

Part I. THE ORIGINS OF THE AFGHAN REVOLUTION

1. The Sociogenesis of the Afghan State

The political history of Afghanistan may be interpreted as the emergence of a state whose development has re-ordered the relationships between social groups.¹ After the death of Aurangzeb (1707), the vacuum created by the collapse of the Mughal empire and the decline of the Safavid empire allowed Mir Wais, at the head of the Ghilzai tribal confederation, to drive out the Persians in 1709. In 1747 the election of Ahmad Shah (1747–1773) as chief of the Durrani tribal confederation marked the inception of an Afghan dynasty which, after the battle of Panipat against the Indians in 1759, expanded its empire as far as the Indus. Originally elected by the tribes as an agent of military coordination, the *amir* attempted afterwards to keep the proceeds of the conquests for himself. In 1775 Timur moved the capital from Kandahar to Kabul in order to distance himself from the Durrani tribes. However, he was unable to escape the effects of the tribal system, and continued to rule over an empire with fluid boundaries which progressively shrank to the dimensions of present-day Afghanistan under the pressure of British and Russian imperialism. Up to the end of the 19th century incessant revolts resulted in the emergence of what were for practical purposes independent provinces in Kabul, Kandahar and Herat. Attempts to establish a centralised authority inevitably failed due to the weakness of the urban economy and to wars of succession which reduced the country to ruin.²

In any explanation of the sociogenesis of the Afghan state from the end of the 19th century, account must be taken of the part played

¹ On the building of the Afghan state, reference will be made to the studies made by Hasan Kakar, *Government and Society in Afghanistan: the Reign of amir Abdur Rahman Khan*, Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1979, and Vartan Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan*, Stanford University Press, 1969.

² Gregorian, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

by the imperial powers, Britain and Russia, which defined the frontiers of Afghanistan and supported the state at critical moments. Subsequently the development of the institutions of the state took place side by side with the maintenance of patrimonial practices within the governing class. Meanwhile the state, whose source of legitimacy was progressively transformed from Islam to Pushtun nationalism, faced challenges from the *ulema* and the tribes.

The role of imperialism

From the close of the 19th century onwards, the internal balance of forces within Afghan society was diverted into an unnatural course by Britain and Russia, which laid down the frontiers even before a state existed which was truly able to impose its authority on the territory. In fact, those two powers on the whole favoured the establishment of an Afghan state, once the impossibility of direct control was recognised. The frontiers of Afghanistan thus came into being through a process involving both negotiation and war between the British, the Russians and the Afghans. In 1891 the British created the Wakhan corridor, which separated India from Russia and thus gave Afghanistan a border with China. Two years later Britain's Colonel Durand drew the 'Durand Line' which demarcated the frontier between Afghanistan and the Indian empire.³ Drawn up exclusively in the light of military considerations, the Durand Line divided the Pushtun tribes, and was to be the origin of a lingering dispute between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Finally, between 1904 and 1906 the British demarcated the Afghan-Persian frontier.

In order to forestall disorder on their frontiers, the British were to make a priority of the stability of Afghanistan, ensuring that conflict between the *amir* and the tribes did not result in disadvantage to the *amir*. In 1883 Gladstone granted the Afghan sovereign an annual subvention, financed by a tax levied on the population of India. The annual revenue of the kingdom of Afghanistan was at that time 12 to 13 million rupees. In relation to this the additional British contribu-

³ Dr Azmat Hayat Khan, *The Durand Line: its Strategic Importance*, University of Peshawar and Hanns Seidel Foundation, 2000. Strictly speaking, the Durand Line was not a frontier, but rather the limit of the British zone of influence, which was the justification for Afghan claims on territory populated by ethnic Pushtuns when Pakistan was established.

tion was substantial, amounting to 1.8 million rupees per year from 1893, in addition to a supplementary fund available in case of emergency, thus bringing the total to 28.5 million rupees between 1883 and 1901.⁴ During periods of tension, the British provided money and arms whenever the central power in Afghanistan appeared to be in difficulty, especially during the tribal uprisings of 1880, 1882 and 1887. Later, in 1924, during the revolt of the Mangal tribe at Khost, King Amanullah, with British approval, enlisted Soviet and German pilots for punitive air raids. After the overthrow of Amanullah in 1929, the British and the Soviets intervened to come to the assistance of the respective parties. When, after some months, British support enabled a tribal coalition led by the future ruler Nadir to be established, the Russians went so far as to risk a brief military incursion into the north of Afghanistan in support of Amanullah.⁵ In the following period, British assistance in the reorganisation of the army was equally significant, with the provision of 10,000 rifles, 5 million cartridges and a sum of £180,000.⁶

Neo-patrimonialism

The construction of the state, once begun at the end of the 19th century, was to continue from that date in spite of some reverses. The concept of neo-patrimonialism⁷ applies well to a somewhat ambiguous situation, in which the development of institutions continued but was accompanied by the continued predominance of a restricted group which was able to perpetuate its hold on power.

The institutionalisation of the state. The project of establishing a state on the western model came into existence with Abdul Rahman Khan. He, by refraining from nominating his heirs to positions as

⁴ Hasan Kakar, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

⁵ Georges Agabekov, *OGPU: the Russian Secret Terror*, New York: Brentano's, 1931; and Anthony Arnold, *Afghanistan: the Soviet Invasion in Perspective*, Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution, 1981, p. 19.

⁶ Hasan Kakar, *op. cit.*, p. 321.

⁷ The neo-patrimonial state is defined by the appropriation of the partially institutionalised political centre by a group essentially oriented towards the maintenance of its own power. On this issue see Jean-François Médard, 'Etat patrimonialisé', *Politique Africaine*, September 1990.

provincial governors, set a limit to the patrimonialisation of power.⁸ The very broad autonomy of the provincial governors was suppressed in favour of a more centralised system, which strengthened the authority of the *amir*. The size of the provinces was reduced, which improved administration and offered a more restricted platform to any potential claimant to the throne. Two examples illustrate the transition towards the institutionalisation of power. First, the royal treasury in 1922 distinguished between the personal expenses of the king and those of the state. The transition towards an institutional system was thus definitively set in train, all the more so since a constitution was adopted in 1923. Secondly, the constitution of 1964 provided for an elected parliament and ruled that members of the royal family could no longer hold ministerial office.

In addition, the recruitment of administrators reinforced the autonomy of the state. In the 19th century the *gholam-i shah* (the king's slaves), in fact orphans or other children under the protection of the *amir*, constituted the backbone of the royal administration. The state thus established for itself a group of loyal supporters, structurally linked to its interests, and divorced from tribal loyalties. The *gholam-i shah*, who often married into influential families, would provide in due course the personnel of the reformist circles of the first decades of the 20th century.⁹ Similarly the *pishkhedmat*, who were the sons of notables, kept close to the *amir* as sureties for the loyalty of the group whom they represented, performed various duties at the royal court. This system of recruitment was supplemented by the educational system, of which one function was to educate administrative élites for the state. Thus the military college at Kabul, founded by Habibullah in 1904, mainly recruited the sons of the *khans* of the Durrani tribal confederation, of whose loyalty the regime wished to be assured. The college was to provide a significant proportion of the higher

⁸ The patrimonial state is characterised by leadership of a traditional kind, where the decision-making power is viewed as the perquisite of the prince and his followers. Before Abdul Rahman Khan, it would be appropriate to speak of 'Sultanism', because of the extent to which power appeared to be the personal property of the *amir*, divisible between his heirs at successions. Cf. Max Weber, *Economie et Société*, Paris: Plon, 1968, p. 231.

⁹ See Dr Fazal ur-Rahim Marwat, *The Evolution and Growth of Communism in Afghanistan 1971–1979*, Karachi: Royal Book Company, 1997, p. 106.

administrators in the first two decades of the 20th century.¹⁰ From the 1950s the university progressively took over the task, but the administration then found itself unable to absorb the growing cohorts of graduates. The administration remained relatively unexpanded, as the number of officials was estimated at 40,000 in 1969, in a population of around 10 million people.¹¹

To an even greater extent than the civil administration, the army was a priority for investment by the Afghan state. The development of a national army was undertaken in response to the stimulus of the tribal revolts which punctuated the state's drive towards centralisation. Military investment was thus justified by immediate security considerations, since as late as the 1950s the state found difficulty in quelling a rebellion solely by the use of its army and was obliged to raise tribal levies. The clashes of 1924 during the Khost rebellion were an indication that the balance of forces was not always favourable to the central authority, as the debacle of 1929 a short time later also showed. In July 1930 the army, unable on its own to put down a revolt in Kohistan to the north-east of Kabul, was obliged to call on the Pushtuns. In contrast with these internal threats, the protection of Afghanistan against neighbouring powers was always a secondary consideration. The wars against the British in the 19th century, an essential element in Afghanistan's historical memory, were waged by the tribes. The army's only external engagement, which was in any case on a limited scale, was the war of independence against Britain in 1919,¹² and even in this case the assistance of the Wazir and Mahmud eastern Pushtun tribes was necessary. On this criterion the troubles of 1959 marked a turning-point, since for the first time a tribal rebellion was easily crushed by the army. The process of imposed modernisation already attempted under Amanullah was able

¹⁰ In the first place Habibullah founded a school for the sons of notables (*maktab-i malikzadeh*), which later became the royal military college (*madrasa-yi harbi-yi sirajiyā*).

¹¹ The figure given by the American governmental agency USAID, cited by Gilbert Etienne, *L'Afghanistan ou les aléas de la coopération*, Paris: PUF, 1972, p. 45.

¹² Unable to occupy Afghanistan, the British nevertheless imposed their control on its external relations. After the war of 1919 Afghanistan was accorded full international recognition and welcomed its first foreign embassies. See Ludwig W. Adamec, *Afghanistan 1900–1923: a Diplomatic History*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967.

once more to get under way, and the policies of Daud, from his first term as Prime Minister onwards (1953–63), relied on a military institution whose political significance was growing.

At the beginning of the century the army was a crucial item of expenditure, with 50 per cent of the budget allocated to it.¹³ Amanullah (1919–29) was an exception in that at the beginning of the 1920s he cut the military budget, which was to be one of the reasons for his downfall.¹⁴ Subsequently the army became once more a priority. Nadir Shah and his successors devoted more than half the budget to it, and in the 1960s it attracted a third of the current account expenditure. The large size of the army explains in part the levels of expenditure. In the first years of his reign Abdul Rahman Khan set up a paid army of 43,000 men, which had risen to 100,000 by the time of his death in 1901. After a reduction under Amanullah, the army rose again from 40,000 to 70,000 men between 1934 and 1941, and with conscription after 1941 reached 90,000,¹⁵ in a remarkable contrast to the small complement of civil officials.

