Iranica* 5 (2) 1976, pp. 269–77.

⁴¹ The Qadiriyya and the Naqshbandiyya are the most prevalent Sufi orders, although the Chestiyya and Suhrawardiyya are also encountered. There are also *pirs* who do not belong to a brotherhood, and *malang*, vagrant preachers who have no organised clientele.

less consistently, through visits to the *pir* and through pilgrimages to relics or to the tomb (*ziarat*) of a *pir*, which is often under the guardianship of the descendants of his family.⁴² These practices are widespread. The *ziarat* of Mazar-i Sharif, where a local Afghan tradition maintains that Ali, the Prophet's son-in-law, is buried, attracts tens of thousands of pilgrims every year.

In other places the *pir* presides over a *khanaqah* (a place where Sufis gather) which functions both as a mosque and as a *madrasa*, although this function had declined in the pre-war period. A *murid* would normally be assured of a welcome from his master, who would when appropriate exploit the relationship to his own benefit. The attachment of a *murid* to his *pir* would take the form of a gift in cash or in kind made once or twice a year on the occasion of a visit by the *murid* or of a tour by the *pir*. This source of finance covers the upkeep of the *khanaqah* but the surplus of the gifts of the disciples over the expenses of the *pir* might be considerable, since the *murids* often come from several provinces. The pattern of *pir-murid* relations is structurally that of patron and client, although the goods involved are of a different kind. The hypothesis may be advanced of an extension into the sacred domain of more general social models.⁴³

In the context of Sufism there are two ways of approaching the exchanges between the *pir* and the *murid*.⁴⁴ Orthodox mystical practices form an integral part of the teaching of the *ulema*. On the contrary, practices connected with the cult of saints are viewed by the *ulema* as magical rituals. Richard Tapper suggests on the basis of a case-study that individuals who take part in Sufism of the 'saintly' variety are often of inferior social status and experience feelings of inadequacy in relation to the values of their group.⁴⁵ Whatever the truth of this, the distinction between the two types of Sufism is not a matter of difference between one brotherhood and another, but between different *pirs* and the communities from which they recruit their *murids*. Among the tribal populations the Qadiri *pirs*, but also some *naqshbandis*, are generally attached to a saintly cult.

⁴² The guardians (*mutawali*) usually sell amulets (*tawiz*) to visitors.

⁴³ On Christian saints, see Peter Brown, *Le culte des saints, son essor et sa fonction dans la chrétienté latine*, Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1984.

⁴⁴ See Olivier Roy, 'Sufism in the Afghan Resistance', *Central Asian Survey* 2 (4), December 1983.

⁴⁵ Richard Tapper, *op. cit.*

In the pre-war period the flow of both manuscripts and oral transmissions seems to have dried up, although the scarcity of historical sources must cast some doubt on the reality of the supposed 'decline' of Sufism, a theme which recurs in literature on the subject. It remains true that the brotherhoods did little recruiting within the young educated class or in the towns, other than in regions such as Herat. Bo Utas relates this decline to the hereditary status of the *pirs*, so that their disciples were not motivated to aspire to excellence in order to become their successors.⁴⁶ This probably accounts for a certain ossification in the style of teaching. However, the principle of succession within families is long-standing, so that the decline, a more recent phenomenon, must be explained by other factors, in particular the competition offered by modern schools from the 1950s onwards.

To what extent were such charismatic figures able to make use of their legitimacy to achieve the status of commanders? In the pre-war period certain *pirs* or *sadat* were personalities of local influence, who were sometimes even elected as members of Parliament. The economic and political effects of religious charisma did not therefore appear only with the onset of the war. Because of the long tradition of struggle of the Naqshbandis against the Russian colonisers in the Balkans, Central Asia and the Caucasus, it might have been thought that this brotherhood would become a motivating factor in the *ji-had*.⁴⁷ In fact the brotherhoods have not been at the heart of the resistance, and have not been the framework for the parties, as has been seen in Turkish and Iraqi Kurdistan at various periods.⁴⁸ With some exceptions, mainly in Herat and Maymana, the *pirs* did not become commanders and there was no collective loyalty among *murids* to any particular group.

Locally the *sadat* occupied significant positions, for example in the northeast, but did not make up greatly extended networks. The only exception concerns Hazarajat, where the *sadat* were dominant almost

⁴⁶ Bo Utas, 'Notes on Afghan Sufi Orders and Khanaqahs', *Afghanistan Journal* 7, 1980, p. 2. For the theory concerning the decline, see also David B. Edwards, *op. cit.*, p. 187.

⁴⁷ It should be noted that the brotherhoods have not played a determining role in the current war in Chechnya.

⁴⁸ See Martin van Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State*, London: Zed Books, 1992, mainly chapters 5 and 6.

up to 1982, though in alliance with the *ulema*.⁴⁹ To be a *sayyed* helped notables who were also major landowners to preserve their local clienteles. In the last resort the war did not produce charismatic figures, ‘mad *mullahs*’ such as appeared in the 19th and 20th centuries in the tribal revolts against the British on the Afghanistan–Pakistan frontier.⁵⁰

How might the relative eclipse of the brotherhoods be explained? The *pirs* were the victims of the Khalqi repression in the 1978–9 and in consequence many left for Iran or Pakistan. Further more the brotherhoods, with their recruitment among the urban and educated groups in decline, did not have men at their disposal who were able to become guerrilla leaders, and suffered from the effects of competition from other élites, the educated class and the *ulema*, who had taken control of various parties and tended towards action of a more organised kind. Nevertheless it will emerge in the course of the analysis of the biographies of the leaders of the political parties that membership of a brotherhood was still a considerable advantage. Thus the influence of the Mujaddidi family depended partly on its position

⁴⁹ In Hazarajat the influence of the *sadat* was related to that of the *khans*, but with the eclipse of the *khans* the networks were broken up, since the *sadat* were not spread throughout Hazarajat. Though numerous in Yakoalang and at Behsud, they were virtually absent from the south of Hazarajat. This factor partly explains the initial alliance between the *sadat* and the *ulema* who were more evenly distributed. In addition, most *pirs* are *sadat*, which explains the significant clientele they enjoyed and also their competitive relationship with the Shi’ite clergy. Traditionally the role of the *sadat* was to provide links between social groups, especially at times of crisis. Their activity during the war may be seen as an attempt to perpetuate this role, though on a scale and in ways which were different. The failure of the *sadat* was due to the impetus of the Iranian revolution, which favoured the rise of clergy trained in Iran who were generally hostile to popular forms of religion. The conflict between the *ulema* and the *sadat* was therefore also a competition for the monopoly of religious legitimacy. Nevertheless, the *sadat* were not eliminated in contrast with the *khans*, and their prestige among the lowest classes of the population allowed them to resist from their strong points, for example Waras, Behsud and Naur. A major landowner such as Sayyed Hasan Jaglan was able to mobilise hundreds of men at Naur. A *sayyed* such as Beheshti, on the other hand, was able to use his status as a *mudares* to speak on equal terms with the *ulema* and to mobilise his *taliban*.

⁵⁰ See Akbar S. Ahmed, *Millennium and Charisma among Pathans: a critical essay in social anthropology*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1976.

within the Naqshbandi brotherhood. The same observation holds for the relationship of the Gaylani with the Qadiri brotherhood.

The khans. A *khan* is a local notable who exercises an influence related to his status as a landowner or as a tribal leader. He maintains a clientele whose size is measured by those who are obliged to him, from among the relationships in which he is dominant. He feeds others and obtains services for them: he cannot operate without an open table, gifts to the local *mullah* and so on. He therefore invests his capital and his time in a network of relationships while personifying the values of his group, in particular that of generosity. He also plays a role as intermediary between the community and the outside world, whether government officials or a passing stranger, and he thereby obtains numerous advantages, particularly through his dealings with the administration. Nevertheless, his behaviour is directed towards the acquisition of prestige, rather than material benefits. Thus in his relationship with a *mulgerey* (companion) the *khan* feeds or helps his client, but this clearly differs from the payment of wages. In effect the *khan* makes use of his companion, who remains a free man, as an emblem of his status as a person of influence.⁵¹

The power of the *khan* consists primarily in his capacity to exert influence. He has no means to impose his will other than persuasion, debate and gifts. His power has no legal basis, although in certain regions such as Hazarajat and Badakhshan his domination over the peasants can be very forceful. This is not a matter of traditional power, since there is no handing down of immutable and more or less sacrosanct rules, but rather of a system of influence which is relatively open to newcomers. Between *khans* there is a degree of competition for dominance, and 'personal qualities' are obligatory to attract continued fidelity.⁵² The son of a *khan* does not automatically inherit the position of his father, although the power of acquired status tends to favour family continuity.

Two types of *khan* are distinguished by the more or less hereditary nature of their situation. In the eastern Pushtun tribes or among the

⁵¹ See Whitney Azoy, *Buzkashi: so that his name shall rise*, Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982.

⁵² Fredrik Barth, *Political Leadership among Swat Pathans*, London: Athlone Press, 1959.

Ghilzai the competition between *khans* results in a degree of instability among individual positions, while in other cases, there is what might almost be described as an aristocratic form of authority. The great families of Kandahar in particular, but also those of Hazarajat,⁵³ of Badakhshan and among the Baluch, enjoy a legitimacy which is founded not only on their economic resources but also on their genealogy, which is in itself a source of legitimacy.

After the 1960s economic transformations acted to the detriment of the clientele relationship between the *khans* and the peasants. Relations lost their mystique, becoming more overtly economic. Social relations altered, and the very idea of a clientele began to erode. In Ghazni, for example, the introduction of tractors broke the cycle of reciprocity, and the position of *khan* tended to disappear.⁵⁴ In Hazarajat the *khans* lost their erstwhile social supremacy. Their decline did not date only from the war, but had already been in evidence much earlier, probably from the end of the 19th century when the Hazara tribes had been conquered by Abdul Rahman Khan. However, social changes from the 1950s onwards further accelerated a decline which was to the benefit of the merchants and craftsmen. Everywhere sedentarisation, economic liberalisation and the alleviation of insecurity tended in the direction of increasing the influence of the state and the weakening of the *khans*' power.

How did the *khans* react to the new conditions imposed by the war? Those whose clientele was at the village level did not have the same level of resources to dispose of or employ the same strategies as those who wielded their influence on a provincial or national scale. The disappearance of the great notables was a major consequence of the war. In Hazarajat they were overthrown in the very regions where their power had been most absolute, such as the Uruzgan province and Jaghori, while many smaller *khans* had survived in regions such as Behsud. These were notables who had sometimes possessed several dozen villages. In the Kandahar region the great Durrani fami-

⁵³ According to the particular place in Hazarajat, there exists a quasi-aristocratic system with much importance ascribed to genealogies (in the province of Uruzgan), or a system of competition between notables, similar to that of the eastern Pushtun tribes (this applies in Behsud).

⁵⁴ Jon Anderson, 'There are no Khans any more: economic development and social change in tribal Afghanistan', *op. cit.*

lies went into exile, sometimes to Quetta, and no commanders of any significance were drawn from their ranks.

The power of the *khans* suffered as a consequence of the fall from grace of the state partly because of their role as its representatives. However, this effect should not be exaggerated: the *khans* lost power mainly because of the link between military force and hostile policies. Assimilated to the old 'feudal' order, they were exposed to the hostility of the Islamists and, in a less obvious way, of the *ulema*, not to speak of the government, for whom they represented an easily identifiable target. In some cases pressure from the Islamists, which went as far as assassination, prompted their withdrawal from the political scene, especially in Laghman. In Hazarajat the *ulema* sometimes bitterly opposed the landowners, whom they accused of injustice against the peasants. At Yakaolang, where most of the landowners were *sadat*, open conflict was to last for several years until the *ulema*, supported by the peasants of the neighbouring mountains, eliminated the great landowners of the valley. The *khans*, preoccupied with their personal rivalries, showed themselves unable to band together to make common cause against either the *ulema* or the Islamists. More significantly, they did not even succeed in holding on to their local power by calling into play their relationships with their erstwhile clients, which speaks volumes about the violence of the social changes.

In addition, the richest and the most influential disposed of the economic and cultural resources to be able to establish themselves easily in Pakistan or in the West. Those *khans* who had connections with the governing class therefore went into exile and played only an indirect, though sometimes significant, political role, such as those from Kandahar who established themselves in the Pakistani city of Quetta. On the other hand, at the village level the *khans* were able to set themselves up as commanders, since here they did not encounter the competition of the educated class or the *ulema*, whose numbers were insufficient to administer the population in all the villages.

Regional variations were explicable in terms of the intensity of fighting and the power of the tribal system. In regions little touched by the war, the *khans* retained their dominance, since the war was a less significant agent of change. Furthermore, the lessening of economic activity had the effect of preserving established positions, at

least for the land owners. The Baluchis in the south of Helmand and the Aymaq provided instances of this persistence in the social structures. In addition, in some tribalised areas such institutions as the *jirga* became once more the real locus of power, since the commanders were often the heads of clans. This phenomenon of retribalisation was to be seen in all the Pakistan frontier regions, where the solidarity of communal affiliation and the tribal code did not permit autonomous political activity.

The educated class. Though restricted in numbers, the return of the educated group to the countryside was important since it provided leaders for the resistance and particularly for Islamist parties.⁵⁵ As the fighting became more generalised, many educated young men left the towns or returned from abroad, making their way back to their villages of origin where their families were known. Masud, a native of Panjshir, had lived mainly in Kabul, and from 1974 in exile in Pakistan, before settling in his native valley in 1979. In the same way Zabihullah returned to Marmul, at a time when he was teaching in Mazar-i-Sharif. Dr Fazlullah and Amin Wardak, who were students in Kabul, returned respectively to Baraki Barak in Logar and to Jeghatu in Wardak.

The lack of leadership was in fact the crucial problem for the Afghan guerrillas. Organisation, especially in the military field, necessitates a minimal level of technical competence, and in particular the ability to read and write. Members of the educated class therefore became commanders, especially since their status also gave them the ability to negotiate directly with the groups in Peshawar.

However, the elevation of a member of the educated class to the role of commander generally also required either affiliation to a party or the support of a family. For example, in the first phase of the war, militants returned to Afghanistan with a few followers and imposed themselves locally as commanders, without consultation with the

⁵⁵ In the case of Badakhshan the principal commanders, with the exception of some *khans*, had emerged from the educational system, which was well developed in this region. On the other hand it would be hard to argue, even in Badakhshan, that all the leaders were educated men, as Shahrani does (*op. cit.*, p. 164), in view of the contrary examples of Sayyed Wakil and of Kheyradmand—who were respectively a *khan* and an *alem*.

local population, as Masud had done in Panjshir. In certain places in Hazarajat such as Lal o Sarjangal, or Deh Kundi (Khedir), power was overtly seized by force, without prior political effort. Several dozen young Hazaras, who had gone to study or work in Iran, came back armed and took control of their regions of origin.