As in many countries, the army was a central element in the construction of the state. Owing to the numbers who underwent training, and as a model organisation, it had considerable influence within the state apparatus. Its evolution may be traced in the light of two issues, technical modernisation and recruitment.

Rather than real industrialisation, the *amirs* initially sought technological advance in the field of armaments. Openness to western ideas in the 19th century was accepted, but was in principle limited strictly to the technical sphere, and in particular to the manufacture of arms, which could improve the equilibrium of the *amir's* power with that of the tribes. Dost Muhammad (1826–39 and 1842–63) was the first to call on foreign experts, who modernised his army through the introduction of military uniforms and infantry. Under Abdul Rahman Khan the closure of the frontiers, in spite of its disastrous effects on the economy and culturally, was no barrier to the controlled importation of military technologies. The *amirs'* workshops were restricted essentially to the manufacture of ammunition

¹³ Under the *amir* Shir Ali in 1877–8 the budget for the army already represented 43 per cent of the total. Hasan Kakar, *op. cit.*, p. 88.

¹⁴ Leon Poullada, *op. cit.*, p. 111.

¹⁵ Vartan Gregorian, *op. cit.*, p. 296.

and guns, and their extent was limited, with a workforce of 1,500 at the beginning of the century, rising to 5,000 in 1919.¹⁶ In the 1940s the state called on British technicians, but the major turning-point came in 1955 with the Soviet-Afghan cooperation accords. These related to the training of officers and the provision of supplies, and effectively made Afghanistan a client of the Soviet Union.

An analysis of military recruitment displays two phenomena: the gradual transition to conscription and the training of an officer corps. In the 19th century several attempts to provide the *amir* with forces independent of the tribal levies failed, since the military significance of the Durrani confederation's horsemen greatly restricted the choices open to the government. Nevertheless Abdul Rahman Khan succeeded in establishing a professional army, paid and hierarchically organised, which was recruited from among the politically most reliable groups. The process of recruitment followed the changing loyalty of the communities: the Hazara, the Qizilbash and the Ghilzai, who were dominant up to 1880, gave way after various uprisings to a majority of Durrani. Nonetheless the *amir* recruited from all the ethnic groups, stationing his troops outside their province of origin, a practice continued under all later governments.

Until the 1940s recruitment was based on the supply of a number of soldiers by the village or the clan, rather than being chosen by the state. In particular Habibullah set up the system of *hasht nafari* (eight men), i.e. the enlistment of one man in eight, chosen by the community. The transition to a conscript army was not achieved without difficulties. Obligatory military service, decreed for the first time by Amanullah in the 1920s, was rejected by the Pushtuns, which gave rise to substantial over-representation in the army of other ethnic groups. In 1941 the international situation allowed the government to persuade the *Loya Jirga* (Great Council)¹⁷ definitively to accept universal military service, which led in turn to the abandonment of

¹⁶ *ibid.*, p. 190.

¹⁷ The *Loya Jirga* is a council of tribal chiefs, convened for the first time by Mir Wais at the time of the rebellion against the Safavid Empire. Later the *Loya Jirga* became an assembly of tribal chiefs, religious leaders and notables gathered to endorse a new sovereign or a constitutional change. Cf. Ludwig W. Adamec, *Historical Dictionary of Afghanistan*, Metuchen, NJ: the Scarecrow Press, 1991, p. 150; and Fida Yunas, *Afghanistan, Jirgahs and Loya Jirgahs: the Afghan Tradition (977 AD to 1992 AD)*, Pakistan, 1997.

community recruitment. However, the men of certain eastern and Ghilzai Pushtun tribes were exempted from military service because of their status as 'guardians of the frontier'. In practice this left them free to indulge in smuggling and participate in the destabilisation of the Pushtun tribes on the other side of the Durand Line.

In the first half of the century officers were generally recruited from groups which had links with the authorities: the *pishkhedmat*, the *gholam-i shah*, the sons of notables (*khanzadeh*), and members of the royal clan. Later the government of Daud (1953–63) set up military schools throughout the country. These were free, and became a means of social advancement for many children from small merchant or peasant families.

The maintenance of patrimonial practices. However, the development of institutions of state never resulted in a fully coherent system, nor in the abandonment of patrimonial practices. After the 1950s the Afghan state stressed its institutional character, but power remained largely the personal prerogative of the king and the governing class. The inheritance of power clearly illustrates the low level of institutionalisation. Abdul Rahman Khan laid down rules of inheritance, in order to avoid the wars which had drawn the numerous claimants to the throne into mutual conflict in the 19th century. This situation was complicated by the fact that the *amirs* frequently had several dozen children. However, up to the present there has been no instance of a regular succession to the throne, except that of Abdul Rahman Khan himself in 1901.¹⁸

¹⁸ In 1919 Amanullah in fact imposed himself by force against the opposition of his uncle Nasrullah. Daud, Taraki, Amin, and Najibullah were victims of *coups d'état*. Karmal (1980–6) was ousted by Najibullah on the direct orders of the Soviets, without what could be called a coup, since the succession procedure, as under other communist regimes, was not on a firm legal footing. The situation was just as ambiguous in the case of Zahir who, though the legal heir after the assassination of Nadir, was unable to exercise real power before the 1960s. The coming to power of Daud as Prime Minister in 1953, without there being a coup, symbolised a new balance of forces and allowed a new generation within the dynasty to come to power (to the surprise of many, Daud agreed to go at the request of Zahir in 1963). Even the legality of the presidency of Rabbani (1992–2001) was disputed, and *mullah* Omar (1996–2001), whose government was not internationally recognised, lost power as the result of his defeat by the United States.

Up till the 1970s the Afghan governing class comprised several thousand individuals who, through their wealth or prestige, wielded a decisive social and political influence. Within this class four groups were distinguishable: the tribal aristocracy, the intellectuals (university personnel and religious dignitaries), administrators and merchants.¹⁹ However, the frequency of marriage between governing class families, whose members were linked by extended networks, meant that the division into distinct groups was not absolute, though without the implication of any automatic convergence of attitudes or agreement on decisions. Historically the primary element of the governing class was the royal clan, the Muhammadzai, which had distanced itself progressively from its tribal origins in order to achieve a distinctive status within the state. The role of the Muhammadzai dated from the reign of Abdul Rahman Khan. There was a change in the attitude of the *amir*, particularly after the Ghilzai revolt of 1886–8, after which he systematically raised the prestige of the royal clan, designating it as the *sharik-i daulat* (the partner of the state), thus underlining the privileged position of its members.²⁰ In the contemporary period the Muhammadzai were over-represented in decision-making positions, especially in the armed forces, because of their supposed loyalty to the dynasty. In the last period of his presidency (1973–8) Daud, having split with the communists, continued to seek the support of the royal clan, of which he was a member, demonstrating the persistence of such loyalties even after the end of the monarchy.

In the course of the 20th century, the development of the state led to the gradual enlargement of the governing class, which became an urban, and even a Kabuli, group. The predominant use of Persian was an indicator of its increasing distance from the tribes, who were Pushtu-speakers, although the Durrani aristocracy always maintained their links with Kandahar, their region of origin. With the

¹⁹ Abdullah Aziz, *Essai sur les catégories dirigeantes de l'Afghanistan, 1945–1963*, Berne-Paris: Peter Land, 1987, p. 55. In addition, Leon Poullada assesses the élites (the royal family, senior officials, tribal chiefs, wealthy merchants, major landowners) at 2–3,000 people: see *The Pashtun Role in the Afghan Political System*, New York: Asia Society, 1970 (Afghanistan Council Occasional Paper no. 1).

²⁰ In particular they constituted the royal cavalry (*risala-yi-shah-i qandahari*). The *amir* also employed the Muhammadzai in his personal guard. At moments of crisis, however, he turned more readily to the Safi or the Gardezi.

exception of the religious establishment, this class derived its cohesion from a common aspiration towards western-style modernity. A foreign university education was commonplace for students from these families, who frequently went on to find employment in the higher ranks of the administration. The governing class also laid down new norms of behaviour, particularly in dress and language. In addition the onset of industrialisation enabled its members to obtain dominant positions within the economy, thanks to their contacts within the governmental structure. The national bank (Bank-i melli), established in the 1930s, operated in the first instance with private capital and played a part in the creation of most of the industrial ventures of significant size, such as the cotton company Spinzar. Not till the 1960s was there any development of smaller-scale industries, which were never able to obtain sufficient capital.

Beyond the ranks of the national élites, the central authority could also count on the loyalty of particular communities. From the time of Timur, the *amir* employed two strategies, both normal within imperial structures, to ensure the loyalty of his supporters. In the first place, an external community, in this case the Qizilbash, who were Shi'ites of Iranian origin, became the source of recruitment of court administrators and of a military élite.²¹ In addition, the *amir* favoured particular Afghan tribes, for example the Safi of Tagab, who was represented in the royal guard, and who provided Abdul Rahman Khan with his most reliable support. In the contemporary period the Nuristanis exemplified the attachment of a particular group to the state. Settled on the Afghan-Pakistan frontier, and converted late to Islam at the close of the 19th century, the Nuristanis, often recruited into the army, secured numerous material privileges. This enabled them to develop their valleys while the relations of the

²¹ The Qizilbash are the descendants of a Shi'ite community established by Nadir Shah in the Shindawal quarter of Kabul in the 18th century. They have served various Afghan *amirs* in the administration and in the army. In particular, they constituted the majority of the *gholam-i shah*. However, after supporting the British in the war of 1839–42 they were obliged either to leave the city or to practise *taqiyya* (religious concealment). From the reign of Abdul Rahman Khan the Qizilbash gradually lost their influence, though they held on to a significant role in the senior ranks of the administration. Many continued to practise a reduced form of *taqiyya* (concealment), admitting to being Shi'ites only in private.

neighbouring tribes, though Pushtun (the Safi), with the government were poor.

The legitimacy of the state

To ensure its survival the militarily weak state was obliged to avoid disputes, and accordingly paid particular attention to issues of legitimacy. In this project the language of Islam and that of nationalism were often employed simultaneously.

Islam. With varying degrees of success all holders of authority have used Islam as a fountainhead of legitimacy, either primarily or secondarily, with the exception of the communists in 1978–9. However, in its attempts to lean on religious legitimacy, the Afghan state has had a less convincing case than, for example, the Moroccan regime with a long tradition behind it.²² In Afghanistan the *amir* has claimed Islamic legitimacy since the beginning of the 19th century. It was laid down at that time that sermons in the mosques should be preached in his name, and this obligation was reaffirmed in the constitutions of 1923 and 1931.²³ When certain *mullahs* at the time of the political disturbances in the spring of 1971 no longer preached the Friday sermon (the *khotba*) in the *amir's* name, this constituted a direct challenge to his legitimacy and as such brought retribution from the authorities. But although the Afghan state has always claimed religious legitimacy, its form has often varied greatly. From Abdul Rahman Khan to Amanullah, legitimacy was seen as coming directly from God, and the role of the *ulema* was merely to endorse this. After 1929, however, clerical recognition became in itself the source of legitimacy, and the *ulema* saw themselves as granting legitimacy to the ruler.

Under Abdul Rahman Khan and his successors Habibullah and Amanullah the *ulema* were obliged to recognise the divine origin of

²² See especially Mohammed Tozy, 'Le prince, le clerc et l'Etat. La restructuration du champ religieux au Maroc' in Gilles Kepel, Yann Richard (eds), *op. cit.*, and R my Leveau, *Le fellah marocain, d fenseur du tr ne*, Paris: Presses de la Fondation nationale des sciences politiques, 1985, p. 261.

²³ The Afghan constitutions of 1923, 1931, 1964, 1977 and 1987 all recognise Islam as the official religion.

the power of the *amir*. This was a break with the tradition of their predecessors,²⁴ for whom legitimacy had been that of a *primus inter pares*, the first *amir* having been elected by a tribal assembly at Kandahar. In his memoirs²⁵ Abdul Rahman Khan presented himself as the bearer of a religious mission which he was obliged to fulfil in the interests of the salvation of the Muslims of Afghanistan. He strongly rejected tribal justification, favouring by contrast the Islamic legitimation of royalty.²⁶ The practical consequences of this rhetoric were very real. Afghanistan lost to some extent its character as a Pushtun empire, and a degree of equality between its Muslim subjects began to appear. After the suppression of the levy imposed on non-Pushtun subjects (the *sarmardeh*), taxes were no longer in principle variable as between different communities,²⁷ but were equal for all Muslims. Abdul Rahman Khan also used Islamic terminology in the introduction of new taxes, which made them more comprehensible and conceivably more acceptable.²⁸ This form of legitimation also allowed royalty to claim a monopoly of the right to declare *jihad*²⁹ and to condemn as *kafir* (heretical) all those who opposed their power. This measure was also a means of reinforcing his control over the religious establishment. Here may be seen the reflection of the conflicts in which Abdul Rahman Khan found himself in opposition to the *ulema* of Kandahar, who had declared a *jihad* against him on the grounds that he was supported by the British.

To confirm this religious legitimacy, Habibullah (1901–19) was to be solemnly consecrated as *amir* in a ritual devised by Abdul Rahman

²⁴ This was not, however, a total innovation. See Nikki Keddie, *Sayyid Jamal ad-Din al-Afghani*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972, p. 55.

²⁵ *The Life of Abdul Rahman Khan* (1st ed. 1900), Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1980.

²⁶ He also wrote a handbook on the rights and duties of the good Muslim, *Zia ul Mellat va Din* (The light of the state and of the faith).

²⁷ The Kandaharis were exempt, the Ghilzai and the Uzbeks paid little, and the Tajiks were the most heavily taxed.

²⁸ Taxes were justified, on the basis of an interpretation of the Quran, as a religious duty. On Abdul Rahman Khan's economic reforms see McChesnay, 'The economic reforms of Abdul Rahman Khan', *Afghanistan* XXI (3), autumn 1968.

²⁹ Abdul Rahman Khan was certainly not the first to launch appeals to *jihad*. Dost Muhammad did the same in 1939, and held the title of *amir al-mu'minin* (commander of the faithful).

Khan himself. The accession to the throne of Amanullah (1919–29) followed the same pattern at the outset, and his declaration of a *jihād* in 1919, at the time of the war of independence against the British, increased further the popularity which he enjoyed in the early years of his reign. Although he rapidly distanced himself from the *ulema*, he maintained his religious legitimacy by posing during the 1920s as a defender and potential inheritor of the Caliphate.³⁰ In a manner symptomatic of current thinking, a constitutional amendment of 1923, endorsed by the *Loya Jirga* (Great Council) in 1924, introduced yet further discriminatory measures against non-Muslims, including the obligation to wear distinctive clothes and the imposition of higher taxes.

However, Amanullah's position was ambiguous because of his simultaneous claim to be espousing a modernising ideology. Thus the 1923 constitution, while confirming the hereditary monarchy, abandoned the principle of the divine legitimacy of royal authority in favour of a constitutional and nationalist model. In addition, the fall of Amanullah in 1929 led to a substantial modification of the relations of the *ulema* with the state, and their link to its legitimation. The imamist concept of legitimacy, which accorded to the king the right to govern in the name of God, was replaced by a more contractual notion of legitimacy, which sprang from the state's acknowledgement of the *shariat*, under the supervision of the *ulema*. Thus the king was no longer the 'servant and protector of the true Islamic faith' as he had been under article 5 of the 1923 constitution.³¹ Indeed, after the revolt of 1929 the *ulema*, who had played a key role in both the fall of Amanullah and the installation of the new ruler, gained in independence and presented themselves as possessing the autonomous authority necessary for the ruler's legitimation. After 1929 the incorporation of the *ulema* into the highest ranks of the state further endorsed the political weight of what was already an influential group. Significantly a *Jamaat ul-Ulema* (society of the *ulema*) was established to certify the conformity of the state's laws to the *shariat*.³² Its role was significant in the early years,³³ but then dimin-

³⁰ Gail Minault, *The Khilafat Movement*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1983.

³¹ Nighat Mehroze Chishti, *Constitutional Development in Afghanistan*, Karachi: Royal Book Company, 1998, p. 67.

³² A similar step was taken in 1924 after the revolt of the Mangal.

³³ We owe to it the translations of the Quran into Dari and Pushtu.

ished progressively with the arrival in power of Daud in 1953 and the adoption of measures much disputed by the *ulema*, such as the abolition of female veiling in 1959. In 1963 the role of the Jamaat ul-Ulema was devolved to the department of Islamic affairs (*Edare-yi sho'un islami*) and then to a parliamentary commission, which marked its definitive disappearance. By this time, however, the language of nationalism had already become dominant.

Nationalism. The idea of nationalism made its appearance in the first decades of the century, with the establishment of a constitutionalist movement (Mashruta Khawan).³⁴ Mahmud Tarzi (1865–1933) was one of the key figures of this movement with his periodical *Saraj al-Akhbar-i Afghaniyah*³⁵ (The Illumination of the Afghan News), which was published from 1911 to 1918. The father-in-law of the future King Amanullah, Tarzi was an intellectual, open to ideas of modernity, whose influence was to be crucial in the evolution of the intelligentsia at the beginning of the 20th century. The construction of Afghan nationalism lay at the heart of the concerns of these reformers, who were concerned at the absence of national sentiment and the country's lack of development. The difficulty was to bring together nationalism and an acknowledgment of the principles of Islam, in the context of a situation which somewhat resembled the end of the Ottoman empire.

In the view of these reformers, national identity should be common to all the ethnic groups, and founded in the last resort on Islamic values. However, an underlying ambiguity remained: should the direction taken be towards the recognition of the other ethnic groups, or alternatively towards their assimilation to the dominant group on the Kemalist model as seen in Turkey? The reformers opted in the event for the construction of a national identity based on the Pushtun ethnicity, and in particular the Pushtu language.³⁶ The appeal to Islam may therefore have justified, or even disguised, a project to

³⁴ See Dr Fazal ur-Rahim Marwat, *op. cit.*, pp. 99 ff.

³⁵ See V. Gregorian, 'Mahmud Tarzi and Saraj-ol-Akhbar: Ideology of Nationalism and Modernisation in Afghanistan', *Middle East Journal* 21 (3), 1967.

³⁶ Significantly, the obligatory learning of Pushtu was advocated by Tarzi, in the *Saraj al-Akhbar-i Afghaniyah* of 14 September 1914, quoted by S. A. Mousavi, *The Hazaras of Afghanistan: An Historical, Cultural, Economic and Political Study*, Richmond: Curzon Press, 1998, p. 158.

construct a Pushtun nation-state, and was coupled with a fierce criticism of the conservatism of the *ulema*, such as one could expect from the modernists. In spite of its low circulation, Mahmud Tarzi's periodical significantly assisted Habibullah's earliest efforts at liberalisation.³⁷ Such modernising ideas were also later to evoke a sympathetic response from Amanullah. In a sense this movement provided the mould for the main reformist tendencies up to the coup of 1978. The communists explicitly acknowledge it, and it is also possible to identify it more indirectly as a precursor of the Islamists in view of their modernisation and interpretation of Quranic texts outside the exegetic tradition of the *ulema*.

Nevertheless, various constraints held back the state's dissemination of a nationalist ideology, and as late as the 1920s the *amirs* did not appeal to nationalism as a legitimisation of their authority. In fact it was religious legitimisation which allowed them to rally the support—essential for the *amir*—of a faction of non-Pushtuns. Abdul Rahman Khan and Habibullah even encouraged the use of Persian rather than Pushtu as an official language, and the language of education was Persian, even in the Pushtun areas. In no sense did Abdul Rahman Khan owe his power to the Pushtun tribes. The Durrani opposed him at the time of his accession to power, and most of the tribal chiefs had been exiled to India.³⁸ Above all, nationalism remained a concept alien to Abdul Rahman Khan, who relied on the oppositions inherent in a segmented society rather than on broad Pushtun solidarity, in a manner consistent with a principle of legitimisation which remained religious. However, even without consistent ideological justification, the government was dominated by the Pushtuns, who made use of the state as an instrument of 'internal imperialism', especially in the colonisation of the north, and with a tax system which allowed certain privileges to persist. For example, inequalities remained within the army: the Durrani regiments, and especially those linked to the royal clan, were better paid than the others, which gave rise to discontent.³⁹

³⁷ In Central Asia the reformist movement of the *Jadids* also paid close attention to this publication. See Leon Poullada, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

³⁸ Moreover, the *amir* was the last Afghan sovereign to speak Pushtu, Turkish and Persian. His exile to Russia probably promoted a less narrowly Pushtun view of Afghanistan.