Nevertheless, the adjustment of the young townsmen to life as guerrillas was far from easy. Many stayed in Peshawar, unable to find a niche in Afghanistan. The rejection of westernisation, which was identified with the state, placed the educated class in an awkward position. Anecdotally, but significantly, table manners—the return to the traditional style of eating with the hand from a common dish—caused the younger men some distress. Some were never able to adapt to these new living conditions and preferred to undertake political work in Peshawar or in the West.

The presence of educated commanders was particularly frequent in the northern regions of Afghanistan, such as Herat in the north-east. In the south, where tribal organisation dominated, the educated class had difficulty in imposing itself in competition with the *khans*. In Hazarajat or in Ghazni the educated group was pushed aside by the *ulema*.

Models of organisation

‘The commanders? They have taken the place of the old *khans*, but they are more powerful!’ (Ahmad Shah Masud in an interview, autumn 1991)

Analysis of the social origins of the commanders allows the way they exercised power to be scrutinised, with two preliminary remarks. First, the correspondence between a commander’s social background and a particular way of exercising power is only on the level of probability. For example, an educated man might exercise power in the manner of a *khan*, in a very traditional way. Secondly, one should emphasise the independence of the commanders from the parties, which explains why party affiliation is not brought in at this stage of the analysis. In fact there was little control over the activity of the commanders by the parties based in Pakistan or Iran. In the absence of national coordination, the strategy of the commanders remained largely autonomous, especially in the early years of the war. Local political alliances were made on the initiative of the commanders, and within a single

party there might be contradictory strategies. Also precise lines were not laid down by the parties in relation to the organisation of *mujahidin* groups. Discipline, such training as might be offered, and the way of life differed little from one party to another, but depended rather on the social background of the commander and the community within which he operated. On the basis of actual cases, two models of how power was exercised might be constructed: the 'patrimonial', which was the more normal at the start of the war, and the 'institutional' in the case of the complex organisations which progressively took control of widespread areas.

The patrimonial model. In the patrimonial model there was no clear separation between the public and private domains. The commander made no distinction between his personal revenues and those of the party, or between his personal actions and those in which he represented a political movement. His status was dependent on his personal reputation or his family rather than an institution. His field of action was defined by the extent of the networks of solidarity which supported him, and in particular of his extended family, occupying all posts of importance. In addition, the system of succession to power was symptomatic of the low level of institutionalisation and of the weight of family connections. Since the status of 'commander' was part of the inheritance of the individual, it could be handed on, in most cases to brothers, or sometimes to a son. The party to which the commander belonged would restrict itself to the ratification of the choice of the new commander.

In a patrimonial system the commander exercised personal power, without delegation or administrative structure. No attempt would be made to establish an administration, or to set up schools or courts. On the contrary, the people were obliged to pay a *mullah* to give primary instruction to children, and to turn to an *alem* on judicial questions. Nor did the commander embark on the establishment of a real military organisation since, even when he headed an armed force, he behaved above all as a private person. No hierarchical structure was instituted: rather, the commander maintained relations with his clientele through favours and gifts. If he was sufficiently wealthy, he lodged his *mujahidin* in his own house and fed them, which reinforced his personal authority.

The commander partly took upon himself the traditional functions of the *khan* in the relationships of the community with the 'exterior'. He would exploit his position to enrich himself and to become an owner of land. His position as an intermediary effectively enabled him to appropriate a proportion of humanitarian aid, as well as of any assistance provided by political or religious factions, and of local resources, whether by means of taxation or of seizure. He might also marry into influential families desirous of making an alliance with the local authority. The guesthouse, where travellers of standing would normally be entertained, was a perquisite of the commander, and he kept open table in order to maintain his reputation for generosity. The distinction between a *khan* and a commander lay in the absence of relations with the state in the case of the latter, although he might be surrounded by the wider network of partisan solidarity. While the power of the *khans* was entirely informal, the commander could impose his will by force and was not obliged to rely on appeal to the consensus or on the use of indirect pressure.

The institutional model. As distinct from the patrimonial model, the institutional model constituted a bid to set up an alternative state, with regulations and a civil and military administration. Many educated commanders established organisations resembling this model, including notably Masud in Panjshir, Ismail Khan in Herat, Zabi-hullah in Mazar-i-Sharif, and Najmuddin in Badakhshan. However, numerous traces of patrimonialism survived: for example bodyguards tended to come from the home village of the commander, while personal profiteering by leaders continued to be a frequent occurrence.

While in a patrimonial system the commander controlled networks of solidarity, in an institutional system he exercised authority over a population occupying a defined territory, imposing consistent standards concerning the treatment of individuals. Solidarity networks ceased to be the only paradigm for the recruitment of officials and *mujahidin*. There was a meaningful distinction between public and private goods, and a system of taxation could be established. Officials ran a rudimentary administrative system, expressing the aims of their organisation in ideological language. Succession to power, though not necessarily following precise rules, takes place outside the commander's family. Military organisation was professional, and the *mujahidin*

were sometimes paid, recognising hierarchical authority and occasionally wearing uniforms. Objectives were conceived on a broader scale, with strategies developed over longer periods. On the basis of this general model, three 'ideal types' can be constructed: a clerical model, set up by the *ulema*; a state model, set up by the educated class; and a partisan variety, established by the Islamists.

The clerical model sprang directly from the involvement of *ulema*, which did not imply that all *ulema* organised a system of this type: some remained with the patrimonial system of organisation. Administration was conducted according to the principles of Islamic law. Official positions were given in principle to *ulema* or to their *taliban*, who were normally pupils of the same *madrassa*. Two examples of this model may be cited. In the province of Helmand in the 1980s, the commander *rais* Abdul Wahid set up a typically clerical system at Baghran, in the province of Helmand. All the officials were *taliban* from his *madrassa*. The *mujahidin*, who were closely controlled and professional, wore uniform and observed strict discipline, while authorisation from the commander was required for population movements. In the province of Ghazni the administration of the provincial *shura* (council) was entirely in the hands of the *ulema*. However, no strict hierarchy existed among the *ulema*, as at Baghran: in contrast a more consensual system prevailed, although Qari Baba continued to be the dominant personality up to 1994. These characteristics were in essence those which would later be found among the Taliban, who appeared to implement the same system on a national scale.

In the state model a bureaucratic organisation took upon itself the functions of government, such as education, taxation and justice. No attempt was made to impose a precise ideological model, beyond the consensual principle of the Islamic state. This type of organisation was therefore linked not directly to an ideology but rather to a social class. The recruitment of officials was carried out among the educated class, including soldiers and state functionaries,⁵⁶ but not necessarily among the Islamic militants as the example of Herat showed. In this province in 1980 Ismail Khan set up his own regional organisation, the Emarat, open to commanders belonging to all parties. He was

⁵⁶ The commanders often recruited their officials in the universities where they themselves had been students: engineers in the case of Masud, teachers for Zabihullah, and soldiers in the case of Ismail Khan.

not himself an Islamist and his relations with the local Islamist network, which was run by the Afzali family⁵⁷ and Nurullah Emat, were difficult. Ismail Khan was a former officer, and he attempted to reproduce within his organisation the functions of the state. From the beginning of the war he was unique in recruiting his senior aides with no regard for communal or political affiliation. Of the four leading figures in the Emarat, three were from outside the town proper, namely Ismail Khan and Allauddin Khan, who were both from Shindand,⁵⁸ and Muhammad Aref from Shamali. These three 'outsiders' had in common the fact that they were all former soldiers. They were far from being the only military men in the Emarat, and it was certainly this link with the military which gave the organisation its coherence at the top.

The partisan model was a variant of the state model, in which the underlying structure was more the party than the state. The structures were of a different type than those which have been described, since the movement had revolutionary principles. There was some similarity with Maoist guerrilla movements, although the ideological structure was different. The population was led by militants with ideological commitment, in addition to, or sometimes instead of, technical abilities. The objective was to politicise the population.

Masud's organisation was the most developed example of this kind of structure in Afghanistan.⁵⁹ He had been a militant Islamist since adolescence, and his involvement in the movement drove him into exile in Pakistan in 1974, whence he returned in 1975 to take part in

⁵⁷ Hafizullah Afzali was a student in the university at Kabul in the 1970s, and took part in the coup in Panjshir in 1975, where he was killed. See Abdul Hafiz 'Mansur', *op. cit.*, p. 52, and the anonymous *Biography of Commandant in Chief Safiullah Afzali and the Resolution of Afghan Mujaheddin and Refugees*, Liestal: Bibliotheca Afghanistanica, n.d. His brother led a Front in Ghorian, in the province of Herat, and never acquiesced in the leadership of Ismail Khan, in particular because of his lack of legitimacy in the eyes of the Islamists.

⁵⁸ Whether the *uluswali* of Shindand was regarded as belonging or not to the province varied from one period to another.

⁵⁹ There are many written accounts of Masud and films about him, but few are of any quality. The demands of the media, which tend to focus attention on Masud's personality, obstruct understanding of his political organisation. Jean-José Puig gives a relevant analysis of his career in 'Le commandant Massoud' in Gérard Chaliand (ed.) *Stratégies de la guérilla*, Paris: Payot, 1994. See also Abdul Hafiz 'Mansur', *op. cit.*

the Islamists' abortive coup.⁶⁰ After a period in Nuristan he took up residence in Panjshir, where the rebellion broke out in July 1979, and eliminated rival groups, in particular the Maoists. For this professional revolutionary ideological issues were central, in spite of the priorities of combat. In 1980, through the agency of his brother, he embarked on the establishment of political teaching for the peasants in Panjshir: in the event the classes failed, and the plan was abandoned. Officials used very political language,⁶¹ and their horizons were not limited to Afghanistan: their movement fell within an international revolutionary context. Another factor was that Masud's expansionism provoked a long series of clashes with other commanders, which brought about, for example, his military occupation of the neighbouring valley of Andarab. Masud was also the only commander to organise on a substantial scale training courses for Afghan guerrilla leaders as well as for foreign Islamists, who included Kashmiris, Turks and others. Internationalism was a characteristic trait of Masud's model, at least up to the fall of Kabul in 1992.

In the face of attempts by lay members of the educated class to build political organisations, the rural population kept its distance. In reality there was a fundamental ambiguity in the relationship between the population and the educated class: where the latter wished to establish an impersonal political relationship, the rural population interpreted this new type of authority differently to avoid recognising the regulation being imposed on them, and to continue relying on personal relationships, shading sometimes into clientelism, which

⁶⁰ Masud was born in 1956, the third of six sons, into a wealthy family in the Panjshir valley; his father was an officer. He spent his childhood in Kabul, and attended classes at the French *Istiqlal* lycée (although he rarely spoke French, he retained his competence in the language). He studied at the Polytechnic high school, and joined the Islamist movement. After the failed coup in the spring of 1974, in which he did not take part, he fled to Pakistan. He was trained by Pakistani officers and led the group which carried out the coup of 1975 in Panjshir. In 1976 Masud, who was close to Rabbani, found himself accused by Hekmatyar of having betrayed the movement, on the basis of statements obtained under torture from a friend of Masud, Jan Mohammad, who was later assassinated by Hekmatyar. Though arrested, Masud escaped death and returned to Panjshir in the spring of 1979. See Anthony Davies, 'A brotherly vendetta', *Asiaweek*, 6 December 1996.

⁶¹ Quoting for example Mackinder, one of the founders of geopolitics. Interviews with officials of the Shura-yi Nazar, autumn 1991 and spring 1992.

they found easier to manipulate. The issue was not the acquisition of power but its justification, and how it worked in practice. Therefore, when Masud travelled in the country, and as the number of personal petitions increased, there was a short-circuit of the regular procedures in favour of an appeal to a charismatic personality who makes 'just' decisions in the light of a moral code. In the short term the commander's power appeared to be enhanced, but in fact his political programme was jeopardised. The recognition of charisma functioned in this instance as a transaction, in effect a compromise, between the institutional motivations of the educated class and the apolitical goals of the peasants.

In theory, the 'cult of personality' would be a response to this ambiguity, combining the recognition of a leader with the process of organisation undertaken by the educated class. The educated class were the driving force behind the transition to a cult of personality, since they were able to use it as a means of imposing ideological or administrative constraints in the name of the charismatic personality. This phenomenon was observed, up to a point, in the regions controlled by Masud: it was in these regions that tensions were strong since the model was the most ideological.

Finance

Economics lay behind the choice of a war of attrition, with offensives over a limited time involving only a few men. The commanders did not administer the economy, which could otherwise have been a source of income, since they had neither the organisation nor the legitimacy to do so. Even movements between the *mujahidin* and the government's regions were only occasionally controlled, generally with the aim of obstructing some move by Kabul. The government did undertake massive purchases of wheat from time to time with the aim of blocking the *mujahidin's* supply chain, using the nomads as intermediaries; this caused a rise in prices. However, the economic dimension was not absent from strategy, examples being the creation of bazaars and the diversion of trade routes as a result of the clashes and rivalries between commanders, particularly in Badakhshan and Hazarajat. There was also interaction between military logistics and economics, since the commanders strove to control

the means of communication. The resources of the commanders could be seen as deriving essentially from three sources: taxation, external assistance⁶² and the traffic in drugs.

Taxation. The issue of taxation was important in two ways. First, taxation was an important source of local finance, which enabled the commanders to be independent of both the parties and external aid. It was therefore a good indicator of the state of relations between commanders and the population. The levies raised by the *mujahidin* were in theory Islamic taxes.⁶³ *Zakat* is raised on cash and on goods, such as flocks, and mineral extraction, to the level of 2.5% of the value held in a year. *Ushur*, raised on harvests at the rate of 10%, was of considerable importance, since the commanders controlled few bazaars, at least at the start of the war. The proceeds of these two taxes are normally given to the poor, to needy travellers and to the *mujahidin*, which served as a justification for their appropriation by the commanders. Still, there was an evident dilution of the Quranic principle that the recipient of this obligatory gift should be freely chosen.⁶⁴ As an exception to the rule laid down above, there were also non-Islamic taxes, in particular tolls on the roads. The commander here enjoyed a resource which was all the more advantageous in that it did not risk disaffecting the local population. Taxation on shops, which does not seem to have an Islamic basis, was in general low. Finally, a widespread form of participation was to feed the *mujahidin* in the nearest *markaz*. This was the first form of popular contribution to the resistance. For all these taxes self-assessment of contributions was the rule rather than the exception, owing to the lack of specialised officials, and also to the refusal of the peasants to allow the commander to interfere in their affairs. Since many regions were politically fragmented, the payment of tax was the symbol of affiliation to a particular commander, from which sprang the strategy of seeking protection by paying taxes to several commanders.

⁶² In the absence of reliable information, no attempt will be made to analyse in detail the distribution of military aid.

⁶³ Joseph Schacht, *An Introduction to Islamic Law*, Oxford University Press, 1982.

⁶⁴ The *zakat* should be distinguished from the *sadaqat*, which is a voluntary act of charity.