³⁹ Hasan Kakar, *op. cit.*, p. 113.

Nationalism became the state ideology when Nadir Shah⁴⁰ was confirmed as ruler in 1930, after the exile of Amanullah and the fall of Habibullah II 'Bacha-yi Saqao' (Son of the water carrier), the Tajik rebel who seized power in January 1929 and held on to it for nine months. The temporary loss of power by the Pushtuns displayed the potential leverage of the non-Pushtuns, leading the former to close ranks. The role of the tribes, and in particular of those of the east, was crucial to the capture of Kabul by Nadir. A new terminology emerged from this readjustment of the balance of power: since the king had been elected by a *Loya Jirga* dominated by the tribes, the basis of his legitimacy could not be identical to that of his predecessors. Nadir was 'chosen by the people, in recognition of his service', as clearly laid down by the 1931 constitution, which only the *Loya Jirga* had the authority to interpret or modify.

Royalty became once more the political focus of the tribes, and at the same time there was a slide away from dynastic legitimacy and towards Pushtun nationalism. The government was unable to control the *ulema*, and progressively turned to nationalism as a form of legitimacy alternative to that derived from Islam. As an instance of this, the legal distinctions between Muslims and non-Muslims were dispensed with, which tended to promote a nationalist rather than a religious definition of citizenship. Therefore, the legitimacy of the state increasingly rested on nationalism, an ideology in which the feeling of belonging to the national community was presented as 'natural', since it was deemed to result from a shared history or even a shared biological basis.⁴¹ In this way legitimation on the basis of tribal genealogy evolved towards legitimation based on 'race'. The construction of a historical memory then became a central concern. From the 1930s Pushtun nationalism, given its impetus by the intelligentsia, made use of history to 'demonstrate' the common origin and destiny of the populations which had their existence on Afghan soil. Thus archaeology was pressed into service to establish the 'Aryan' origin of the peoples living in Afghanistan. The influence of the Kemalist model was plain to see, as was that of nationalist or even racist European theories from the inter-war period.⁴² The debate

⁴⁰ From 1926 the king bore the title 'Shah', rather than '*amir*'.

⁴¹ Ernst Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1983.

⁴² The rise of National Socialism in Germany was favourably received by the Afghan nationalists, and especially by Daud, who then attempted to impose the

which took place within the *Loya Jirga* leading up to the adoption of the 1964 constitution displayed clearly the misgivings of the non-Pushtuns over these ideas. The non-Pushtun participants demanded and obtained an amendment of Article 1 to reaffirm that the expression 'Afghan' applied to all citizens and not exclusively to the Pushtuns (in common parlance Afghan was often taken to mean Pushtun).⁴³

The linguistic issue took on a growing significance⁴⁴ since the state implemented a consistent policy of Pushtunisation which was to continue till the 1970s. Although Persian was understood by a large minority of the population either as a first or second language, the government was to attempt to impose Pushtu as the national language,⁴⁵ when hitherto its use had not been obligatory even within the administration. The Pushtu Academy (*Pashto Tulana*) founded by Amanullah expanded, and government publications increased in number. In 1936 Pushtu was raised to the status of a national language, on an equal footing with the Persian of Afghanistan—known as *Dari* to distinguish it, somewhat artificially, from the Persian of Iran. In the same year the government imposed Pushtu as the language of education, before recognising this as unfeasible, leading to the adoption of Pushtu/Persian bilingualism in 1946.⁴⁶ In the 1960s administrative measures were put in place with the target of publishing 50 per cent of written material in Pushtu.

This policy encountered the hostility of the non-Pushtu-speakers. The debate in Parliament in 1971 on the requirement that officials should learn Pushtu exposed once more the dichotomy between the Pushtu-speaking deputies and the others. A further problem was that the intelligentsia and the court spoke and wrote Persian, the traditional language of culture. King Zahir himself had only rudimentary Pushtu.

use of Pushtu, at the expense of Persian. See Mir Mohammad Sediq Farhang, *Afghanistan dar Panj Qarn-i Akhir* (Afghanistan in the last five centuries), Peshawar: Derarsheh, 1988, p. 632.

⁴³ Nighat Mehroze Chishti, *op. cit.*, p. 96.

⁴⁴ J. Petrusinska, 'Afghanistan 1989 in sociological perspective', *Central Asian Survey*, Incidental Papers Series no. 7.

⁴⁵ Pushtu, meanwhile, was spoken by less than 10 % of the population as a second language. See *Encyclopaedia Iranica* 1 (6), Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda, p. 504.

⁴⁶ A distinction was drawn between the national language, Pushtu, and the official language, Persian. See Shafie Rahel, *La politique culturelle en Afghanistan*, Paris: Les Presses de l'UNESCO, 1975.

In the army the recruitment of officers underwent a major transformation. Daud (1953–63) wished to use the army as an instrument for the Pushtunisation of the state, and to that end he gave priority to the recruitment of Ghilzai and eastern Pushtuns into the military colleges. In the 1970s the young officers were Pushtuns, or less frequently Tajiks.⁴⁷ The Hazaras and Uzbeks, at the bottom of the ethnic ladder, were in practice excluded from the military profession.

This insistence on Pushtun nationalism at the expense of Islam was a source of tension between communities. The non-Pushtun populations, who were probably in the majority,⁴⁸ felt themselves excluded, while for the rural populations, whether Pushtuns or non-Pushtuns, religious legitimacy was the only comprehensible principle. Under the presidency of Daud (1973–8) Pushtunisation entered a more aggressive phase in relation to the other communities. For example, the radio broadcasts in vernacular languages initiated at the end of Zahir's reign were cancelled. In 1978–9 the extreme Pushtun nationalism of the communists, in spite of their theoretical support of minorities, was to play its part in the outbreak of the insurrection.

Challenges to the state

During the process of its formation the state often faced challenges. To crush these, Abdul Rahman Khan relied on a police system, with a network of spies, which deflected all forms of protest short of open rebellion. For instance, journeys of more than a few kilometres outside Kabul had to be authorised by the police. It was not till the 1964 constitution that Afghans were given the right to free movement inside and outside the country. Breaking with the historiographical tradition which has represented the *amir* of Kabul as a 'positive' factor for Afghan unity, the historian Jonathan Lee was one of the first to draw attention to the detrimental consequences of the hyper-centralisation of the state, which was reduced to impotence by the

⁴⁷ Hasan Kakar, *op. cit.*, p. 211, and Barnett Rubin, 'The old regime in Afghanistan: recruitment and training of a state elite', *Central Asian Survey* 10 (3), 1991.

⁴⁸ Even if one finds texts where the Pushtuns are said to be in a majority, with the effect of justifying *a posteriori* their domination of the political system. Census returns were in fact unreliable, and available data relating to ethnicity has not been fully explored.

ill-health of the ruler, and of the campaigns of pacification with their adverse effects on intercommunal relations.⁴⁹ The reliance on policing was an indication of the fragility of the state, which was still threatened by demands for autonomy from unruly communities, and too weak to negotiate, even when this would have strengthened its legitimacy in the longer term. Habibullah, the successor to Abdul Rahman Khan, taking advantage of his more certain exercise of power, was able to abandon some of these police practices, but conflicts once more became regular occurrences.

The challenge to the state came essentially from the tribes (Push-tuns, Uzbeks and Hazaras) and from the *ulema*. However, these oppositional thrusts were not necessarily in the same direction. The *ulema* protected their privileges, especially in education and the judicial system, but they did not dispute the necessity of the state's existence since they hoped to utilise it—for example, to impose the *shariat* in place of tribal customs.⁵⁰ On the other hand the tribes denied the state's right to play a part in their affairs, and in the case of the Push-tuns it was understood at best as the representative of the domination exercised by the tribes in Afghan territory. In unsettled times the behaviour of the tribes tended towards pillage of the towns and of state property. Thus, after the sack of Kabul in 1929 the eastern Pushtun tribes were in no particular hurry to re-establish any kind of central government.

The Tribes. When Abdul Rahman Khan (1880–1901) set himself the task of ensuring by military means his domination over Afghan territory, a number of regions still enjoyed *de facto* autonomy. After the military campaigns at the end of the 19th century the Ghilzai tribes, which had been virtually independent till the 1820s, as well as the Turkmens, the Hazaras and the Durrani of Kandahar, no longer represented a serious threat to the central government. In future these

⁴⁹ See Jonathan Lee, 'Abd al-Rahman Khan and the "maraz ul-muluk"', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 3 (1–2), 1991, pp. 208–42. The *amir* is said not to have suffered from gout but probably from cirrhosis of the liver, chronic encephalopathy and porphyria. 100,000 people are said to have been executed by the authorities during his reign. See F. Martin, *Under the Absolute Amir*, London, 1907.

⁵⁰ A centralised authority was often favourable to the *ulema*. These played an increasing role within the imperial bureaucracies of the Ottoman, Safavid and Mughal empires.

tribal confederations would not provide the framework for political mobilisation. Subsequently uprisings mainly concerned the eastern Pushtun tribes, the only ones to have retained any military strength.⁵¹ This semi-autonomy was partly a result of the geographical position of these tribes, which the state wished to be able to bring into play against the British empire, and later against Pakistan.⁵²

From the 1950s onwards the state had the military capacity to put the tribes to flight. Although the Safi revolt of 1947–9 still proved difficult to suppress, the troubles of December 1959 showed that the balance of forces had changed. When the Mangal took arms in protest against the building of a road which threatened their income and their independence, they were unable to stand their ground against a mechanised army, and thousands fled into Pakistan from where they only gradually returned. In the same year the state was sufficiently strong to demand the payment of taxes by the Kandahar landowners, who had traditionally refused to comply on the grounds of an exemption granted to them in the 18th century. The police intervened and then the army, and in the end the state won the day, even though the eastern Pushtun tribes continued largely to evade payment of the tax.

However, the state did not always choose to clash head-on with the power of the tribes. The simple act of imposing administrative frontiers which did not accord with the boundaries of the tribal territories was in itself a way of undermining the strength of communal attachments. The result was in some areas the substitution of solidarity based on location for solidarity founded on clan. Another factor was that the villages were in any case less and less homogenous in their tribal affiliations, except in the east. Existing communal antagonisms were also exploited, and sometimes encouraged. For example, the divisions between the Hazaras and the Qizilbash were carefully

⁵¹ The most significant of these in recent times have been as follows: in 1933, the Mohmand tribe; in 1937, the Mohmand, Shinwari and Ghilzai tribes in the east; in 1945, incidents in the Kurram valley; in 1947–9 the revolt of the Safi tribe; in 1955 tribal stirrings near Kabul; riots at Kandahar and in the east in 1959; in 1968 the war between the Jaji and Mangal tribes; the agitation among the Shinwari in 1970.

⁵² Similar phenomena occur in the case of the Kurds, on the periphery of the Ottoman Empire. See Van Bruinessen, 'Evliya Çelebi and his Seyahatname', in *Evliya Çelebi in Diyarbekir*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1988.

cultivated in order to avoid the emergence of a united Shi'ite front. In the same way Amanullah played off the tribes against each other to curb the Mangal revolt of 1924, although this strategy was to fail in 1929.

Frequent transfers of population also facilitated control over the tribes.⁵³ From the reign of Abdul Rahman Khan, there were movements—both forcible and voluntary—of predominantly Pushtun groups to the north of the country. The aim of this interior colonisation was to ensure the security of the frontiers and exert more effective control over tribes prone to rebellion against the central authority. The government granted lands to the colonists, and afterwards traded on Pushtun solidarity in the face of the dispossessed indigenous populations. The earliest migrations began in 1883, with a programme of colonisation in Badghis, the objective of which was to counter the threat of a further Russian annexation. The failure of this initiative after the loss of Panjdeh in 1885, gave rise to a more ambitious programme, using Pushtun nomads rather than the Jamshidis, who were prone to be tempted by Russian offers of an accommodation. Colonisation was undertaken thereafter with varying degrees of success across the whole of northwest Afghanistan. Transplantation was sometimes punishment for a rebellion, as in 1890 when a penal colony of Suleiman Khel was set up at Baghlan. In addition, the populations involved were not always Pushtuns: at the beginning of the 20th century groups of Uzbeks were forcibly installed in the neighbourhood of Kabul and Jalalabad. The final forced transfers seen to have been those of the Safi after the revolt of 1947–9. However, from the 1920s the exploitation of new lands in the north at Kunduz led to the settlement, though here on a voluntary basis, of several thousand Pushtun families. Interior migrations organised by the state continued till the 1960s, making their contribution to the strength of the central government, which from this point on was in a position to arbitrate between the different communities.

Under Abdul Rahman Khan the significance of the tribes was acknowledged by the existence of a *darbar-i shahi* (council of tribal chiefs), whose deliberations, were strictly consultative. After the events of 1929 a strategy of integrating the tribes into the national institu-

⁵³ Richard Tapper (ed.), *The Conflict of Tribe and State in Afghanistan*, London: Croom Helm, 1983.

tions was declared. The 1931 constitution provided that Parliament should sit from May to October, which necessitated the presence in Kabul of the principal tribal chiefs. The Shah thus hoped to limit the risks of rebellion by gathering together the tribal leaders between the seasons, after the end of the year's agricultural labour, at a time which otherwise lent itself to the mobilisation of the tribes. In addition, in recognition of the role of the tribes, a *Loya Jirga* was supposed to meet at least once every three years, although this was not always to be observed, especially as the council duplicated the work of Parliament. Finally, the institution of a Minister for the frontiers was evidence of the state's vigilance over the turbulent eastern Pushtun tribes.

In one case at least, internal conquest left a trauma whose effects are still felt today. No campaign was as difficult as that which achieved the subjugation of the Hazarajat, the central region of Afghanistan populated by the Hazaras.⁵⁴ The origin of the Hazaras remains relatively obscure. Contrary to a popular supposition they are not largely the descendants of the armies of Genghis Khan, as their Mongoloid physical appearance, which contrasts strongly with the Pushtuns and Tajiks, might suggest. They are actually an ancient group, with Turkish and Mongol links.⁵⁵ They speak a dialect of Persian, known as Hazaragi, in which Turkish and some Mongol words occur. The total population of Afghanistan is not precisely known, still less its ethnic composition, but most writers agree that the Hazaras constituted some 10% of the population, that is to say more than a million people, in the 1970s. They make up 80 per cent of the Shi'ite population, the remainder of whom are Qizilbash and Tajik.⁵⁶

The date of their conversion to Shi'ism is unknown, but it was probably in the first part of the 16th century, in the early days of the Safavid dynasty (1501–1786).⁵⁷ In any case, not all the Hazaras are

⁵⁴ In particular the provinces of Bamyan, Ghor, Uruzgan, Wardak, Ghazni and Jozjan. For a history of the Hazaras see Hasan Poladi, *The Hazaras*, Stockton, CA: Mughal Publishing Co., 1989.

⁵⁵ See S. A. Mousavi, *op. cit.*, pp. 19 ff. The Hazaras do not always have pronounced physical characteristics, and their social identification is more in terms of cultural markers. There are also regional variations, perhaps the result of intermarriage with Pushtuns and Tajiks.

⁵⁶ Persian-speaking non-Hazara Shi'ites are found on the frontier with Iran, mainly in Herat and the province of Nimruz.

⁵⁷ Hasan Poladi, *op. cit.*, p. 118.

Shi'ites. Sunni Hazara communities are to be found to the south of Mazar-i Sharif, in Dara-i Hazara (a valley adjacent to Panjshir), Rustaq and Takhar, where Babur reports their presence from the 16th century.⁵⁸ However the non-Shi'ite Hazaras tend in general to repudiate their ethnic allegiance in favour of the claim that they are Tajiks, on account of the widespread conflation between Shi'ites and Hazaras, with their consequent stigmatisation by the Sunnis. The claim to be an ethnic Hazara implies in practice an affirmation of Shi'ite faith. In this case ethnic and religious affiliations reinforce one another, while on the other hand there are no links of solidarity between the Sunni and Shi'ite Hazaras.

Though they recognised their attachment to the kingdom of Kabul, to which they paid tribute, the allegiance of the Hazaras to the *amirs* who succeeded up to the end of the 19th century was largely nominal. At times the unification of Hazarajat under the authority of a tribal chief even threatened the authority of Kabul. When Mir Yazdan succeeded in pacifying Hazarajat under his leadership from 1843 to 1863, Dost Muhammad had him imprisoned. At the end of the 19th century the central authority could no longer tolerate the *de facto* independence of Hazarajat and the banditry of some of its tribes. In consequence the *amir* of Kabul waged a series of campaigns, mainly between 1891 and 1893, which resulted in a real integration of Hazarajat into the Afghan state.⁵⁹

This war, similar at its outset to the campaigns carried out in Turkestan or against rebel Pushtun tribes, turned into a bloody repression of which the memory persists even today. Religious mobilisation explains in part the tenacity of the two sides. The declaration of *jihad* by the *amir* of Kabul, and that of the Shi'ite *ulema* in response, was to justify the worst atrocities, and in particular the enslavement of a segment of the Hazara population; Hazaras were sold in the markets of the capital as late as the first years of the 20th century. The *amir* also sent Sunni *mullahs* to convert them.⁶⁰ Already displaced

⁵⁸ Zahiruddin Muhammad Babur, *Babur-Nama* (trans. Annette Beveridge), London, 1922; reissue, Lahore: Sang-e Meel, 1987. Sunni Hazaras also exist in significant numbers in Badghis, in the region of Qala-i Naw, where they were settled by Nadir Shah.

⁵⁹ See Hasan Kakar, *The Pacification of the Hazaras of Afghanistan*, New York: Afghanistan Council, the Asia Society, 1973.

⁶⁰ Louis Duprée, 'The Political Use of Religion: Afghanistan' in K. H. Silvert (ed.),

from their mountains by the Pushtun expansion of the 18th and 19th centuries, the Hazaras lost a significant part of their cultivable land. Within a number of years a hierarchical tribal system had given way to a disorganised assembly of notables of whom the state made use as local agents. These traumatic events were to give rise to a strong sentiment of identity which was to have its consequences in the present conflict.

Following these events, *amir* Habibullah (1901–19) proclaimed an amnesty. However, few Hazara returned from exile and it was not until the accession to the throne of Amanullah, who repudiated anti-Shi'ite discrimination, that some of those who had fled came back. In the rebellion of 1929 the Hazaras actually supported the king. Significantly, slavery was abolished by decree in 1921, a measure confirmed in the 1923 constitution. However, the Hazaras, though defeated, remained an element unassimilable by Pushtun nationalism, while their adherence to Shi'ism placed them in opposition to the Sunni *ulema*.⁶¹

Alien to the two modes of legitimation of the Afghan state, and relegated to the bottom of the ethnic hierarchy, the Hazaras suffered from social and economic discrimination. The nomadism of the Pushtun tribes in the central regions of Afghanistan was a particular source of oppression against them. For example, during their seasonal displacements a police agent normally accompanied the Pushtun nomads, and conflicts with the sedentary Hazaras were generally settled in their favour. Trade with the Hazaras and the lending of money at usurious rates of interest also enabled the nomads to seize their land. In the 1970s the nomads went less often to Hazarajat to trade because of the circulation of trading lorries from the neighbouring towns, but the competition for land grew more intense because of increasing demographic pressure.

Descriptive and anecdotal observations all point in the same direction.⁶² In the 1960s and 1970s the Hazaras' land was no longer

Expectant People: Nationalism and Modernization, New York: American Universities Field Staff Report, 1967.

⁶¹ The Constitutions of 1923, 1931 and 1964 recognised Hanafi Islam as the official rite. The Constitution of 1977 marked a concession to the Shi'ites by omitting this specification.

⁶² The cultivation of intensively terraced mountain plots is a good indication of the pressure for land. See also M. Gaweki, 'The Hazara farmers of central Afghan-

sufficient to feed them, which seemed to be the result of two factors. First despite particularly high infant mortality owing to worse sanitary conditions than elsewhere,⁶³ demographic growth was no longer containable. And secondly, the Pushtuns developed the raising of flocks and herds, restricting the amount of land usable by Hazara peasants. From the 1960s poverty led many of the Hazaras to move to the towns, mainly Kabul and Mazar-i Sharif. In due course this phenomenon of rural exodus accelerated, displacing the centre of gravity of the community towards the towns where the Hazaras became a community generally looked down on, often working as bakers or as unskilled workers.