In the early years of the war contributions from the population were widespread and spontaneous. The turning-point came as the *mujahidin* became increasingly professional in 1985–6, with the growth in foreign aid, especially from the United States. Popular contributions were sidelined, at least in the case of the major commanders, who relied on external humanitarian and military aid. In many regions the population found themselves deprived of a bargaining counter and unable to exert pressure on the commanders.

Humanitarian aid. It may appear controversial to put humanitarian aid among the resources available to the commanders. However, although the avowed objective of the NGOs was to give aid to the population,⁶⁵ the commanders profited from it directly—and indirectly through its influence on their prestige or legitimacy. The distinction between humanitarian aid and aid not regarded as such is in any case open to criticism. Assistance given by Islamist networks did not admit a distinction of this type. The building of a hospital or the gift of arms served the same objective, namely to ensure the victory of the *jihad*. However, the two routes were distinct, both from the point of view of the donors and in the conditions under which aid was given. Thus the distinction should be maintained.

In the early years of the war humanitarian aid had two characteristics. First it was crisis aid—essentially gifts of cash, together with a medical presence and the setting-up of dispensaries. The aid came mainly from private organisations run by well-wishers, rather than from institutional organisations as became the case still later. By their nature the medical organisations were more professional, but with almost that sole exception aid operations at that time had a distinctly amateur and sporadic character: the amount of aid provided was economically negligible, its importance resting above all on the reports of the situation it brought to the attention of western public opinion.⁶⁶ A significant evolution took place from 1986 onwards

⁶⁵ Some 256 NGOs have been involved in aid to the Afghans, of which about fifty operated in Afghanistan. Helga Baitenmann, 'NGOs and the Afghan war: the politicisation of humanitarian aid', *Third world Quarterly* 12 (1), January 1990, pp. 62–85; and Pierre Centlivres and Micheline Centlivres-Demont, 'Etat, islam et tribus face aux organisations internationales'. *Le cas de l'Afghanistan, 1978–1998*, *Annales* 54 (4), July–August 1999.

⁶⁶ For example the testimony given in the United States by Juliette Fournot, the head of the MSF (Médecins Sans Frontières) programme in Afghanistan, to the

with the arrival of American money.⁶⁷ Professional sources of finance provided an impetus towards the professionalisation of the staff. The NGOs, which were highly dependent on institutions (e.g. agencies of the United Nations and of the European Community and USAID), were no longer autonomous in their strategy and became the agents of their backers. The borderline between NGOs and international organisations therefore became less well defined.

Humanitarian aid was a significant factor for a commander, as the number of commanders or their representatives who hovered in the anterooms of the NGO offices in Peshawar made evident. Besides, the humanitarian aid agencies were often the sole source of information on the conflict, and they naturally spoke about the regions they knew. In consequence most journalists followed in the tracks of the humanitarian workers because of their logistical facilities, and the existence of a source of information and a viable 'story'. The political map therefore became distorted to the benefit of those commanders who enjoyed humanitarian aid. The reverse of the coin was that the prestige of a commander might suffer if he could not guarantee the security of the humanitarian aid workers.

In addition, a commander did not usually have the means to undertake administrative action, in particular because of the lack of doctors, teachers and engineers. Humanitarian aid enabled a response to be made to the more urgent demands of the population, particularly in medical care. For example, a dispensary brought a commander little income, but he would be credited for his astuteness in having persuaded an NGO to work in his territory. Aid was also a resource for the commander in that he was able to find positions for his clientele and above all his family within the NGO project. In addition, since the commander ensured the security of the NGO, he would arrange, normally at inflated rates, for it to pay a number of *mujahidin*. The security argument also allowed the com-

Congressional Task Force on Afghanistan, *Hearing on Medical Operations in Afghanistan*, 4 March 1985.

⁶⁷ US \$400 million for the period 1980–4 (combining humanitarian and military aid) and \$250 million for the year 1985 alone: John H. Lorentz, 'Afghan aid: the role of private voluntary organisations', *Journal of South and Middle Eastern Studies* XI (1–2), autumn–winter 1987, p. 103. \$250 million were attributed to international agencies between 1985 and 1989: Helga Baitenmann, *op. cit.*, p. 75.

mander to exercise a strong influence over the situation in which the project operated, which was the guarantee that he could keep it under his control. In numerous cases personal profit to the commanders was an acknowledged fact, particularly where land was reclaimed. Sometimes such projects related to zones in which the commander had a personal interest, but in other cases profit came from a tithe on the aid provided. This was not necessarily seen as illegitimate by the population, all of whom depended on the size of the amounts held back.

In large organisations, which were emerging from the patrimonial model, the NGOs played an important role in the functioning of the administrative apparatus, as with Masud and Ismail Khan, though at a lower level in the case of the latter. Masud, who had set up a relatively complex administration, was entirely dependent on the aid of the NGOs in all civil matters, such as health, reconstruction and, to a great extent, education.

In addition to the western countries, Islamic networks such as the Muslim Brotherhood or the Salafists (the Ahl-i-Hadith) were active from their bases in Peshawar. The Muslim World League, whose director in Peshawar in the 1980s was Abdul Hasan, deployed the largest budget for the maintenance of the *mujahidin*, amounting to several million dollars annually. Saudi Arabia, the most important donor, did not appear to control the use of its funds closely, and local employees were generally identified with the Muslim Brotherhood. Additionally, the Saudi Red Crescent was funded directly by the Saudi government, but here too the personnel often belonged to the Muslim Brotherhood tendency. Among the other groups, the Maktab-i Khidmat-i Mujahidin (Mujahidin assistance office) was centred at the beginning of the war around Abdullah Azzam and his assistant Osama Bin Laden. In particular this group published the magazines *Jihad* and *Bunian-i Makhus*. Its finance came principally from the Gulf and from British Muslims. The distribution of aid to the *mujahidin* was not centrally planned, and this fragmentation was a reason for the multiplicity of sources of finance and the groups present in Peshawar. An additional issue was that sources of finance such as Syria, Iraq, Saudi Arabia and Libya were often antagonistic to each other politically. A further factor was the cooperation between the

Muslim Brothers and the Saudi financiers, in spite of their ideological separation. The situation of Abdullah Azzam is an indication of this distribution of responsibilities.⁶⁸

Drug trafficking. The third source of finance was the opium trade.⁶⁹ After 1979 circumstances came together to cause a real explosion of production in Afghanistan. The revolution in Iran had the effect of bringing to a halt all production in a country which was a traditional consumer, with around 2 million users, and also an entrepot on the smuggling route to Europe and the United States. In addition, Ira-

⁶⁸ Abdullah Azzam is a figure who throws much light on the mobilised networks. Born in Palestine in 1941, he was of Jordanian nationality. After reading Muslim law at Damascus University from 1967 to 1973, he took a doctorate in that subject at Al-Azhar and taught Islamic Studies at the University of Jordan from 1973 to 1980. In 1981 he became a professor at King Abdul Aziz University in Jeddah, but lived in Peshawar where he took part in the *jihād*. He died in November 1989 as the result of a car bomb in circumstances that remain obscure.

⁶⁹ Though illegal in Afghanistan, the consumption of hashish was tolerated, and it was not unusual to see smokers in parks or buses, as well as in *saqikhana* (places where opium and hashish were smoked). Opium was rarely used, and only among the poorest classes. Part of the production was exported, mainly to Iran, via Herat to Mashad and Chakansur, sometimes after being refined in Kabul. Smuggling to Europe and to the United States was routed through Kabul airport. The profit derived from opium was significant, more so than from hashish, which explains why the zones of consumption and production did not necessarily coincide. For example, the Jalalabad and Balkh regions were producers, but without significant consumption, since the opium was destined for export or for the Turkmens. Opium was frequently grown for sale because of the price it commanded, while hashish was consumed locally. The cultivation of the poppy, which is planted in the autumn, forms part of a cycle of cultivation including wheat and vegetables. In January 1972 the police confiscated pure heroin and refined hashish prepared for export, which marked the discovery of an illegal trade no longer carried out on a local level but forming part of the international market. The 1970s also saw an increase in consumption. While hashish was frequently used, opium continued to be confined to the most deprived populations. It is likely that the opening of Afghanistan to tourism was an important factor, both in the increase of production for export, and in consumption, through imitation. In early 1972 the Afghan government set up two committees for the suppression of the opium traffic, which indicated the onset of an awareness of the problem, and perhaps reflected an apprehension of appearing to be subject to American pressure like Turkey. The reduced production of opium in Vietnam after 1973 would also have had the effect of increasing production in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

nian smugglers fled to Pakistan to avoid the authorities and continue their activities. By coincidence, the harvest was bad that year in Asia, which increased international prices. At the same time (in February 1979) Pakistan decided, because of Zia ul-Haq's policy of Islamisation, to ban the production and use of opium. Hitherto a low level of production had been permitted, and use was tolerated in official government venues. Because the crop in 1979 was exceptional, and the price increased because of the ban, the Pakistani producers, mostly in the North-West Frontier Province, converted their opium into heroin. Thus all the circumstances came together to make Afghanistan a major producing region: the increased international prices, the existence of refining laboratories and international smugglers in Pakistan, and the absence of control over the Afghan countryside.

Three regions produced 90 per cent of the Afghan opium exported: Badakhshan, Helmand and Nangrahar. The north of Helmand⁷⁰ was one of the world's leading areas of production. Opium might be described as the dominant crop, since it occupies the largest land area and yields the most revenue. Two factors favoured the producers. First the Baluchi smugglers, of Iranian and Afghan nationality, switched from smuggling electrical goods to trafficking opium. Secondly, the principal commanders of north Helmand, beginning with the most important among them, *mullah* Nasim, gave their blessings to the crop by providing transportation and security. Although *mullah* Nasim did not himself cultivate opium poppies, he levied a tax on exported opium which guaranteed him useful revenue.

The situation was very different in Badakhshan. The principal producing areas were Fayzabad, Keshem, Jurm and Baharak. How-

⁷⁰ The province of Helmand may be divided into three areas clearly distinguishable from each other, ethnically, economically and politically. Baluchi country begins in the south, from Mirabad, in the *alaqaderi* of Deh Shu. Durrani Pushtun tribes, the Alizai, the Ishaqzai and the Alikozai, occupy the northern districts of the province: Musa Qala, Nausad, Baghran and Sangin. The central part of the province—Marja, Lashkargah and Girishk—is ethnically very mixed because of the irrigation projects. There are also Pushtuns, sometimes from Farah or Wardak, as well as Hazaras and Uzbeks. In each of these three regions the economy is different, with a predominance of dry crops in the north. The peasants of north Helmand began to produce opium in pre-war times for export to neighbouring Iran via the Baluchis. Production was carried out on a local basis and alternated with other crops such as wheat.

ever, it appears that in Khash 60 per cent of the land was given over to the production of opium, which made it the largest crop. Similarly, in Peshkan the land was not irrigated and therefore did not lend itself to other forms of cultivation, so that the peasants grew only poppies. Traditionally the population used opium, especially the Ismailis, and poppies were grown on small individual landholdings. Badakhshan was a province always on the edge of famine. Its situation greatly deteriorated in the 1970s, because of population growth. In this context the cultivation of poppies was of the highest importance for peasants who were thus able both to obtain money and to ensure their own personal access to the drug. Although the commanders did not earn large returns from the growth of poppies, it was politically difficult for them to forbid it because of the overall level of poverty.

Production in Nangrahar, primarily destined for export, began long before the war. Opium, which in pre-war times had been a secondary crop, now became the principal source of revenue for many families, especially in Nangrahar's poorest districts. In prosperous regions the proportion of land given over to the cultivation of poppies was some 10 per cent, and this figure increased for poorer lands. In contrast to Badakhshan the local commanders were directly involved in cultivation, as landowners, and in its transportation to Pakistan. The presence of the same tribes in both Pakistan and Afghanistan facilitated the movement of the drug and its delivery to the North-West Frontier Province's laboratories.

4. The *Jihadi* Parties

In parallel with the drive towards mobilisation inside Afghanistan, political organisations made their appearance in Pakistan and Iran. They adopted a stance opposed to the regime in Kabul, whose legitimacy they wholly rejected, and established duplicate authorities, in a situation characteristic of civil war. In the analysis of the political situation we first examine the formation of these parties, followed by the exclusivity of their representation of the *mujahidin*. Finally a typology is presented, relating to the various types of ideology, organisation and recruitment.¹

The formation of the parties

In 1978–9 the situation was so fluid that dozens of organisations attempted to turn popular mobilisation to their advantage. This was a chaotic period characterised by ephemeral alliances, when attempts to achieve unity were as rapidly followed by schisms. Parties canvassed known personalities to preside over their coalitions, although in the event all that was on offer was the opportunity to create new organisations. In opposition to the initial movement towards unity, which was justified in terms of the military and moral exigences of the *jihad*, ideological divergences and competition for resources served as a contrary impetus towards fragmentation. The pattern of schisms which led to the emergence of the Sunni and Shi'ite parties is examined below in detail.

In 1978 Hezb-i Islami and Jamiyat-i Islami, which were already in existence in Peshawar, came together as the Harakat-i Enqelab-i Islami (Movement for the Islamic Revolution), under the leadership of mawlawi Muhammad Nabi, a former member of Parliament and an associate of the Mujaddidi family. Nabi laid claim to the political inheritance of the pre-war Khodam ul-Forqan, since the assassina-

¹ See Barnett R, Rubin, *op.cit.*, pp. 196 ff.

tion of Ibrahim Mujaddidi and his son Ismail had left the Mujaddidi family without a leader.² In fact the most politicised *harakati* commanders recognised the continuity between the two movements. However, the strains between Hezb-i Islami and Jamiyat-i Islami continued, and each soon took its own way, with Harakat-i Enqelab remaining under the leadership of *mawlawi* Muhammad Nabi.

Mawlawi Muhammad Nabi subsequently surrendered the leadership to Sayyed Gaylani, a *pir* of the Qadiri brotherhood and a member of the pre-war governing class, in a new movement, the Mahaz-i Melli (National Movement). However, *mawlawi* Mohammed Nabi rapidly recovered control of the Harakat-i Enqelab, leaving Gaylani at the head of Mahaz-i Melli. In addition the Jebhe-yi Nejat-i Melli (National Salvation Front) was established as a new coalition under the presidency of *mawlawi* Sebghatullah Mujaddidi, who had been in Peshawar since October 1978.³ However, most of the parties—including Hezb-i Islami, Mahaz-i Melli and Harakat-i Enqelab—refused to participate in this Front. The Jamiyat-i Islami became for a time Mujaddidi's sole partner, but later it regained its independence, leaving Mujaddidi as the leader of Jebhe-yi Nejat-i Melli.

At the same time Hezb-i Islami split at the end of 1979. *Mawlawi* Khales emerged as the leader of a party that retained the same name—it will be referred to as Hezb-i Islami (Khales). His separation from Hekmatyar may be explained in terms of personalities: *mawlawi* Khales probably felt that the difference in their ages and his own position as an *alem* gave him precedence over the young Islamist. Khales' style, with little concern for organisational niceties, also put him at odds with the Hezb-i Islami line.