These circumstances explain why during the past century uprisings in Hazarajat have been frequent, and popular recollection preserves the memory of the most notorious figures associated with the resistance to the state.⁶⁴ During Amanullah's reign, Naim Khan rebelled, together with his two sons, because of the encroachments of the Pushtun nomads. He was taken captive at Panjao and imprisoned in Kabul. Another well-known chief, Yusuf Beg, a *khan* from Shahrستان, fought for nineteen years against the government before finally being arrested. He was taken to Kabul and executed on the orders of the Prime Minister Hashem Khan (1933–46). Books about Yusuf Beg, published in Teheran by the Hazara community, are still circulated in Afghanistan. However, the most celebrated figure remains Muhammad Ibrahim Khan, a *khan* from Shahrستان known as Bacha-yi Gaw Sawar (the boy riding the bull). His nickname comes from a tale told about him in which he is said to have ridden on a bull which ascended to paradise when its right ear was pulled. During the winter of 1945–6 Ibrahim Khan headed a rebellion against a new tax on animal fats. The police post at Shahrستان was occupied, and the central authorities lost control of the district for a whole winter. In the spring a delegation of Hazara notables led by the gov-

istan: some historical and contemporary problems', *Ethnologia Polona* 6, Poland 1980.

⁶³ There were only some ten dispensaries for the whole of Hazarajat, and no doctors outside the NGOs.

⁶⁴ David Busby Edwards, 'The Evolution of Shi'i Political Dissent in Afghanistan' in Juan R. I. Cole, N. R. Keddie (eds), *Shi'ism, and Social Protest*, Yale University Press, 1986.

ernor of Kabul came from the capital to offer terms. The government cancelled the tax, but Ibrahim was taken to Kabul and placed under house arrest. He was accused, together with Ismail Balkhi (see below) of planning a coup and imprisoned till the 1960s. He died soon after his release but remained a well-known figure in Hazarajat.

In addition to these revolts led by prominent figures, disturbances were commonplace, often connected to the presence of the nomads. The leaders of these uprisings were local *khans*: apparently there were no popular uprisings. Uruzgan, the home territory of Ibrahim Khan, Yusuf Beg and Naim Khan, seemed most susceptible, on account of the Pushtuns settled in the south of the province, and also because of the minimal presence of the state in this inaccessible region.⁶⁵ It would be unsafe to claim that these men were the forerunners of Hazara nationalism, especially where documentary records are so sparse. However, a generation later the first Hazara nationalists, often the sons of the *khans*, who by this time were students in Kabul, held them up as symbols of resistance to the Pushtun state.

The ulema. In contrast to the tribes, who were progressively marginalised by the military power of the state and by social evolution, the men of religion came to represent after the 1950s a real counterweight to the established authority. The *ulema* constituted a social group with its own system of education, both private and governmental, as well as its own transnational networks, and its own material and moral interests, which provided a mobilising impetus. In contrast to the *ulema*, the *mullahs*⁶⁶ were not a well-defined or homogenous class. There is no priesthood in Islam. A person who is qualified to lead the prayers is known as an *imam*, and as a *mullah* if he fulfils this function regularly and professionally. However, *mullahs* educated in the *madradas* displayed solidarity with the *ulema*, especially those whose principal activity was to lead the prayers.

⁶⁵ The province of Uruzgan long remained under the domination of the *khans*, with a strong tendency to conflicts, both internal and with the Pushtuns.

⁶⁶ In Central Asia and Turkey, as distinct from the Arab countries, the expression *mullah* was not restricted to Shi'ites. The *mullahs*, less well integrated into the administration, were sometimes paid by the government, but more often remained in charge of village communities. If there was no school in the village, they would offer an elementary education to the children. See *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1993, p. 223.

In the 19th century the *ulema* were involved in governmental affairs only in the context of the initial legitimation of a ruler,⁶⁷ although they might occasionally play a part in the proclamation of a *jihad*, or in opposition to administrative measures deemed to be at variance with the Quran.⁶⁸ Through their often conflictual relationships with the state, the men of religion affirmed their status as a coherent group with an identity and with collective interests. The state sought to integrate the *ulema*, but the influence of the great religious families, together with the effects of fundamentalist ideological tendencies, motivated them to retain their autonomy while mobilising against modernising reforms.

The instrumentalisation of Islam as a source of legitimacy accounts for the effort made by the state from the close of the 19th century to integrate the *mullahs* and the *ulema* into the administration. Abdul Rahman Khan assimilated the *ulema* up to a point into the administrative system by the institution of qualifying examinations, while *mullahs* participated in the indoctrination of soldiers in all the regiments of the army. In 1896 Abdul Rahman Khan attempted to circumscribe the economic autonomy of the *ulema* and the brotherhoods (*tariqat*) by taking partial control of the religious endowments (the *waqf*), especially in the towns.⁶⁹ In certain cases the *amir* did not hesitate to punish those reluctant to comply: after the Ghilzai revolt of 1886–8 he cut the emoluments of the *ulema* in the Ghazni region. The role of the state was later reinforced by Amanullah, and then in the 1960s by the Etemadi government, which set up a *waqf* depart-

⁶⁷ Because of the absence of strict hierarchy among the *ulema*, a claimant to the throne always found a way to ensure his recognition by some group from among them. At the beginning of the 18th century Mir Wais, in order to justify his revolt against the Safavid Shi'ites, procured a *fatwa* from Mecca, which enabled him win the help of the tribal chiefs of Kandahar.

⁶⁸ In the 1830s the invasion of a non-Muslim power provided the opportunity for the *ulema*, in declaring a *jihad*, to demonstrate their influence.

⁶⁹ See Donald Wilber, 'The Structure of Islam in Afghanistan', *Middle East Journal* 6 (1), 1952, pp. 41–8; Ashraf Ghani, 'Islam and State-Building in Afghanistan', *Modern Asian Studies* 12, 1978, pp. 269–84. Similar phenomena are found in Iran (see N. Keddie, *Scholars, Saints and Sufis*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972, p. 7) and in Turkey (see Albert Hourani, 'Ottoman Reform and the politics of Notables' in W. R. Polk, R. Cambers, eds, *Beginnings of Modernization in the Middle East*, University of Chicago Press, 1968, p. 58). The clergy continued to be significant landowners in certain areas, especially, it would seem, in Kandahar.

ment within the Ministry of Justice. In 1970 the state reduced once more the influence of private individuals by placing certain of the pilgrimage sites (*ziarat*) under direct government control.⁷⁰

However, education was the crucial factor in controlling the *ulema*. Before the modern period there was no training centre for them in Afghanistan. Before the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 they were normally educated in Central Asia and till the 1920s at Deoband in northern India, where Afghans were the second largest group of foreign pupils.⁷¹ At the beginning of the 20th century the Afghan *amir* went as far as to fund construction at Deoband, and offered an annual contribution, which the Deobandi school refused in the interests of preserving its independence. In the 1920s Amanullah attempted to curb the influence of these educational centres, which were notorious for their dogmatic rigidity. Education at Deoband, and at certain Central Asian *madrasas* was declared no longer to be a qualification for official positions.⁷² From the 1940s onwards a national system of religious education was set up by the state, with the aim of facilitating the integration of the *ulema* into the state machinery, and of maintaining control of the content of the teaching provided. The creation of the 'School of Shariat' in 1944 was complemented in 1951 by the establishment of a faculty of theology, linked to that at Al-Azhar University in Cairo. The governmental *madrasas*, opened one by one in the principal towns of the country, trained *ulema* who in due course were attached to the various organs of the state, serving in particular as judges, as academics, or by taking charge of religious education in the secondary schools.

Nevertheless, this governmental enterprise was always limited in its extent, and by the 1970s the majority of the *ulema* were still produced by the private *madrasas*, which had their continued existence guaranteed by the 1931 constitution. The government *madrasas* were in fact to produce the Islamists who were the most antagonistic towards the central authority. This issue is discussed below.

⁷⁰ See Louis Duprée, 'Saint Cults in Afghanistan', *American Universities Field Staff Report*, South Asia Series XX (1), May 1976. The Charter of the Awqaf Administration of 1969 is given in an appendix.

⁷¹ Barbara Daly Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India: Deoband 1860-1900*, Princeton University Press, 1982.

⁷² Amanullah was later obliged to rescind this measure.

The education of the Afghan *ulema* was therefore carried out largely outside the governmental structure, which accounts for the influence of the reformers of the Indian subcontinent. From the beginning of the 19th century, the fundamentalist philosophy inspired by the Indian reformer Shah Waliullah (1703–1762) was found in Afghanistan. Although these reformers were stigmatised by the British as ‘Wahhabites’, there is no historical proof of any direct affiliation to the Arab movement, and a separate origin is more probable. One of the sources of inspiration common to both Shah Waliullah and the Salafists, who rejected the designation ‘Wahhabi’, lay in the writings of Ibn Taymiyyah,⁷³ who condemned the excesses of popular religious fervour inspired by Sufism, even though he was himself affiliated to the Qadiri *tariqat*. It can be seen with hindsight that he was especially significant for his theory of *takfir* (apostatisation), although he failed to define with complete clarity in what conditions a Muslim could be regarded as an apostate, and did not call for rebellion against existing Muslim governments. Ibn Taymiyya was nevertheless one of those rare theologians whose rhetoric did not systematically justify the *status quo*. In this he differed from his teacher Ibn Hanbal, who refused to recognise a right of resistance even to a government which ordered actions contrary to divine ordinances. Ibn Taymiyya, on the other hand, recommended disobedience and even revolt. A respected though marginal author, he has since been claimed as an authority both by reformers of the school of Waliullah and by Islamist writers such as Sayyed Qutb and Maududi, who are not themselves *ulema* and find in him a justification for their political theories.

Such reformist ideas were found particularly in the teaching given at the *madrasas* of Deoband and Patna in northern India, which educated part of the Afghan *ulema*. The Deobandis taught strict observance of the Islamic ethical code, and were opposed to the British presence, as well as to any syncretistic approaches towards Hinduism. Distinguishing themselves from the school of Deoband, the Ahl-i Hadith adopted a particularly radical standpoint, and had maintained relations with the Salafis from the mid-18th century.⁷⁴ They preached

⁷³ On Ibn Taymiyya see E. Sivan, ‘Ibn Taymiyya: Father of the Islamic Revolution’, *Encounter*, May 1983.