In January 1980, when the Islamic conference took place in Lahore, the six parties—Hezb-i Islami, Hezb-i Islami (Khales), Harakat-i Enqelab, Jamiyat-i Islami, Jebhe-yi Nejat-i Melli, Mahaz-i Melli—embarked, at the urging of Jamiyat-i Islami, on a process of unification which resulted on 19 March 1980 in the formation of an alliance, the Ettehad-i Islami Baray Azadi-yi Afghanistan (Islamic Union

² Another consideration was that the only remaining heir, Muhammad Amin Mujaddidi, was too young: he spent the war years in Islamabad.

³ Sebghatullah Mujaddidi, the founder of the Jebhe-yi Nejat-i Melli, was unable to lay claim to the inheritance of his cousin Ibrahim. In the event, Sebghatullah was not fated to become the *pir* of the Mujaddidi family, and in any case before the war he took a controversial position close to that of the Muslim Brotherhood.

for the Liberty of Afghanistan). The secretary-general Sayyaf, an Islamist *alem* recently freed by the communist regime, then went into an alliance with Hekmatyar against the other movements, but afterwards broke with Hekmatyar while retaining control of the Ettehad. At this point the seven Sunni parties came into existence.

Nevertheless in 1980 the number of more or less autonomous groups was still substantial, and the monopoly enjoyed by the seven parties was imposed only piecemeal. Besides the Maoist groups (see Chapter 6), there were regional parties, mainly in the province of Kunar.⁴ Kunar was the first region to rebel in 1978, and due to its position on the Pakistani frontier it rapidly escaped government control. Owing to the violence of the fighting, only 20 to 30 per cent of the population remained there out of 330,000 inhabitants before the war. Independent fronts made their appearance: thus Muhammad Anwar Amin, a Nuristani *khan*, became leader of the Jihad-i Islami-i Nuristani (Islamic Jihad of Nuristan), a party which found itself in competition with 'Da Islami Jahad Da Para Da Kunar Da Qowmunno Ettehad' (Alliance of the *aqwam* of Kunar for the Jihad), formed in 1980. In the early months, the parties in Peshawar provided arms and sent men to fight alongside the Nuristanis, except for Hezb-i Islami, which tried to take military control of the region. Muhammad Anwar became the principal Nuristani leader, though due to lack of support his movement was progressively marginalised.

In the case of the Shi'ites the politicisation of the confessional parties, which had already begun before the war, became the rule after 1978.⁵ Religious sentiment, mobilised through the appeal to *ji-had*, precluded membership of the Sunni parties⁶ and favoured the leadership of the *ulema*, who were seen as the coherent force within the community. The Shi'ite political scene was characterised by opposition between the predominantly Hazara parties, including Shura, Nasr and Sepah, and the parties with predominantly non-Hazara

⁴ David J. Katz, 'Responses to Central Authority in Nuristan: the case of Väygal Valley Kalasha' in M. N. Shahrani, R. Canfield (eds), *op. cit.*, pp. 94–119.

⁵ See Rolf Bindemann. *Ethnizität und Gesellschaft. Religion und Politik bei den schi'itischen Hazara in Afghanistan, Iran und Pakistan*, Berlin: Das Arabische Buch, 1987, Occasional Papers no. 7.

⁶ There were several instances of Shi'ites joining Hezb-i Islami. The Mustazaffin, a small group whose membership was largely Shi'ite, also accepted Sunnis.

leadership, such as Harakat-i Islami and the Mustazaffin, which were present either outside Hazarajat or in its border areas.

During the war a number of parties either coexisted or confronted each other in Hazarajat. However, in the earlier period the Shura-yi Enqelabi-yi Ettefaq-i Islami-yi Afghanistan (Revolutionary Council of the Islamic Union of Afghanistan) held sway as a consultative organisation. The Shura's earliest manifestation was a gathering of several hundred independent delegates and representatives of parties, whose aim was to establish an autonomous authority in Hazarajat.⁷ The assembly was held at Waras, in the province of Bamyan, in August and September 1979, and appointed Sayyed Beheshti as its leader. This Shura was an initiative unique in Afghanistan in terms of the number of delegates who came together to agree on effective cooperation over such an extensive territory. Even before the Soviet invasion, the convening of the Shura signalled Hazarajat's political renaissance. Meanwhile the central authorities, careful to avoid gathering together the Hazaras into a single administrative entity, had divided them up into several provinces. The assembly at Waras demonstrated the power of Hazarajat's identity, at a time when among the Sunnis the shuras of the mujahidin were systematically replicating the existing administrative divisions. The only similar case among the Sunnis was the Nuristani party mentioned above.

One of the principal parties which took part in the Shura was the Sazman-i Nasr (Party of Victory). Nasr was founded by a group of *ulema* trained in Iran who had been active in the pre-war years both in Hazarajat and among the Hazara community in Kabul, Ghazni and Mazar-i Sharif. Some of them had travelled in Syria, Lebanon and Palestine, and had fought against Israel in the 1970s. However, the movement devoted itself primarily to political propaganda: the operation of libraries and publication of leaflets (*shabname*). Nasr was officially established in the summer of 1979 in Mashad by three ulema, Mir Hussein Saddeqi, Azizullah Shafaq and Abdul Ali Mazari.

The founders of the third significant party in Hazarajat, the Sepah-yi Pasdaran-i Islam (Army of the Guardians of Islam), were intellectuals who were active in Iran at the moment of the revolution. In the

⁷ At Yakaolang, after the capture of a military post, a committee was formed to participate in the constitutive assembly of the Shura-yi Ettefaq; in a good example of the unanimous spirit of those times this included members of Nasr, *khans* of the Harakat-i Islami and the principal of the local school, who had no party affiliation.

liberal atmosphere of the early days of the Iranian revolution, under the government of Bazargan, various Shi'ite parties⁸ came together to set up the *Jebhe-yi Azadibakhsh-i Afghanistan* (Front for the Liberation of Afghanistan) whose name was derived from an organisation linked to the Iranian Pasdaran. Two or three months later these parties separated, after setbacks which resulted from ideological differences and from the antagonism between *ulema* and lay members. The young intellectuals who had taken a key role in this Front did not immediately set up another party, but linked up with the Iranian Pasdaran to fight in Afghanistan. At the time the leader of this group was Ibrahim Qazimi, an engineer in his thirties from Behsud, educated at the university in Kabul. The decision to give official recognition to the Pasdaran as an Afghan movement was taken by the Iranians in 1983, following a two-month trip to Hazarajat by the Iranian Jaffar Zade, who visited Ghazni and Behsud. The party then adopted the title of *Sepah-yi Pasdaran-i Islam* (Army of the Guardians of Islam), choosing as its leader a former member of the *Shura, Akbari*, an *alem* trained in the Iraqi city of Najaf. Ibrahim Qazimi, who had ceded his influence to the religious establishment, migrated to Canada in early 1984 and disappeared from the political scene. The creation of the *Sepah* by Iran was the result of a desire to take back control of the Shi'ite movement: Nasr was regarded as too independent, in particular as the result of its history before the Iranian revolution. *Sepah* also represented the victory of *ulema* who were close to the Iranian clergy over young intellectuals who were too independent for Teheran's taste.

Outside Hazarajat the Khalqi government's assassination of *shaikh* Waez, who was the representative of the Ayatollah Khomeini in Afghanistan, left *shaikh* Mohseni as his heir and one of the leaders of the non-Hazara Shi'ite community, although he had mainly been known in Kandahar. After a narrow escape from police who had come to arrest him in the spring of 1978, Mohseni removed himself to the Iranian city of Qom where he established the *Harakat-i Islami*.

The *Sazman-i Mujahidin-i Mustazaffin* (Organisation of the Poor Mujahidin) was a small party of intellectuals based at Shashpul in the province of Bamyan, and was the only organisation in Afghanistan to

⁸ Nasr, Niru, Rad, Nehzat, Mujahidin-i Khalq (Mustazaffin), Jombesh-i Mustazaffin.

accept both Shi'ites and Sunnis, both in practice and in terms of doctrine. The movement seems to have originated in the 1960s in the time of Zahir Shah, with the Pasdaran-i Enqelab-i Islami (Guardians of the Islamic Revolution), which in 1977–8 became the party of the Mujahidin-i Khalq-i Afghanistan (Mujahidin of the Afghan People). In 1979 the party adopted its present name. The other Shi'ite parties were sparsely represented on the ground, sometimes mustering only a few dozen men. Their origin often lay in the ties of patronage between Hazara *ulema* and Iranian *ayatollahs*: this was the case with the Nehzat-i Islami-yi Afghanistan (Islamic Movement of Afghanistan), the Hezb-i Dawat-i Islami (Party of Islamic Preaching), and the Hezbollah.⁹ The Nehzat-i Ruhaniyat wa Jawan-i Afghanistan (Reja) (Movement of the Afghan Clergy and Youth), the Niru-yi Islami-i Afghanistan (Islamic Force of Afghanistan) and Rad (Thunder) had leaderships drawn more from the laity and attracted less support from Iran.

Monopoly of representation. Over time the exiled parties gradually established their exclusive right to speak for the *mujahidin*, especially through their ability to define the parameters of legitimate ideology, as well as through their control of resources—subject to the control exercised by the countries in which they operated—and through the membership of the commanders.

The parameters of legitimate ideology. The concept of *jihad*, which in the eyes of the great majority of the population was the sole legitimate principle, entirely governed the doctrine of the political parties. The plainest indication of the centrality of religion was the position occupied by the *ulema*. In the event, the absence of a professional political class in the pre-war era and the significance invested in reli-

⁹ Hezbollah was not in reality a structured party but rather an ensemble of groups financed and armed by Iran. The two important Hezbollah groups were at Herat and at Kandahar. In Kandahar Hezbollah, led by *haji* Mukhtar Sarwari, played an active part in the struggle against the Soviets. Sarwari opposed *shaikh* Mohseni, who was accused of accepting American aid. The two groups in Kandahar and Herat maintained relations, but there do not seem to have been mechanisms for liaison, even though *shaikh* Ali Wusuqi was described in Kandahar as the leader of the Afghan Hezbollah.

gious legitimation enabled the *ulema* to dominate the political field: they led all the parties, with the exception of only one of any significance, Hezb-i Islami. The lay parties, which did not satisfy this requirement, were swiftly eliminated (see Chapter 6). In contrast with the pre-war period, when the range of ideological systems—communist, Islamist and nationalist—was unrestricted, the parties in exile were distinctly more homogeneous. By this token the Islamists lost their monopoly over legitimation on the basis of Islam, even though their ideology remained distinctive and opposed to that of the traditional *ulema* and the members of the former governing class.

The control of resources. The ability to control the political arena and to maintain a monopoly of representation required the control of external aid, and in the absence of resources of their own the parties subsisted by appropriating a portion of the aid intended for the *mujahidin* and the refugees. Relations with host countries were crucial for the parties. No movement could survive without the assistance of Iran or Pakistan, and Harakat-i Islami, for example, had alternately enjoyed support from both.

For the Sunnis the principal host country for refugees and exiled combatants was Pakistan, whose cooperation was also essential in the transfer to the *mujahidin* of the arms and financial support provided by Saudi Arabia and the United States. Since Pakistan largely controlled the distribution of aid, its attitude was crucial for the survival of the groups which came into existence in 1978–9. In December 1979 the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan was a threat to Pakistan, but it was also useful to the regime of Zia ul-Haq whose military dictatorship had been ostracised by the international community, especially after the hanging of the former Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. After some hesitation Pakistan accepted full American assistance, in the shape of \$3.2 billion of direct military aid and total aid of \$7.2 billion during the 1980s.¹⁰ In addition, Pakistan was given an IMF credit of \$1.6 billion, the largest hitherto granted to a developing country. In exchange for western support, Pakistan became the

¹⁰ P. Dikshit, '1993: Afghanistan Policy', *Strategic Analysis*, Nov., vol. XVI no. 8, p. 1073. For a historical approach to Pakistani foreign policy, see S. M. Burke, L. Ziring, *Pakistan's Foreign Policy: an historical Analysis*, Oxford University Press, 1990.

conduit for western aid to the Afghan resistance and a sanctuary for the anti-Soviet guerrilla movements. The several billion dollars of aid available for the resistance was therefore in practice distributed by Pakistan.¹¹

On the other hand, far from acting simply an instrument of the West, Pakistan made use of its position as an intermediary to control the parties and develop its own policy. In institutional terms Pakistani supervision was exercised in three ways: political and military affairs were supervised by the ISI (Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate), international contacts and negotiations were carried on by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and aid to the refugees was administered by the Commissioner for Afghan Refugees. The role of Pakistan was crucial from the first in the formation of the exiled Afghan political parties which appeared in 1978–9. The Pakistani government therefore decided to halt the formation of new groups and to stabilise the number of parties, in the case of the Sunnis, at seven. Similarly, for the entire duration of the war a Pakistani general took part in the meetings of the exiled parties, while strategy on the ground was broadly laid down by the Pakistan military. The Pakistan administration also played a decisive part in the allocation of aid to 3.2 million Afghans within its borders, of which a significant part seems never to have reached the refugees. Finally, Pakistan acted in the field of diplomacy as the representative of *mujahidin* parties who were never invited to participate directly in negotiations.¹²

Pakistan's Afghan policy, from the Soviet invasion up to the events of 11 September, displayed great stability and did not depend on the party in power. For this reason support for Hezb-i Islami continued after the death of Zia ul-Haq and only ceased because of the movement's failure on the ground. Similarly, the alternation between Nawaz Sharif and Benazir Bhutto had no consequences for Afghan policy, with Benazir continuing to support the Taliban. The reason for this continuity lay in the influence of the military establishment and also in a broadly consensual view of Pakistan's national interest.

¹¹ The single American donation amounted to around \$2 billion and the Arab countries provided a similar sum. See Charles G. Cogan, 'Partners in Time: the CIA and Afghanistan since 1979', *World Policy Journal*, 10 (2), 1993, pp. 73–82; William Maley, *The Afghanistan Wars*, London: Palgrave, 2002, pp. 76 ff.

¹² D. Cordoves and S. S. Harrison, *Out of Afghanistan: the inside story of Soviet withdrawal*, Oxford University Press, 1995.

The strategic plan, often expounded by the Pakistani military, was to endow Pakistan with 'strategic depth' in relation to India, through the installation of a pro-Pakistan government in Kabul, and furthermore to create a Muslim region capable of standing up against India economically, demographically and perhaps even militarily. The balance of power with India and the issue of Kashmir therefore entirely determined Pakistan's Afghan policy. In particular, a pro-Pakistan government in Afghanistan should be able to block the return of an alliance of Afghanistan and India against Pakistan.¹³

In line with such arguments, the Pakistan authorities backed those Afghan religious movements which appeared to share an *a priori* ideological solidarity with Pakistan, which itself had embarked on a process of Islamisation. In the 1980s Gulbuddin Hekmatyar had proposed a confederation between Pakistan and Afghanistan, aiming to please his Pakistani protectors. On the other hand, Pakistan had played a key role in the elimination or marginalisation of the Maoist or nationalist movements within the Afghan resistance, because they represented a potential threat to Pakistani domination.

However, the situation in practice was more complex than might be supposed from what has so far been said. Pakistan's Afghan policy had actually been set in train by officers who held an 'orientalist' view of Afghanistan. The model which influenced the ISI officers who were in charge of contacts with the Afghan commanders was implicitly that of the Pakistani tribal region, where central authority manipulated tribal divisions on the British 'divide-and-rule' model. This is probably why the ISI assisted the development of the Khaled faction of the Hezb-i Islami which opposed Hekmatyar's Hezb-i Islami in the early 1980s, even at a moment when it supported the latter. In general the Pakistani intelligence services systematically divided the Afghan parties by setting the commanders against each other. This strategy did not only affect the military: up until 11 September at least, Afghanistan was seen by the Pakistani political class as an extension of Pakistan's frontier zone, and therefore the Ministry of the Interior rather than that of Foreign Affairs took the leading role, even in diplomatic contacts with the Afghan movements.

¹³ See Ahmad Iqbal, 'A mirage misnamed strategic depth', *Al-Ahram Weekly*, Cairo, no. 392, 27 August–2 September 1998. Also Major Abdul Rahman Bilal, *Islamic Military Resurgence*, Karachi: Ferozsons, 1991.

In the implementation of its strategy Pakistan made use of a network of Afghan clients, of which Hezb-i Islami, followed by the Taliban, were the most important. As has been observed, the relationship between the Islamists and the ISI went back to the 1970s, especially in the organisation of the coup of 1975. Hekmatyar, the future leader of Hezb-i Islami, liaised at that time with the Pakistan intelligence services and had made himself the privileged ally of Islamabad. Subsequently Pakistan distributed a large proportion of the aid to Hezb-i Islami: probably around 40%. Hezb-i Islami also took advantage of its good relations with the Pakistan administration to establish itself in the refugee camps and to assassinate its political adversaries, particularly the leftists, nationalists and royalists.¹⁴

With the Shi'ites Iran played a role symmetrical to that of Pakistan, although it did not exercise such close control over the establishment of parties since some were based in Afghanistan and therefore less dependent on external aid. Iranian policy went through a number of stages. Its complexity and lack of consistency at certain moments arose from there being multiple centres of decision-making which were sometimes violently opposed to each other. Iran's policy of fragmentation through the creation of parties was probably not so much a Machiavellian encouragement of discord, even though in theory Iranian control would thus have been enhanced, but rather the result of internal struggles within Iranian politico-religious circles.

In Afghanistan, Iran sought above all to preserve its relationship with the Shi'ites, while at the same time not providing them with any significant military assistance in order not to damage its own relations with the Soviet Union.¹⁵ The Persian-speaking Sunnis kept their distance from Iran, which offered them no significant help. The reality was that the regime in Iran prioritised its struggle against Iraq, while offering largely verbal support to the *mujahidin*, although it did provide some logistical facilities on its territory. Consequently its relations with the parties which were actually fighting the Soviets were difficult, even when these were Shi'ites, as with the Harakat-i

¹⁴ In the 1980s Hezb-i Islami appeared also to maintain private prisons in Pakistan where it was able to detain its opponents.

¹⁵ Well before the Islamic revolution, the Afghan Shi'ites felt themselves to be close to Iran. Portraits of the Shah were to be seen in some Shi'ite houses, and Hazara migrants travelled for preference to Iran rather than to Pakistan.

Islami. On the other hand the Iranians did assist Shi'ite movements which took their inspiration from the Iranian revolutionary model, such as Nasr and Sepah.

The affiliation of the commanders. The parties' monopoly over the representation of the *mujahidin* was yet further extended in Afghanistan through the recruitment of the commanders, hence the fundamentally asymmetrical relationship between these two types of actors.¹⁶ The parties depended on the bellicosity and organisational capacity of their commanders to attract further foreign donors and enhance their influence, although media manipulation might in the short term affect how they were perceived and therefore influence the flow of aid. On the other hand, what the commanders were able to raise from the population was used locally, with nothing returning to the centre of the organisation.

When a commander joined a party, it was because he thereby derived immediate and concrete benefits. In practice commanders were only able to maintain their influence if they succeeded in obtaining arms and money. Here the parallel drawn by Mike Barry between the activities of the *khans* and those of leaders of parties is illuminating.¹⁷ The primary activity of the parties was the distribution of arms, while most movements also ran military training courses: for example, teaching the use of anti-aircraft weapons. The parties also gave support to the commanders or to their *mujahidin* when they spent periods in Pakistan or Iran.

At their origin the relationships between the commanders and the parties did not depend principally on ideological identification, but on access to resources provided from abroad. However, this statement must be qualified, especially for those commanders who had a political affiliation which pre-dated the war. Non-material issues generally played a considerable part in the relationship between a commander and a party. Party affiliation provided protection, and also legitimacy in relation to other groups. In the event a commander not attached to a party could be suspect—was he, for instance, a

¹⁶ The leaders of the main Hazara Shi'ite parties were not in exile, but remained in Hazarajat. Only Mohseni, who was not a Hazara and recruited principally in the towns, lived in Pakistan. There did not exist therefore the same kind of relationship between the parties and the commanders as for the Sunnis.

¹⁷ Mike Barry, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

Maoist?—and other local groups might take this as a pretext to bring him down, especially since they did not fear reprisals. Similarly, affiliation to a party almost inevitably brought with it benefits of solidarity, especially while travelling.

The relationship between a party and a commander also depended on the commander's importance. Many petty commanders lingered for months in Peshawar, waiting for a party to provide them with arms and thus enable them to go home.¹⁸ However, from the moment when a commander became important enough to be able to pay for a representative in Pakistan, his autonomy was enhanced, since he would henceforth be able to make his own contacts with the Pakistan intelligence services and with western embassies. For instance, Abdul Haq, Masud and Amin Wardak had the benefit of direct aid from France or from Britain. Such direct links weakened the parties, who saw the exclusivity of their role as intermediaries threatened.

While membership of a party was the general rule, this did not prevent a commander from having a large measure of autonomy in his choice of which particular organisation to join. This would be, in the majority of cases, a choice for the commander and not the *mujahidin* or the population. Affiliation was undertaken at the initiative of the commander, as the leader of an already existing group which would make contact with a party in order to obtain weapons.¹⁹ In addition, competition between the parties meant that they were obliged constantly to strive to maintain their existing clientele, which hampered the establishment of party discipline. In the event this competition augmented the freedom of action of the commanders who followed the patrimonial model, and changed their allegiance without difficulty from one party to another, although the commanders of the institutional type maintained more stable affiliations. During changes of party the *mujahidin* remained faithful to their commander rather than to the party. Various reasons might lie behind

¹⁸ Conflict could erupt between the leadership and the commanders if their demands ceased to be met: in some cases violent incidents took place in Peshawar itself.

¹⁹ However, the commander's room for manoeuvre was not unlimited, and an unpopular party affiliation could diminish his power. In addition early affiliation, often crucial, tended to be made when the *mujahidin*, and therefore the commanders, were not well differentiated from the population.

the commanders' changes of party, though the prospect of obtaining more arms, and therefore of consolidating their power, was often enough. Another common situation was the existence of a conflict between commanders of the same party. For instance, in Badakhshan Jamiyat-i Islami was largely dominant at the beginning of the war, except in Keshem which was under the control of Hezb-i Islami. However, internal conflicts within Jamiyat-i Islami in the Argu region prompted the expulsion of the commander Jamaluddin and his replacement by *mawlawi* Kheyradmand of the Hezb-i Islami.

As the war continued, the parties never succeeded in leaving behind this disunity between the leaderships and the commanders. With only rare exceptions, occurring mainly when the leadership was situated in Afghanistan, the parties would continue to be coalitions of commanders.

A typology of the parties

The classification of the Afghan parties generally adopted has proved inadequate. The customary distinctions drawn between 'moderate Islamists', 'radical Islamists', 'moderate fundamentalists', 'traditionalists' and so forth are confused and hard to justify, since they depend on non-empirical criteria which arise from the subjective involvement of an observer, often a westerner, with the movements. In addition the relevant areas for analysis—ideology, organisation and recruitment—have not been distinguished.

Three models of party may be hypothesised, derived from the types of commander: the Islamist, the clerical and the patrimonial. This typology is based on a statistical correspondence between social position, ideology and method of political action. The ideology of the educated class tended to be Islamist, while that of the pre-war élite was conservative, and the *ulema* of the private *madrasas* were often fundamentalists. Similarly, a bureaucratic style of organisation was linked to the involvement of the educated group or of the *ulema*, while the pre-war élites adopted a more informal structure, based on patronage. Finally, the recruitment of commanders was socially close to that of the leadership: *ulema*-commanders were found in clerical parties, educated commanders in Islamist parties and *khan*-commanders in patrimonial parties.

The characteristics of an Islamist party were therefore an Islamist ideology and leadership, of lay or religious origin; with a bureau-

cratic organisational style and recruitment from the educated class. A clerical party was characterised by a fundamentalist ideology, combined with a clerical bureaucracy, and a leadership consisting of *ulema*-commanders. Finally a patrimonial party brought together a conservative or reactionary ideology, a leadership drawn from the pre-war élites, a patrimonial organisation, and recruitment from the *khans*. These categories applied fairly well to the majority of the parties in terms of their leadership, organisation and ideology, but recruitment was by its nature more complex since, as is shown later, they involved local considerations.

This typology also enables the identification of mismatches and irregularities, since the links between the various phenomena—ideology, leadership, organisation and the recruitment of commanders—were not in practice absolutely consistent. In practice there might be a contradiction between recruitment and leadership, or between recruitment and avowed ideology. In all such cases local issues and incidental motivations should be examined for the understanding of particular situations. The personal histories of the leaders often provided some explanation. In addition, a party might evolve moving closer to an alternative ideal type. Ideological frontiers between Islamists and fundamentalists had a tendency to become blurred, which was not unique to Afghanistan. However, recruitment would generally follow a set pattern.

To return to the selected categories, Hezb-i Islami, Jamiyat-i Islami and, among the Shi'ites, the Mustazaffin corresponded closely to the category of Islamist parties, although the situation of Jamiyat-i Islami was more complex owing to the mixture of *ulema*-Islamists and lay Islamists in its leadership. Jebhe-yi Nejat-i Melli and Mahaz-i Melli were instances of the patrimonial model. Hezb-i Islami (Khales) was similar to this model in its organisation and recruitment, but its leader, an *alem* who did not belong to the pre-war ruling class, expressed himself in fundamentalist terms. Harakat-i Enqelab was the sole example of a Sunni clerical party, to which may be added the majority of the Shi'ite parties, especially Nasr and Sepah. Harakat-i Islami, headed by an *alem* but with a membership of notables and an Islamist ideology, was hard to fit into a category, as was also the Ettihad, with an Islamist leader, a fundamentalist doctrine and a frankly opportunist recruitment policy. The proposed classification

will be more satisfactorily demonstrated by way of a detailed examination of four issues: leadership, organisation, ideology and recruitment, always distinguishing between Sunnis and Shi'ites.

THE SUNNI PARTIES

<i>Name of party</i>	<i>Leadership</i>	<i>Organisation</i>	<i>Ideology</i>	<i>Recruitment</i>
Hezb-i Islami	Islamist (Gulbuddin Hekmatyar)	Bureaucratic	Islamist	Educated class
Jamiyat-i Islami	Islamist, clerical (<i>mawlan</i> i Rabbani)	Bureaucratic	Islamist	Educated class
Harakat-i Enqelab	Clerical (<i>mawlan</i> i Nabi)	Clerical	Fundamentalist	<i>ulema</i>
Jebhe-yi Nejat	Patrimonial (<i>pir</i> Mujaddidi)	Patrimonial	Conservative	<i>khan</i>
Mahaz-i Melli	Patrimonial (<i>pir</i> Gaylani)	Patrimonial	Conservative	<i>khan</i>
Hezb-i Islami Ettehad	Patrimonial Clerical (<i>mawlan</i> i Sayyaf)	Patrimonial Patrimonial	Fundamentalist Fundamentalist	<i>khan</i> Opportunist

THE PRINCIPAL SHI'ITE PARTIES

<i>Name of party</i>	<i>Leadership</i>	<i>Organisation</i>	<i>Ideology</i>	<i>Recruitment</i>
Shura	Clerical (<i>sayyed</i> Beheshti)	Clerical	Conservative	Hazara, <i>satad</i>
Nasr	Clerical (<i>shaikh</i> Mazari)	Clerical	Islamist	Hazara, <i>ulema</i>
Sepah	Clerical (<i>skai</i> kh Akbari)	Clerical	Islamist	Hazara, <i>ulema</i>
Harakat-i Islami	Clerical (<i>shaikh</i> Mohseni)	Clerical	Conservative	Shi'ite <i>khan</i>
Mustazaffin	Islamist (engineer Hashemi)	Bureaucratic	Islamist	Educated class

The leaderships. With one exception only—Gulbuddin Hekmatyar—the leaders were *ulema*, but this category was not homogeneous. Some, such as Burhanuddin Rabbani, *pir* Sayyed Ahmad Gaylani,²⁰ Abdul

²⁰ Born in 1932, Gaylani was educated at the Abu Hanifa College in Kabul, then at the Faculty of Theology at the University of Kabul where he took his degree in 1960. The Gaylani family soon linked itself to the royal clan through marriage.

Rasul Sayyaf,²¹ and Sebghatullah Mujaddidi,²² had emerged from the government *madrasas*, while others, such as *maulawi* Yunus Khales²³ and Muhammad Nabi Muhammadi, came out of the private *madrasas*.

In 1952 Sayyed Ahmad married Adela, the granddaughter of *amir* Habibullah, at a moment when the wife of King Amanullah was also of Gaylani descent. Before the war the *pir* was mainly occupied in secular pursuits: among other activities he was the Peugeot concessionaire, and his activities as a brotherhood leader were modest. He placed the preservation of his network of clients above his pursuit of spiritual practices.

²¹ Sayyaf was born in 1946 at Paghman, near Kabul. He was a pupil at the Abu Hanifa theological school where he graduated in 1963, then at the Islamic College at Kabul University where in 1967 he took his degree with distinction, then becoming a teacher at the Faculty of Shariat where he taught *hadith*. In 1969 he went to Al-Azhar University, and graduated with distinction. He returned to Afghanistan in 1972, where he taught and helped to publish *Shariat*. His involvement with the Islamist movement was already notorious, which resulted in his arrest in 1974 as he boarded a plane to the United States to undertake legal studies. He was freed by Babrak Karmal in 1980 and went to Pakistan, where he achieved election as president of the Ettehad-i Islami (Islamic Alliance).