⁷⁴ Marc Gaborieau, Nicole Grandin, ‘Le renouveau confrérique (fin XVIIIe–XIXe siècle)’ in Alexandre Popovic, Gilles Veinstein (eds), *Les voies d’Allah*, Paris: Fayard, 1996.

the destruction of the tombs of *pirs* to prevent them becoming places of worship, but they were not opposed to Sufism as such; indeed controversy over the links between Sufism and Salafism was often deceptive, since even among the Salafis there existed a minimal Sufi current. Consequently, from the time of Sayyed Ahmad Barelwi (1786–1831) it would be preferable to speak of reformist Sufism, as opposed to the popular practices involved in the worship of saints.⁷⁵

What influence did these movements have over the Afghan *ulema*? Deobandi tendencies have long been present in Afghanistan, where Deobandi texts have been known since the 19th century. For instance, in 1912 the Pushtuns of Karachi, under the influence of the Afghan *amir*'s representative, took the side of the Deobandis in a controversy with those who adhered to the orthodox Hanafi school over the status of the Prophet Muhammad.⁷⁶ In the course of the discussions concerning the 1931 constitution certain *ulema* disputed Article 6, which includes a reference to saints in the context of the Shah's oath of fidelity, thus adopting a typically reformist position.

After the partition of India certain of the Afghan *ulema*, who would traditionally have gone to Deoband, were instead educated at *madrasas* in the North-West Frontier Province of Pakistan, where the Deobandi influence was strong. In 1959–60, 15 per cent (60 out of 397), of the students at the *madrasa* Dar al-Ulum Haqqaniyah were Afghans, a proportion which grew to 37 per cent in 1970 (204 students out of 550).⁷⁷ Movements of the most fundamentalist kind also exercised regional influence. In particular many *ulema* in the frontier provinces of Badakhshan and Kunar were educated in *madrasas* identified with the Ahl-i Hadith and the Deobandis. In Afghanistan the Najm ul-Mudaris *madrasa* near Jalalabad also served as a channel for fundamentalist tendencies close to this movement.⁷⁸ Nevertheless, in

⁷⁵ Frederick de Jong, Bernd Radtke (eds), *Islamic Mysticism Contested: Thirteen Centuries of Controversies and Polemics*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1999. Marc Gaborieau, 'A Nineteenth Century Indian Wahhabi Tract against the Cult of Muslim Saints: al-Balagh al-Mubin' in Christian W. Troll (ed.) *Muslim Shrines in India*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1990. Marc Gaborieau and Nicole Grandin, *op. cit.*, object to the term 'neo-Sufism', which implies a break with tradition.

⁷⁶ Sahrah Ansari, *Sufi Saints and State Power: the pirs of Sind, 1843–1947*, Lahore: Vanguard Books, 1992, p. 80.

⁷⁷ See Jamal Malik, *Colonization of Islam: Dissolution of Traditional Institutions in Pakistan*, Lahore: Vanguard Books, 1996, p. 207.

⁷⁸ Olivier Roy, *op. cit.*, pp. 75 ff.

pre-war times the majority of Afghan *ulema*, who followed the Hanafi rite, were opposed to the 'Wahhabis', lumping together under that term many of the reformists.⁷⁹ For example they rejected the doctrine of the Ahl-i Hadith, since the cult of saints remained very popular in Afghanistan.⁸⁰

The dominant faction in the pre-war period professed adherence to a version of Islam close to the Sufi and Deobandi tradition. The Mujaddidi family was a typical rallying point for the traditionalist *ulema*. This family was also behind the initiation of a modernising reform in the teaching of the private *madrasas*. Indeed, in the 1930s Fazl Omar Mujaddidi founded the Nur ul-Mudaris *madrasa*, in the Ghazni province, which was the venue of a genuine reconstruction of private religious education. In reaction to the setting-up of governmental *madrasas* his son Ibrahim in the 1970s introduced 'modern' subjects, including science, sport and English, equipping a new generation of *ulema* who were able to compete with those from the government schools.

The autonomy of the *ulema* in relation to the state was also linked to the role of a number of influential families, notably the Mujaddidi and the Gaylani, who dominated the informal Afghan religious hierarchy and played a leading part in all efforts to mobilise them as a group. From these two families came the most renowned *ulema* and the most influential *pirs* of the two main religious brotherhoods present in Afghanistan—the Naqshbandiyya and the Qadiriyya.⁸¹ The Gaylani and the Mujaddidi were not originally from Afghanistan, but their prestige had allowed them to lead the local *ulema*. Qayyum Jan Mujaddidi, who came from India in the early 19th century, set up a *madrasa* in the Shor Bazaar, from which arose the name by which he and his descendants were known: Hazrat Sahib-i Shor

⁷⁹ Here the *ulema* enjoyed the support of the State, which was apprehensive of antagonistic positions. As late as the 1970s an *alem* in Kandahar had Wahhabi preachers imprisoned (interview, Kandahar, 1992).

⁸⁰ See Nighat Mehroze Chishti, *op. cit.* On the persistence of non-Islamic traditions, see Marc Gaborieau, 'Typologie des spécialistes religieux chez les Musulmans du sous-continent indien: les limites de l'islamisation', *Archives des sciences sociales des religions* 55 (1), 1983, pp. 22–51.

⁸¹ On the Naqshbandiyya, see Marc Gaborieau, Alexandre Popovic, Thierry Zarccone (eds) *Naqshbandis. Cheminement et situation actuelle d'un ordre mystique musulman*, Istanbul-Paris: Isis, 1990.

Bazaar.⁸² There were also branches of the family in Herat, Logar and Ghazni provinces. The second important family, the Gaylani, arrived in Afghanistan in 1905. Other branches of this family were previously in Afghanistan, but the last to arrive achieved dominance. Sayyed Hasan Gaylani⁸³ had moved to Afghanistan because of differences with the *pir* of the Qadiri brotherhood in Iraq. He was well received by *amir* Habibullah, who granted him a pension, and settled near Jalalabad where he became the principal *pir* of the Qadiri brotherhood in Afghanistan.

These two families, though often opposed to the authorities, belonged to the governing class, and their strategy of forging matrimonial alliances with the royal clan earned them an important position among the élites. The Mujaddidi, who adhered to the Naqshbandi tradition, were awarded a role as the counsellors or arbitrators of the ruler, and in particular took upon themselves the right to confer legitimacy on new sovereigns and to adjudicate on whether their actions conformed to Islamic principles.⁸⁴ The Gaylani, who were much less confrontational, also had less influence among the *ulema*. Their ties with the royal clan were close.

For the Shi'ites the centres of education have always been outside Afghanistan, particularly at Qom in Iran and Najaf in Iraq, and the authorities made no attempt to integrate their religious establishment.

⁸² Qayyum Jan Mujaddidi was descended from Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi, who was born in Kabul in 1564 and buried at Sirhind in India in 1624. Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi was recognised as the *Mujaddid alfi-thani* (the bringer of millennial renewal), since according to Muslim tradition a reformer periodically arises to bring religion back to its principles. See Ludwig W. Adamec, *Historical Dictionary of Afghanistan*, London: Scarecrow Press, 1991, p. 167. According to family history Qayyum Jan arrived at the end of the 18th century, see David B. Edwards, 'The Political Lives of Afghan Saints: the Case of the Kabul Hazrats' in Grace Martin Smith (ed.), *Manifestations of Sainthood in Islam*, Istanbul: Isis Press, 1993.

⁸³ A descendant of the founder of the Qadiri brotherhood, *pir* Baba Abdur Qadir Gaylani (1077–1166), was born in Baghdad in 1862. The eldest son of Sayyed Hasan, Sayyed Ali, who later inherited the position of *pir*, died in 1964, and his successor was Sayyed Ahmad Efendi Sahib Gaylani. On the frequent visits by the Gaylani of Iraq to India at the close of the 19th century, which aroused the suspicions of the British, see Gölhan Çetinsaya, 'Ottoman Administration of Iraq, 1890–1900', Ph.D thesis (unpublished), University of Manchester, 1994, p. 55.

⁸⁴ This Naqshbandiyya strategy of acquiring influence is evident in the significant number of senior officials who are Naqshbandis, especially from the Barakzai and Sadozai tribes.

A genuine cultural renaissance manifested itself in some *madrasas* from the 1960s onwards. Ismail Balkhi (1922–68), an intellectual known for his abilities as an orator, was one of the leading figures of this movement.⁸⁵ Sayyed Beheshti attracted the *taliban* (students) from the entire Hazarajat to Waras. At Kandahar, the cultural movement *Sobh-i Danesh* (dawn of knowledge), inspired by Asef Muhseni, made available a modernist education; in addition to strictly religious topics, the movement's monthly publication dealt with social issues, Marxist dialectic and other subjects.⁸⁶ In the majority of cases training in Iran or Iraq was part of this renaissance, which gave rise to a growing politicisation of the students emerging from the *madrasas*. The politicisation of the Shi'ite clergy preceded the Iranian revolution.

The autonomy of thought of the *ulema* and their organisation accounted for the frequency of clashes with the state. From 1919 the *ulema* opposed Amanullah, who wished to speed up the process of modernisation. In 1924 Amanullah, fearing a plot inspired by the British, arrested *pir* Mujaddidi and executed a number of *ulema*. In 1929 the *ulema* played a key role both in the spread of the rebellion and the seizure of power by Nadir. From the 1950s opposition once more intensified between the *ulema* and the authorities, who had resumed the modernisation of society. Some fifty *mullahs*, of whom a number were members of the Mujaddidi family, were imprisoned as the result of their opposition to the unveiling of women in 1959, a measure especially symbolic since Amanullah had already included it in his programme of reform. The parliamentary regime which took office in 1964 afforded the opportunity for a substantial number of men of religion to enter Parliament, around a quarter of the first assembly.⁸⁷ The *ulema* and their *taliban* (students), under the influence

⁸⁵ Sayyed Muhammad Ismail Balkhi, originally from the province of Jozjan, was a remarkable intellectual and preacher who studied at Mashad and Qom. His speeches calling for equality for the Shi'ites, as well as for the democratisation of the country, had an impact in student and cultured circles beyond the Shi'ites themselves. He was arrested in 1946 for an attempted coup, and remained in detention for fourteen years. His influence on the Shi'ite movement as a whole in Afghanistan was critical. On the politicisation of these groups see David Busby Edwards, 'The Evolution of Political Dissent', *op. cit.*

⁸⁶ See Olivier Roy, *op. cit.*, p. 202.