²² Born in Kabul in 1925, Sebghatullah Mujaddidi was the son of Muhammad Masum Mian Jan Mujaddidi. He was educated at the Habibia School, and afterward spent six years at the Faculty of Law and Jurisprudence at Al-Azhar University, where he graduated in 1953. Until 1959 he taught at various schools, as well as teaching Quranic studies and the *shariat* at the Teachers' College in Kabul. He had links with the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, and enjoyed good relations with Rabbani, with whom he had in common membership of the Naqshbandi *tariqat*. In 1959 he was accused of participation in a conspiracy against Khrushchev during the latter's visit to Afghanistan. He was imprisoned until 1964, then lived in the United States from 1968 to 1970. He founded the Jamiyat-i Islami-yi Ulema-yi Mohammadi in 1972. Once more exiled from 1974 onwards, he headed the Islamic Centre in Copenhagen, returning to Peshawar in 1978, where he set up the Jebhe.

²³ Born into a poor family around 1919 at Nuqur Khel, Khales was a Pushtun of the Khagiani tribe, and studied in private *madrasas* before going to complete his training at the Haqqaniyyah *madrasa* in Pakistan. In the 1960s he worked for Kabul Radio, where he presented religious programmes. He seems to have enjoyed a certain popularity, owing to the direct and often humorous style of his contributions, and he also collaborated on a monthly magazine, *Gahis*. Around 1960 Khales published a translation of the book by Sayyed Qutb, *Islam wa Adalat Ijtima'i* (Islam and Social Justice). His involvement with the radio station and the magazine ended with the rise to power in 1973 of Daud, who swiftly showed his antagonism to the Islamists: under Daud one of his sons was killed. Khales's membership of the Islamist movement appears to date from this time. In 1975 he went into exile in Pakistan, taking up residence in Islamabad. From 1975 to 1978 he worked within the Hezb-i Islami.

The life histories of the Islamists, who were often exiled during the 1970s because of their opposition to the authorities, were plainly different from the members of the governing class such as Muhammad Nabi, a former member of parliament, or Gaylani, a former member of the *Loya Jirga*. The Islamist leaders, who had been relatively unknown before the war, had a network of militants at their disposal, while the other leaders were well known and had support among the ruling class and, in particular in the case of Gaylani, within the Sufi brotherhoods. Some leaders held several positions, others did not. In contrast to Hekmatyar, who belonged only to one category—that of Islamist—Gaylani belonged to three: he was a member of the ruling class, a *pir* and an *alem*. Rabbani was an Islamist and an *alem*. Ethnically Rabbani was a Tajik, Gaylani and Mujaddidi were *sadat*, and the others were Pushtuns.

Among the Shi'ites none of the important leaders belonged to the ruling class, and education was not a point of difference, since all were *ulema*. Their community affiliation was a more influential factor. Three types of leader mobilised different networks: the *alem-sayyed* such as Beheshti; the Hazara *alem* such as Mazari,²⁴ and Akbari; and the non-Hazara *alem* such as Mohseni. The engineer Hashemi, the leader of the Mustazaffin, was the only lay Islamist among the Shi'ites, occupying a position comparable to that of Hekmatyar among the Sunnis, but leading only a group of very small size.

Models of organisation. The party structures in general duplicated the administrative pattern, with titles such as *amir-i welayati* (provincial governor) and so on. Titles were derived from Islamic terminology, such as *amir*, and in general distinguished between military officials (*amir-i nezami*) and political ones (*amir-i siyasi*). Beyond these common characteristics, the parties might be organised on patrimonial, bureaucratic or clerical lines.

The bureaucratic style of organisation necessitated a body of rules concerning activities, such as meetings and the assignment of tasks, on an administrative model. Recruitment of students and former government employees accounted for the propensity to bureaucratic

²⁴ Born in 1946, Mazari came from Nanway, a village near Charkent in the province of Mazar-i Sharif. After studying in Qom and Najaf he returned to Afghanistan in 1978.

organisation. The Hezb-i Islami was the closest to this model, while Jamiyat-i Islami, which also recruited among the educated class, did not have the means to maintain an extensive bureaucracy. Hezb-i Islami's organisation was a blend of centralisation and military discipline on the model of the Pakistani Jamaat-i Islami.²⁵ Its obsession with rules contrasted with flexibility observed elsewhere. Hezb-i Islami set up an alternative society as well as an alternative state, and demanded that its members should end their communal affiliations. The party was intended to take precedence over family or tribal loyalties, a policy which came up against various kinds of resistance.

The organisation's outstanding characteristic was centralisation. Hekmatyar was in a position to make crucial decisions more or less on his own, though this seems to have been modified after successive setbacks and the marginalisation of the movement. While in most parties the commanders were allowed wide autonomy on the ground, the leadership of Hezb-i Islami retained as far as possible strict control over local initiatives. In the 1980s the major commanders had in principle been supposed to stay in daily touch by radio. Internal purges enhanced respect for the discipline of the party, which had the use of prisons in Pakistan where several hundred members of other parties, as well as communists, were detained, tortured and executed.

Among the Shi'ites the Mustazaffin was the best example of a bureaucratic organisation. In total this group amounted to only several hundred men, whose time was divided between military and civilian activities. A sharp distinction was drawn between the officials, who were all members of the educated class, and the ordinary members. The officials were drawn from the original pre-war nucleus, and though the engineer Hashemi was the spokesman and leader of the group, the leadership was collective. The overall level of organisation was the best found anywhere in Afghanistan.

The clerical parties adopted a type of organisation in which the personnel were religious figures. Among the Sunnis this model was found in the Harakat-i Enqelab, where the leadership consisted in

²⁵ See Marc Gaborieau, 'Le néo-fondamentalisme au Pakistan. Maududi et la Jama'at-i-islami' in Olivier Carré (ed.), *Radicalismes islamiques*, vol. 2, Paris: L'Harmattan, 1986, pp. 33-76; also Kalim Bahadur, *The Jama'at-i-islami of Pakistan*, Lahore: Progressive Books, 1978.

principle of *ulema* and their *taliban*, and was the dominant one among the Shi'ite parties in Hazarajat, especially during the Shura of the early years, which replicated the pattern of administration of the state, though with the posts of responsibility occupied entirely by *ulema*.²⁶ The system set up by the *ulema* of the Nasr and the Sepah was little different from that of the Shura, but was less complex.

Mahaz, Jebhe and Hezb-i Islami (Khales) functioned according to a patrimonial model where no distinction was made between the resources of the leader and those of the organisation. For example, the trucks belonging to Hezb-i Islami (Khales) were the property of the leader, who was thus in a position to embark on commercial ventures in his private capacity. In these parties the commanders employed complex strategies to increase their resources and their clientele. The commanders often directly provided their own finance, and therefore enjoyed wide autonomy. Within Hezb-i Islami (Khales) a number of competing networks could be distinguished.²⁷ The Pakistani intelligence services controlled the activities of all of them, supporting the various commanders according to their priorities of the moment. In Mahaz the group which surrounded *pir* Sayyed Ahmad Gaylani consisted largely of members of the former governing class, as well as the *pir's* family members. This was the only party to have been family-based to this extent, with the possible addition of that of

²⁶ Hazarajat, and particularly Yakaolang, was incidentally the only place where the population was systematically disarmed. Hazarajat was divided into nine *wilayat* (provinces). Small settlements had a *shahrwal* (mayor). The administration of the Shura, which took over the government buildings, was top-heavy and inefficient to a degree. The representatives of the thirty-four liberated *uluswali* were represented by two or three delegates making up a permanent *shura* which met once or twice a week. There were committees for war, economy, culture and law. Taxes were high, reaching 10% of incomes, much more than among the Sunnis. Militarily the Shura ran four fronts, in Bamiyan, Behsud, Naur and Jaghori, coordinated by Sayyed Hassan *jaglan*. There was conscription, requiring one year of military service at the age of twenty-two, with the possibility of sending a paid replacement.

²⁷ On the one hand, *haji* Din Muhammad and his brothers *haji* Qadir, Abdul Haq and Daud controlled an important part of the party's resources. On the other hand *mawlawi* Khales maintained good relations with Engineer Kabir, his brother, and Engineer Mahmud, which counterbalanced the influence of the other network. *Mawlawi* Haqqani and Amin Wardak were virtually independent powers, each closely linked to the Pakistani intelligence services.

Mujaddidi; in both these cases nepotism reached a level which obstructed their efficiency.²⁸

Ideology. ‘Scripture is its own interpretation.’ (Martin Luther)²⁹

Three ideological positions define the range of the Sunni political field. These are Islamist, fundamentalist and reactionary-conservative, each of which relies in different ways on religion for its validation. The Islamists, in Hezb-i Islami and Jamiyat-i Islami, had a distinct predilection for ideological issues. This concern—systematically to validate the actions of the party on the basis of abstract principles—was a point of distinction from the practice of other movements. Hezb-i Islami therefore attached great importance to the training of its members and to the spread of its ideology.³⁰ Its programmes and those of Jamiyat-i Islami were important texts since they enumerated in detail the parties’ principles on religion and education, among other issues. The Islamic revolution, with its founding myth of the original community of the Prophet, played a key role in political doctrine and in the self-conceptualisation of these parties. The principal accent

²⁸ Sayyed Hasan Gaylani, Fatima Gaylani, Naser Zia, and Suleiman Gaylani were among the most active of the Gaylani family within the Mahaz apparatus. Among the former members of the senior administration were General Salam, General Katawasi, Asef Muhammad Ikram and Dr Gholam Faruq Azzam. The leadership of Jebhe was drawn from élite figures from the former regime: for example Muhammad Gulab Nangrahari, Shahid Zemaray the secretary of Mujaddidi, and family members such as Abdul Shakur Turyalay Osman. The son of S. Mujaddidi, Zabihullah, was the treasurer of the party, while his brother played a part in the early years before taking up residence in California. The details of these networks may be followed in Ludwig W. Adamec’s *A Biographical Dictionary of Afghanistan*, Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1987.

²⁹ *Oeuvres*, vol. I p. xxiv, Paris: Gallimard, 1999.

³⁰ For analysis of the programmes, see David B. Edwards, ‘Summoning Muslims: Print, Ideology and Religious Ideology in Afghanistan’, *Journal of Asia Studies* 52, no. 3 (August 1993), pp. 609–28. Hezb-i Islami propagated its ideology essentially through the party’s publications in Peshawar. The daily *Shahadat* and the monthly magazine *Mujahidin Monthly* were among the party’s most widely distributed periodicals. In addition, meetings were regularly organised in the refugee camps to allow the party leaders, and especially Hekmatyar, to put their points of view, a thing the other movements did less often and on a less organised basis. Hezb-i Islami attempted to take control of the refugees, for example through setting up schools for orphan children in the camps. Great attention was typically paid to education in the desire not to leave it to the *mullahs* and to teach non-religious subjects.

was placed not on re-Islamisation in day-to-day terms but rather on a radical and violent transformation of political society, and putting social relations on a new footing. The Islamist project did not give a special place to the *ulema*, but legitimised institutions on the basis of universal suffrage—masculine and feminine—while nonetheless rejecting western democracy and especially the concept of multiple political parties.

Rationality, science and modernity were also essential elements of the ideology of the Afghan Islamist parties. Hezb-i Islami's model of modernisation, essentially urban and industrial, favoured investment in heavy industry and the nationalisation of major companies—as too did that of Hezb-i Demokratik-i Khalq-i Afghanistan—while explicitly excepting small companies. On the other hand, the peasantry did not loom large in the party's thinking. Hezb-i Islami was the inheritor of the Muslim Brotherhood's ideology, in practice closely allied to *dirigiste* planning, whereby development could be programmed in foreordained steps. The Islamists were influenced by the Third World left in more than one aspect of their programme, all the more since anti-imperialism was a concomitant of the Islamic revolution. Verbal antagonism towards the United States, whatever the complexities of the actual relationship, was a constant in the language of Hezb-i Islami and, to a lesser degree, of Jamiyat-i Islami. Hezb-i Islami took a systematically hostile attitude towards westerners, and incidents—some fatal—were frequent.

However, there were differences between the two movements. The history of the Islamist movement was re-written because of Hekmatyar, who was the object of a real personality cult organised by the party functionaries, while Rabbani set himself up as an arbiter between the various commanders of the Jamiyat-i Islamic. In addition the programme of Jamiyat-i Islami was an appeal to all Afghans, and laid less stress than Hezb-i Islami on the party leader. Although both movements referred to Islamist authors such as Maududi and Sayyed Qutb as the source of their doctrine, Jamiyat-i Islami was inspired by the dominant tendency of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, while Hezb-i Islami identified itself rather with the Pakistani Jamaat-i Islami, which was very hierarchical.³¹ Even though Jamiyat-i Islami

³¹ Maududi was, however, more conservative. For example, he was radically opposed to all agrarian reform: see Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr, *Maududi and the Making*

aimed at the liberation of Soviet Central Asia,³² it put first the patriotic aspect of the struggle against the occupier. Hezb-i Islami rejected all nationalist ideology and proposed a confederation with Pakistan. However, this suggestion was made with the aim of enhancing relations with Islamabad, and thus in reality primarily tactical.

Hezb-i Islami and Jamiyat-i Islami also took opposing positions on the issue of *takfir*: could a Muslim be declared an apostate by virtue of his recognition of a non-Islamic state, when he continued to perform his religious duties, prayer, fasting and so on? Sayyed Qutb,³³ an important ideologue for the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, re-introduced this idea, which was found in the writings of Ibn Taymiyya (1263–1328). Hezb-i Islami practised individual *takfir*, that is to say it took upon itself the right to declare a practising Muslim an apostate, which could imply the death penalty, but stopped short of declaring the whole of Afghan society to be irreligious, as certain groups following Sayyed Qutb had done in the case of Egypt. With this exception Hezb-i Islami, in denying that law had any autonomous existence, operated according to political imperatives, untrammelled by moral or juridical perspectives. Political assassination, justified by *takfir*, was a vital part of the political culture of Hezb-i Islami. This was a divergence from the juridical viewpoint of most of the parties, who turned in cases of difficulty to an interpretation in the spirit of jurisprudence, although the *ulema* were not always the

of Islamic Revivalism, Oxford University Press, 1996, p. 74. The closeness of Hezb-i Islami to Maududi may have consisted at a more profound level in its interpretation of texts outside the religious institutions; though Maududi, in contrast to Hekmatyar, had a classical religious education and came from a line of *pirs* of the Chishti Sufi brotherhood.

³² As witness Ismail Khan, who declared that he wished to die a martyr at Bukhara (interview: Herat, autumn 1988). Jamiyat-i Islami's maps showed Soviet Central Asia as an occupied portion of the *umma*.