⁸⁷ Louis Duprée, 'Comparative profiles of recent parliaments in Afghanistan', *American Universities Field Staff Report* XV (4), July 1971.

of Ibrahim Mujaddidi, who succeeded his father in 1956, were at that time organised into an informal group known as the Khodam ul-Forqan (servants of the Quran).

In 1970 a number of *ulema* were again imprisoned, this time after clashes with Marxist students. In the spring of the following year, religious figures from Kabul and its neighbourhood organised the largest demonstration so far seen in the capital, involving tens of thousands of people. The protest was directed against the appearance in a communist journal of an article deemed offensive to religion, and in particular against the use in celebratory coverage of the hundredth anniversary of the birth of Lenin of the term *dorud* (greetings), an expression reserved for the Prophet Muhammad. Ibrahim Mujaddidi and Gholam Muhammad Niazi were the instigators of the movement, which demanded an end to the education of women and a return to veiling (*pardah*),⁸⁸ while the protests of the *mullahs*, who roused the tribes in Laghman and Nangrahar, induced the government to negotiate. It will be seen that at this time the political parties enjoyed nothing like the same ability to mobilise.

As has often been the case in the Muslim world, law and education were the two points of friction with the state. The *ulema* were to an extent marginalised in both these fields, above all by the overtly modernist policies of Daud (1953–63). In the judicial domain relations between the *ulema* and the state were initially good. Aiming to counter tribal and customary law, Abdul Rahman Khan widened their role, in particular through the nomination of *qadis* (judges) in all districts. Ashraf Ghani has shown in a study of the case of the province of Kunar how the *qadis*, closely controlled by the state, were able by employing a jurisprudence antithetical to customary law profoundly to modify the way in which conflicts were resolved.⁸⁹ Nevertheless, many issues continued to be settled outside the legal system.

⁸⁸ Leftist movements then mounted a demonstration involving several thousand women. Shots were fired and a number of the demonstrators were burned with acid, in Kabul and other towns. See, Linda Clark Richter, 'The impact on women of regime change in Afghanistan', *Journal of South Asia and Middle Eastern Studies* 3 (2), winter 1983, p. 6.

⁸⁹ With the result that women were empowered to become more autonomous agents, while they were excluded from customary law. See Ashraf Ghani, 'Disputes in a court of Shari'a, Kunar Valley, Afghanistan', *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 15, 1983.

The recent subjection of Hazarajat and Nuristan, which had been Islamised only at the close of the 19th century, also tended to enhance the power of the *ulema*, who issued their judgements independently with a right of appeal only to the *amir*. Amanullah still devoted one day each week to the dispensation of justice.

In due course conflicts became inevitable between the state, which introduced a legal code on the European model, and the *ulema* who regarded the *shariat* as the principal legal source and wished to retain the monopoly of justice. Indeed, the effect of all the legal codifications carried out by the state was to diminish the role of the *ulema*. For example, the penal code of 1924 laid down the priority of specialised legal codes in the commercial and military fields, which lay beyond the jurisdiction of the *ulema*. Codification also allowed recourse to legal sources in competition with the *shariat*, such as the *pushtunwali*, the customary Pushtun law. After 1929, however, the secularisation of the law went into reverse, with the civil and criminal law directly inspired by the *shariat* at the expense of imported law.⁹⁰ The movement towards secularisation gradually resumed after 1945, but the *shariat* and the right of reference to an Islamic judge continued, so that the coexistence of two alternative principles of justice led to some confusion. Personal law remained generally under the authority of the Islamic judge in the new civil and penal code of 1976, but punishments were defined, which deprived the *qadi* of a margin of interpretation. Finally, judges increasingly tended to be drawn from the faculty of law and political science.

In teaching the state attempted to displace the *ulema* and the *mul-lahs* in favour of compulsory education controlled by the administration in which the teaching of non-religious subjects had first place. Nevertheless, at least in the 1930s and 1940s, the *ulema* retained a controlling power over education. In consequence the secondary schools for girls were closed till the end of the 1930s, and religious subjects regained their predominance. After the arrival of Daud in 1953, secularisation once more became the dominant tendency, not least because of the increasing presence of western experts in this sphere.

⁹⁰ Nevertheless the constitution was ambiguous on the point. See Night Mehrose Chishti, *op. cit.*, p. 65. See also M. G. Weinbaum, 'Legal élites in Afghan society', *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 12, 1980, pp. 29–57.

The conjunction of the tribal and religious oppositions. Up to the 1950s the principal danger for the state remained the conjunction of the two opposition forces, tribal and religious. It proved fatal to Amanullah in 1929 having already dangerously threatened his power in 1924. Though there were major contradictions between the religious code, the *shariat*, and the tribal law, the *pushtunwali*, Islam was nevertheless an essential element of Pushtun identity. In addition to their performance of the prayers and the rituals, the *mullahs* interpreted the law during tribal *jirgas*, or gatherings. Occasionally the externality of the *mullahs* to the tribal system enabled them to intervene as intermediaries, similarly to descendants of the Prophet (*sadat*) and holy men (*pirs*). The influence of a particular *mullah* was in practice variable, and was enhanced if significant *waqfs* were under his control. The role of the *mullah*, as an interpreter of the Quran, implied a constant tension with tribal practices, since he sought to impose other values, religious rather than customary, as well as an alternative justice, Quranic as against *pushtunwali*. In contrast to the *pirs*, the *mullahs* did not necessarily seek to minimise conflicts, but looked rather for an 'Islamic' solution.⁹¹ The *mullahs* therefore sought autonomy within the tribal structure.

The conjunction of opposition by the tribes and by the religious establishment in general occurred through the intervention of charismatic *mullahs*, who made possible the temporary suppression of tribal differences and the adoption of a unified stand against an authority denounced as apostate (*kafir*). This was demonstrated by the numerous rebellions led by them.⁹² These *mullahs* might even be illiterate, since they derived their legitimacy from their charisma and not, like the *ulema*, from learning. Even in the absence of a charismatic figure, the *ulema* were able to sustain a tribal revolt by declaring a *jihad*, as in 1924 during the Khost rebellion. In that year, for instance, at the time of the revolt of *mullah* Abdullah Ahmadzai, known as *mullah-i* Lang, against King Amanullah, the Mujaddidi

⁹¹ This opposition between *mullahs* and *pirs* is found in many tribal societies in the Muslim world. On the situation in Morocco, see Ernest Gellner, *Saints of the Atlas*, London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1969.

⁹² Instances in Pakistan and Afghanistan are numerous: the Akhund of Swat, *mullah-i* Lang, the Fakir of Ipi, Shami *pir* or Hadda-yi Sahib; cf. David Busby Edwards, 'Charismatic leadership and political process in Afghanistan', *Central Asian Survey* 5 (3-4), 1986.

supported *mullah* Abdul Ghani, one of their disciples, who directed the uprising of the Ghilzai at Ghazni.

However, any accord between the *ulema* and the tribes would be provisional, to the extent where one could speak of a mutual instrumentality. In fact, the model of tribal action did not undergo permanent change under the influence of the religious leaders, and alliances formed under the leadership of charismatic personalities were always temporary by nature. In reality, tribal revolts were generally occasioned by attempts by the state to place limits on the independence of the tribes, for example through the suppression of the *badraga* (the levy imposed on travellers by the eastern tribes), or the imposition of compulsory military service, or the introduction of identity cards. The religious aspect was generally marginal when set against the preservation of tribal autonomy.

The events of 1929 showed clearly the complementarity between the strategy of the *ulema* and that of the tribes. The revolt against Amanullah was launched by the Shinwari tribes for economic reasons, with no genuine religious dimension. This is why they were able later to respond to the call to revolt launched in 1938 against Zahir Shah by a charismatic *mullah*, Muhammad Saadi al-Keilani, who called for the reinstatement of Amanullah. The same tribes who engineered his downfall in 1929 were to call for his return ten years later. However, in 1929 the *ulema* opposed to Amanullah's project of modernisation capitalised on the revolt against him by declaring a *jihad* against the ruler, who could not stand up to the tribes because his army was not strong enough. So far the situation followed the normal pattern, with the *ulema* and the tribes in alliance, but the capture of Kabul by Habibullah 'Bacha-yi Saqao', a Tajik brigand,⁹³ created an unprecedented situation. Habibullah, crowned ruler by Akhundzada, the *pir* of Tagab, was supported by the network of fundamentalist *ulema* and by the Naqshbandis of the north;⁹⁴ he is supposed to have been the *murid* (disciple) of the *pir* Shams ul-Haq Mujaddidi Kohistani.⁹⁵

⁹³ Habibullah was born in 1890 in Kalakan, the son of a water-carrier (*saqao*), and became a bandit after deserting from the army. See Mir Muhammad Sediq Farhang, *Afghanistan dar panj qarn-i akhir* (Afghanistan in the last five centuries), Peshawar: Derarshesh, 1988., p. 561.

⁹⁴ Olivier Roy, *Afghanistan. Islam et modernité politique*, Paris: Seuil, 1985, pp. 86 seq.

⁹⁵ Muhammad Naser Kamal, *Afghanistan sarzamin-i aria* (Afghanistan, an Aryan country), Peshawar: Danesh Ketabkhane, 1999, p. 151.

However, the Mujaddidi maintained an ambiguous attitude towards him, because of their links with the Muhammadzai dynasty and the Ghilzai tribes.⁹⁶ After some months power was regained by the tribes united under the banner of Nadir Khan, when the Mujaddidi family played a decisive role in rallying the support of the Ghilzai. The key point was the incompatibility of the various strategies. Since the *ulema* at this point were unable alone to sustain the ruler against the tribes, they rallied to the pretender to the throne. By the 1960s and 1970s such opposition movements seemed to be a thing of the past, as the state embarked on a modernisation of the country which led to a different configuration of opposition forces.

⁹⁶ The *ziarat* of Shirind was a place of pilgrimage for the Ghilzai nomads, which was the reason for their connection with the Mujaddidi.