³³ On the thought of Sayyed Qutb, who was largely the Islamists' inspiration, see Olivier Carré, *Mystique et politique. Une lecture révolutionnaire du Coran par Sayyid Qutb, frère musulman radical*, Paris: Presses de la fondation nationale des sciences politiques, 1984. On *takfir*, see p. 15 ff. For Qutb, *takfir* was a generalisable concept, implying a break with society rather than individual excommunication. On this point Sayyed Qutb's view was atypical within the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood and only a few groups of extremists, such as Tahrir, Takfir and Jihad, made *takfir* the basis of their strategy, in the process carrying Qutb's view to an extreme. In particular, this was the justification for the assassination of President Sadat of Egypt.

judges of last resort. For Hezb-i Islami nothing could be just in itself, and truth had no value outside the party, which retained a *de facto* monopoly over the interpretation of the Quran. Jamiyat-i Islami, on the contrary, employed a more limited concept of *takfir*, possibly explained by the presence of numbers of *ulema* within the party.

While the Islamist movements were linked to the phenomenon of mass education, it has been observed that the fundamentalist tendencies, often established by *pirs* or *ulema*, originated with the 19th-century reformists of the Indian sub-continent. In contrast to the Islamists, the fundamentalists preached a 'return' to good Islamic customs, in relation for example to the status of women, to religious practice and to artistic activities. However, this dichotomy should not be stretched too far, since there was also an authentic fundamentalist political project, although it implied the rejection of the modern forms of the state and even of politics as an independent sphere. Within the fundamentalist movement various tendencies were represented in the Afghan parties, whether inspired by Salafism or more in continuity with the pre-war tradition.

The war facilitated a breakthrough on the part of fundamentalist movements whose influence had previously been limited. The ideology of the Ettehad and of certain Hezb-i Islami (Khales) commanders was inspired by such fundamentalist movements. In particular, these parties rejected parliamentary democracy and elections, to which they preferred an 'Islamic' system, in which the *Ahl-i hal wa akd* (pious Muslims, persons respected within the community) played a determining role in the legislative system. The frequent denunciations by Khales and Sayyaf of the Shi'ites, to whom the former even denied the right to vote, reflected in the case of Khales the traditional tensions between the Shi'ite and Sunni Pushtun tribes of the frontier, but it also arose from the scale of Saudi financial support. However, it seemed that neither the commanders of the Ettehad nor Sayyaf himself became Salafists, since they continued to observe the Hanafi Sunni rites. Finally, at the beginning of the war, Harakat-i Enqelab was closer to Mahaz or to Jebhe. Nevertheless, a growing strictness on moral issues indicated a rapprochement to the tendencies mentioned above.

The reactionary or conservative parties, Mahaz and Jebhe, were nostalgic for the old order and the domination of the pre-war élites. Mahaz had no detailed programme, but its ideology may be deduced

from the publications of the WUFA (Writers' Union of Free Afghanistan). Mahaz was a royalist party, which arose from the personal links of Gaylani with the royal family and the pre-war establishment. Mahaz demanded a constitutional system inspired by the regime of the West, with separation of powers and a parliament. It favoured the market economy and opposed the social measures proposed by the Islamist parties. Jebhe took a similar line, although it appealed more directly to Islam as the mode of social organisation and did not insist on support for the king as an absolute principle.

Among the Shi'ites the distinction between Islamism and fundamentalism was less relevant. The ideological structure was polarised by attitudes to Khomeini, and placed conservatives in opposition to revolutionaries. In the revolutionary parties such as Nasr and Sepah the *ulema* insisted unanimously on the predominance of the religious leaders in the political field. Their ideology was nevertheless put into practise in various ways by different leaders in different places. Nasr was inclined generally to be populist and puritan, but some officials took a less sectarian and less strictly clerical line. The demand for social justice was also expressed by many of its leaders, and attempts were made to distribute land to the peasants. In addition Hazara nationalism, though seldom appealed to as such, was an element of the ideology of Nasr, Sepah and Nehzat.

By contrast, the Harakat-i Islami of Mohseni, a disciple of *ayatollah* Khomeini, did not seek to set up the Iranian revolution as a model. A factor was the opposition between Khomeini and Khomeini, who had always rejected the involvement of the *ulema* in politics, and in addition had failed to return to Iran after the revolution. Although *shaiikh* Mohseni preached that the social order should conform to Islamist values, he did not proclaim a clerical model of society and remained socially a conservative. The Mustazaffin were once more the exception. The principal sources of the party's ideology were Iranian intellectuals, especially Ali Shariati, as well as, more tangentially, Muhammad Iqbal, a Pakistani Sunni, and Ismail Balkhi. The view taken of Khomeini was somewhat critical, since the party was opposed to the domination of the *ulema* in politics. Utopianism was the most unusual feature of this system of ideas, which sought to recreate a perfect community modelled on that of the Prophet.³⁴

³⁴ The parallel with the Iranian Mujahidin-i Khalq was striking, and the two parties in fact had contacts. This ideology was organised around two central ideas:

Distribution on the ground. Since the beginning of the war most Afghans identified with a party and many held membership cards. It was not unusual to encounter an individual with two or three cards from different parties. Multiple adherences in general included a main membership, genuinely entered into, along with others acquired for convenience, often to facilitate travel. In the towns membership was more often to a single party. In practice an individual's choice of a party depended on the opportunity to develop political awareness in the context of environments other than the immediate solidarity group of the extended family, i.e. in school, at the university or in professional life. Among townsmen who had been through the educational system, the various members of a single family might have experienced different social contexts, and therefore may have had access to a variety of choices, while in rural areas it was customary to follow family or clan affiliations. However, whether membership was on an individual or a collective basis, it was only with a commander as intermediary that the Afghan population joined a party. Only the distribution of the party memberships of the commanders was significant.

The political map of Afghanistan was complex, and one cannot necessarily discover the individual reasons for the affiliation of each commander. Of more significance are the imperatives which explain them in more general terms. Two types of affiliation can be distinguished, one based on the imperative of proximity and the other on the imperative of differentiation. The first type results from the search for a leader who is close to a commander in the context of a *qowm*, and the second type from the need for differentiation at a local level, which obliged the commanders to distinguish themselves from each other by their choice of party.³⁵

first, a unity between Shi'ites and Sunnis, who ought to overcome their differences, and, second, social justice, to be achieved by way of the collective ownership of the means of production, or of a part of them. The influence of Marxism, or at least of socialist ideas, was palpable. The very name *Mustazaffin* (the poor) was significant. In addition, their positions on the status of women were very liberal in the Afghan context. Uniquely, as far as is known, the *Mustazaffin* gave women military training.

³⁵ In addition some affiliations were purely practical. The *Ettehad*, in particular, was set up on the basis of generous contributions from the Gulf, hence the initial reluctance of observers to regard it as a real party. Opportunist reasons for membership were in this case the rule rather than the exception.

The imperative of proximity. Affiliations were explicable in part on the basis of social proximity: commanders adhered to the party whose leadership was socially compatible in terms of geography, ethnicity or social status. In the end the degree to which a party was able to extend itself on the ground would depend largely on the capacity of the leader to bring various networks under his control. In fact, the real criterion for the choice made by a commander was not in any direct sense the party's ideological stance, but rather the personal characteristics of the leader, in communal, geographical, social and religious terms. The leader of the party was crucial, since the desire for social proximity, on the model of the *qowm*, was operative in the choice of membership. Party leaders brought into play their various qualities to attract various networks: *ulema*, Islamists, notables, members of the ruling class, *murids*. There follows an examination of communal proximities, shared membership of networks, whether political or linked to the Sufi brotherhoods, and finally shared membership of a social category.

In all the parties there was an ethnicity which was dominant at the level of leadership and, though in general less obviously, among the commanders. For example two-thirds of the leadership of Hezb-i Islami was made up of non-Durrani Pushtuns, clearly differentiating it from Jamiyat-i Islami, which was three-quarters Tajik.³⁶ *Mawlawi* Rabbani was the only party chief who was a Persian-speaker, a Tajik and a Sunni. Mujaddidi and Gaylani were Persian-speakers but also *sadat*. This exclusivity over the representation of the non-Pushtuns certainly played a part in the expansion of the Jamiyat-i Islami. Similarly the leadership of Hezb-i Islami (Khales) was eastern Pushtun, while that of Harakat-i Enqelab was in essence Ghilzai Pushtun, while that of Mahaz was Durrani Pushtun. Among the Shi'ites the leadership and the commanders of the Harakat-i Islami were mainly non-Hazara Shi'ites: Qizilbash and *sadat*.³⁷ By contrast, Nasr and Sepah were led entirely by Hazaras.

³⁶ Barnett Rubin, *op. cit.*, p. 87.

³⁷ The most important areas for Harakat-i Islami were: Kandahar (commander Ali Anwar), Ghazni (Dr Shah Jan, originally from Kakrak), the neighbourhood of Kabul (commander Anwari), Charkent (commander Din Muhammad), Bamyan (commanders Sayyed Adi and Mobarez), and the Unay pass (commander Rezavi). In Herat, Harakat-i Islami benefited in 1989 from the membership of commander Azimi, hitherto the responsible military official in Rad. There was there-

Affiliations therefore could be established as the result of a common macro-ethnic attachment, but also through local proximity. Thus the areas of effectiveness of a party were often those where the leader, in one way or another, had roots. Rabbani, originally from Badakhshan, Khales from Nangrahar, and Sayyaf from Paghman were influential in the provinces where they were born. The geographical extent of *Harakat-i Enqelab*, also resulted in a strong and durable presence among the Ghilzai and in the province of Ghazni. Muhammad Nabi was himself born into a Ghilzai tribe, the Astonekzai. In addition Ibrahim Mujaddidi had set up the Nur al-Modares school in Ghazni, and, since the recruitment of *taliban* was mainly local, his pupils were principally Ghilzai. The building of this *madrasa* reinforced what was already a long-standing link between the Mujaddidi and the Ghilzai tribes. Historically there had therefore been a Mujaddidi presence among the Ghilzai, which Muhammad Nabi inherited as leader of the *Harakat-i Enqelab*.

In this *Hezb-i Islami* was an exception; it was one of those rare cases where the leader of a party had no local or tribal roots. The regions of *Hezb-i Islami's* strongest influence, for example the neighbourhood of Kabul, were the result of a party structure in which town-dwellers predominated. In fact the Pushtuns of Imam Saheb, Hekmatyar's birthplace, were affiliated not to *Hezb-i Islami* but to Gaylani's Mahaz. Hekmatyar's membership of the Kharuti tribe, part of the Ghilzai confederation, led to no sizeable recruitment, since Hekmatyar suffered from two disadvantages: first, he was born in the province of Kunduz, far from the territorial base of his tribe, and secondly his family was not especially influential. He was therefore not seen as a representative of the Kharuti tribe, a fact demonstrated by *Hezb-i Islami's* recruitment among the Suleiman Khel, who were the Kharuti's traditional enemies. The Mustazaffin were also a particular case. The members of this group tended to be townsmen, often from Kabul or the north of Afghanistan, so that basing itself at Shashpul, near Bamyan, did not constitute a return to the leader's

fore both an urban distribution and a presence at the periphery of Hazarajat. This geographical position was partly what conditioned the strategy of the party, which was always in a minority in majority Sunni areas. In addition, though the commanders were mainly Qizilbash or *sadat*, the *mujahidin* were partly Hazaras, especially in Ghazni and around Kabul.

goum of origin as in the case of Masud or Zabihullah, but was only the result of strategic considerations.

The leaders of the parties also mobilised commanders who had belonged to a particular political or Sufi brotherhood network. Because of the personalities of their leaders, Mahaz and Harakat-i Enqelab were the two main groups able to mobilise the Sufi brotherhood networks. Harakat-i Enqelab's links with Sufism were close because the Mujaddidi stood for the orthodox Naqshbandi tradition, and the two networks of *pirs* and *ulema* were difficult to distinguish, as in Herat.

Sayyed Ahmad Gaylani does not have links with all the Qadiris of Afghanistan, and most of those who recognised him as a *pir* did not follow the ritual of orthodox Sufism. His *murids* belonged mainly to Mahaz, especially in Ghazni and Jalalabad.³⁸ The presence of Gaylani's *murids* was substantial in Ghazni, for example among the *kuchis* (nomads), who joined Mahaz as a group. The largely Qadiri affiliation of the Ghilzai nomads had already been observed in the 1930s by Captain J. A. Robinson.³⁹ Among the various eastern Pushtun tribes the Ahmadzai mainly joined Mahaz at the outset of the war, in particular under commander Shamali who was active in the region of Jalalabad. The decision of the eastern tribes to throw in their lot with Gaylani was related to the presence of *murids*, as well as to the recruitment of families of *sadat*, such as that of Majruh.⁴⁰

A commander who was a former Islamist militant rejoined his former party. This accounted for the presence of a Hezb-i Islami commander near Keshem in the heart of Badakhshan, a region which belonged mainly to the Jamiyat. This commander, Abdul Wadud, was the brother of Dr Omar, an Islamist executed by Daud who had been close to Hekmatyar. There were also some *ulema* who were former pupils of Rabbani, such as *mawlawi* Shirin in Wardak.

³⁸ The *pir* of Esfandeh, *pir* Ali Mahmud Khalifa, a Tajik, and *pir mullah* Sayyed 'Palawan' had links with Gaylani, who often visited them in pre-war times. In addition, the *amir-i welayati* of Mahaz, Sayyed Nazar Jan, was a Qadiri *pir* also linked to Gaylani.

³⁹ Captain J. A. Robinson, *Notes on Nomad Tribes of Eastern Afghanistan* (1st edition 1934), Lahore, 1980.

⁴⁰ When the Gaylani family arrived in 1905, Habibullah gave him a property at Chaharbagh, where *pir* Sayyed Hasan Gaylani was later buried. His tomb became a *ziyarat* and many of the Gaylanis' *murids* are found today in this area.

Finally commanders joined various parties as the result of the similarity of their social origins—whether they were educated, *ulema*, or *khans*—to those of the leadership of the party. The educated class mainly joined the Jamiyat-i Islami and the Hezb-i Islami, which was therefore principally found within those groups. The individual affiliations of students, who were often from the technical faculties as with most Islamist movements, as well as those of former government employees, were of greater importance here than with most of the parties. The case of the province of Helmand showed that Hezb-i Islami's recruitment took place within groups affected by modernisation—schoolteachers, government employees and such like—while its recruitment in the rural and tribalised areas was negligible. Because of the lack of religious legitimacy of its leader, a 'negative' characteristic of Hezb-i Islami's recruitment was the small number of *ulema* who adhered to it and their restricted influence. The Islamist *ulema* in general gravitated towards Jamiyat-i Islami at the time of the schism in 1975, with none of the Islamists who had been at the Abu Hanifa government *madrassa* joining Hezb-i Islami. Those rare *ulema* within the Hezb-i Islami were mostly judges excluded from senior posts. It was not by chance that the two principal splits within Hezb-i Islami were carried out by *ulema*.⁴¹

Jamiyat-Islami's membership had the same element of educated laymen, but Rabbani's personality also attracted Islamist *ulema* trained at the government *madrasas*. These two groups were found among both the leadership and the commanders. As for the commanders, the party recruited more among the educated class than the *ulema*, the great majority of whom joined the Harakat-i Enqelab—even those who were Persian-speaking, as in Herat, since Rabbani's prestige could not be compared to that of the Mujaddidi family. The *ulema*-commanders of the Jamiyat were generally the products of government *madrasas*, such as that of Abu Hanifa in the case of *mawlawi* Alam at Mazar-i Sharif, or of the faculty of theology at Kabul in the case of Muhammad Ismail Tariq of Laghman.

⁴¹ The second of these, which followed that of *mawlawi* Khales, was that carried out by Hekmatyar's deputy Qazi Amin, an Islamist *alem* from a government *madrassa*. From 1980 Qazi Amin, who did not relish his subservience to Hekmatyar, attempted to create a network of support for himself within the party. In 1982 he officially split from Hezb-i Islami, probably with financial aid from Sayyaf, who had an interest in weakening a competitor.

Those *ulema* who were not from the government *madrasas* mainly joined Harakat-i Enqelab because of the personality of its leader Muhammad Nabi, who had been close to Ibrahim Mujaddidi before the war. *Mawlawi* Khales's fundamentalist approach had also attracted *ulema* from the private *madrasas*, both in the west, from Kandahar to Farah, and in the east as in the case of Jalaluddin Haqqani and Shir *mullah* Khel. Among the Shi'ites, Hazara *ulema* made up the officials of Nasr⁴² and Sepah.

The *khans* mostly joined Harakat-i Enqelab, Jebhe, Hezb-i Islami (Khales) and Mahaz. Harakat-i Enqelab was the party which attracted the most *khans* at the start of the war, since Muhammad Nabi represented a degree of continuity with the parliamentary regime, in contrast to the Islamist movements.

Within Jebhe, Sebghatullah Mujaddidi was an *alem* who because of his early exile had lost touch with the Islamist movements. In the absence of militant supporters, he relied on his membership of the Mujaddidi family rather than on his Islamist commitment in order to set up his party. Jebhe's recruitment came largely from two sources. The élite schools connected to the government of Zahir Shah, which in Daud's time, were often in opposition, provided the senior staff of the party. Merchants and artisans, often with links to the Sufi brotherhoods, made up the majority of the Jebhe's commanders and *mujahidin*.

Mahaz was the party of those linked to the old order—that of Zahir rather than of Daud. These were people who had suffered from modernisation: the *bazaaris* (shopkeepers and artisans), the governing class and the major notables. Inevitably, therefore, there was a generational difference between the officials of Mahaz and those of the other parties. The *bazaaris*, often Persian-speaking, also made up a significant portion of the membership of Mahaz because of their nostalgia for the days of royalty and the economic structures of that time, which were more favourable to the artisans.

⁴² The presence of Nasr was particularly strong in the heart of Hazarajat, especially in Yakaolang, Lal o Sarjangal, Deh Kundi (Khedir). The Nasr officials were all *ulema*: *ustaz* Abdul Husein Sadeqi, of Turkmen, a disciple of *shaikh* Akay Alem (the representative of Khomeini in Afghanistan, who was assassinated under Taraqi); the *ayatollah* Abdul Ali Mazari of Charkent, who spent most of the war in Iran, where he was in close contact with the Iranian clergy; Nadeqi (of Deh Kundi); Azizullah Shafaq of Behsud; *ayatollah* Eftekhari (of Dara-yi Suf); *shaikh* Qurban Urfani; and *hojatoleslam* Zaedi (of Yaokalang).

In the tribalised regions of the east, the Pushtun *khans*, who were often the leaders of sub-groups of their tribe, followed *mawlawi* Khales. His ethnic origin, his reputation due to his pre-war radio broadcasts, and his status as an *alem* enabled him to recruit in a tribal area. His role was therefore not dissimilar to that of the charismatic *mullahs* who crop up in the history of the Afghan frontier.

The Shi'ite Harakat-i Islami commanders were generally not *ulema*, which clearly differentiated them from the pro-Khomeini revolutionary parties. Harakat-i Islami recruited notables: merchants, land-owners such as Din Muhammad at Charkent, and some from the educated class such as Dr Shah Jan at Ghazni.

The imperative of differentiation. Membership of a party also followed a system of differentiation: two adjacent but competing groups would affiliate to different and even opposing parties. Local rivalries were translated into political conflicts, and perpetuated as such. There were many examples: the affiliation of the Andar tribe to Harakat-i Islami increased the tendency for the Suleiman Khel tribe to join another party—Hezb-i Islami—because of pre-existing tensions. With two such groups in the same party there would be the risk for the minority group of the power of the majority group being reinforced because it would be better represented in the leadership of the party. In addition, the coexistence of two groups within the same party would prove unmanageable in the case of an armed clash. Through its re-introduction of the autonomy of individual actors, this imperative based on local configurations militated against what could have become the automatic operation of affiliation founded on proximity.

Sometimes the process of affiliation by differentiation reproduced the pattern produced by proximity; however two groups might be similar in macro-ethnic terms—both Pushtun, for example—and still join different parties. This provides an explanation for the presence, at first sight surprising, of some parties in areas which were alien to them. The adherence of *mullah* Naqibullah to Jamiyat-i Islami seems a case in point. Naqibullah was an Alikozai Pushtun, of the Durrani confederation, from the Arghandab valley north of Kandahar. None of his social characteristics—a Pushtun small landowner who had not been politically active before the war—appeared to predispose him to join Jamiyat-i Islami. However, in this region Mahaz

membership was largely Barakzai, *Harakat-i Enqelab* was dominated by Ghilzai from the neighbouring provinces of Ghazni and Logar, and *Hezb-i Islami* was locally Ghilzai. Therefore it was probably more logical for *mullah* Naqibullah to join *Jamiyat-i Islami*, which was locally 'neutral' in tribal terms and which also possessed substantial resources. In addition, the fact of being ethnically marginal within *Jamiyat-i Islami* may offer advantages, since the party was impelled to give priority to a Pushtun commander who could endow it with legitimacy nationally. The same explanation holds good for the adherence of *rais* Abdul Wahid of Baghran, in the province of Helmand, to *Jamiyat-i Islami* in 1988, after a long conflict with Nasim Akhundzada, his neighbour, when both at first belonged to the same party, *Harakat-i Enqelab*. In this case strategic considerations may have predominated: Ismail Khan, himself a member of *Jamiyat-i Islami*, had made an agreement with *rais* Abdul Wahid concerning control over the road between Herat and Quetta.

In a situation of marked fragmentation, the likelihood was that all the parties would achieve representation, for reasons other than the imperative of proximity, since the groups present were at least as numerous as the parties. Only the choice of the dominant group, if there was one, followed the imperative of proximity or representation, while the remainder could be regarded as random choices. The sole exception to this rule was that two strongly opposed groups would often belong to the most openly antagonistic parties—e.g. *Hezb-i Islami* and *Jamiyat-i Islami*. Such motiveless partisan affiliations were found especially in Kandahar, at least up to 1988–9, after which the pattern tended to become simpler. Many groups adopted contradictory and sometimes very fluid affiliations; adherence here was entirely subservient to an imperative of pure differentiation. There was also a good example of fragmentation around the town of Kunduz, where the political map was especially complicated. Within the town there were populations from all over Afghanistan who had come to cultivate the land in this northern region. The distribution of the parties seemed largely random, except for Aref Khan, a Pushtun and a son of the former mayor of the town, whose pre-war Islamist sympathies had led him to *Jamiyat-i Islami*.

Hezb-i Islami's recruitment among the Pushtuns was a recurrent theme in these choices of affiliation, which as a result came to resemble an imperative of proximity. Thus the Pushtuns were often

members of Hezb-i Islami when they were locally in the minority, as in the province of Baghlan or at Mazar-i Sharif. Similarly the Ghilzai of Kandahar, who were mainly of the Hottak tribe, were largely Hezb-i Islami in a Durrani environment. However in majority Ghilzai regions, the Ghilzai did not join Hezb-i Islami, but preferred Harakat-i Enqelab. Groups in minority situations joined Hezb-i Islami since this enabled them aggressively to defend their specificity, which was not as much encouraged by the other parties. This provided a good illustration of the effects of the leader's situation: Hekmatyar, himself a minority Pushtun, recruited among populations who saw themselves in a similar light.⁴³

Affiliations on the basis of differentiation had the general implication that the parties were more broadly instrumentalised, but they also affected relationships between groups, in general by exacerbating tensions, since party conflicts on a national scale were reproduced at the local level. Affiliations based on context were more numerous among populations organised on a segmentary basis, such as in the eastern provinces and Kandahar, and in multi-ethnic zones, where the need for differentiation was most obvious.

The parties and the refugees

From 1979 refugees arrived in Pakistan at the rate of tens of thousands a month.⁴⁴ They were estimated in October 1979 at some 200,000, and would reach a million at the end of 1980 and 2 million in 1981. The largest number of registered refugees was seen in 1990, with 3.2 million, to which around half a million should be added who were not registered.⁴⁵ After this, return to Afghanistan became an increasing phenomenon. Figures provided by the UN High Commission for

⁴³ To take a further example, Hezb-i Islami was very largely Pushtun in the province of Baghlan. The Pushtuns were relatively recently settled in the region, between 1930 and 1950, and their relations with the Tajiks and the Ismailis were sometimes tense as a result of competition for land. The coming to power of the Parchamis did not improve the situation of the Pushtuns, since Babrak Karmal made a preferential alliance with the Ismailis, whose support was necessary for the control of the crossroads of Pul-i Khumri. The majority adherence of the Pushtuns of Baghlan to Hezb-i Islami was therefore likely.

⁴⁴ On the number of refugees in Iran and Pakistan and their situation, see *Encyclopaedia Iranica* VII (4), New York: Bibliotheca Press, 1995, pp. 383 ff.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 383.

Refugees have been criticised, since several hundreds of thousands were not counted, either through delay or to escape supervision.

In Pakistan, to simplify the situation, two waves of refugees may be distinguished. Until approximately 1984 the refugees, who were up to 80 per cent Pushtuns, came from the south and the southwest. In some cases their exodus was a protest—a *hijra*—but more often the population simply fled the fighting. Generally they arrived in an organised group, a clan or a village, under the leadership of a *khan* or *mullah*. There was no automatic linkage between the number of departures and the intensity of the fighting, as it is showed by the province of Kandahar, although the exodus from Kunar could be directly linked to the fighting. After 1984 there were more from the north, but they were always a minority among new arrivals. Their arrival was related to the fighting; sometimes to conflicts between groups of *mujahidin*, as well as to bombing and to the deliberate destruction of the harvest. Their exodus, often involving only individuals or families, was undertaken clandestinely, since the main roads had been closed by the government.

The majority of the refugees in Pakistan, around 2.3 million, lived in the North-West Frontier Province. In Karachi there were also 200,000 refugees who were not in general gathered into camps. In 1982 the Pakistani administration had also set up a camp in the Punjab, which by 1987 had a population of 172,000.⁴⁶ Because of the scale of the aid, the material conditions of life were not bad. The rate of infant mortality was lower than in neighbouring Pakistani villages. Solidarity groups—clan, village or tribe—were reproduced within the camps. The difference in the way of life was above all due to the lack of land, which had consequences in daily activity and social status. In addition, the size of the groups of people was larger, in Pakistan averaging several tens of thousands.

The refugee population was a considerable prize for the Afghan political parties.⁴⁷ For this reason, out of aid totalling \$1 billion intended for the refugee camps in Pakistan throughout the entire conflict, it may be estimated that only half reached its destination, the remainder being divided between the Pakistani administration and

⁴⁶ Brigitte Picard, 'Les Damnés du Penjab', *Les Nouvelles d'Afghanistan*, special issue 'Les réfugiés afghans', December 1987.

⁴⁷ Among the refugees in Iran the role of political organisations was more limited since there were no camps and only the Shi'ite organisations were active.

the Afghan parties, which were active in the camps where they competed with the traditional notables as intermediaries with the administration. Even more than in Afghanistan, the possession of a party card became universal—for the Pakistan administration this document also served as an identity card. The Islamist parties, principally Hezb-i Islami and Jamiyat-i Islami, were the most active in organising the population, with schools, security committees and so on.

The refugees' dependence on aid enabled the parties to present themselves as intermediaries and therefore to acquire real power;⁴⁸ they were able to control the refugees and negotiate with the Pakistani state. A second factor, of some importance, was the absence of arms in the camps, which meant a lower risk of vendettas and the consequent fragmentation of parties. Finally, the militants did not need to justify their local strength in numbers. The displacement of populations gave rise to new relationships and facilitated interventions by outsiders.

One may nevertheless question how real were the affiliations to Islamist parties. In some camps such as those in Baluchistan⁴⁹ the low level of influence of these parties was attributable to the persistence of strong tribal structures among the refugees. Frequent pro-royalist demonstrations and the hostile reception given to Hekmatyar during his visits were evidence of this. In 1987 the Afghan Information Center, directed by Sayed Bahodine Majrouh,⁵⁰ carried out a survey of political opinion among the refugees in the camps. The most

⁴⁸ See the analyses of Pierre Centlivres and Micheline Centlivres-Demont, 'Hommes d'influence et hommes de partis. L'organisation politique dans les villages de réfugiés afghans au Pakistan' in Erwin Grötzbach (ed.), *Neue Beiträge zur Afghanistansforschung*, Liestal: Bibliotheca Afghanica, 1988, and Micheline Centlivres-Demont, 'Les réfugiés afghans au Pakistan: gestion, enjeux, perspectives' in Rocardo Bocco, Mohammad-Reza Djalili (eds), *Moyen-Orient. Migration, démocratisation, médiations*, Genève: Institut Universitaire des Hautes Etudes Internationales, 1994.

⁴⁹ On the refugees in Baluchistan, see A. S. Ahmed, 'The impact of the Afghan refugees on ethnicity and politics in Baluchistan', *Central Asian Survey* 9 (3), 1990, pp. 43–56.

⁵⁰ B. Majrouh, the son of Sayyed Shamsuddin Majruh (a former Minister and senator), who was close to Mahaz, ran the Afghan Information Center until his assassination in February 1988. He also left a significant body of poetry, part of which has been translated into French: see particularly *Le suicide et le chant. Poésie populaire des femmes pachtounes*, Paris: Les Cahiers des Brisants, 1988 (translation and adaptation by André Velter).

striking finding was the popularity of the former king Zahir Shah and the desire for a negotiated peace.⁵¹ The selection of the sample was perhaps questionable, but it was also clear that there was no large-scale ideological affiliation to the Islamist parties.

⁵¹ 62% wanted a negotiated solution and 73% wanted unity between the parties. The survey was conducted among a sample of 1,787 'educated' Afghans, a restriction which raised questions of methodology.