

Afghanistan

“Soviet Pull-Out Will Intensify the War”

The following interview was conducted with a representative of the Committee of Propaganda and Agitation of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought for the Formation of the Communist Party of Afghanistan for the Emancipation of the Working Class (PAC). The following extracts deal exclusively with the current situation in Afghanistan following the signing of the Geneva agreement which calls for the withdrawal of Soviet troops.

The PAC is one of two Afghan Marxist-Leninist organisations (the other being the Revolutionary Cells of Afghan Communists) which have expressed support for the *Declaration of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement* and called for the formation of a single vanguard Party based on Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought. There is a need for a genuine vanguard party in all countries and where one does not yet exist the immediate task is to form one. Yet this truth takes on particular meaning in Afghanistan today, where the masses have been waging an heroic struggle against the Soviet invaders but where the proletarian leadership of the struggle is yet to be established.

Today the Soviet social-imperialists and the Kabul puppet regime have been badly battered by the struggle of the masses and are forced to attempt new manoeuvres to avoid disaster in Afghanistan, including promising to withdraw their soldiers. The non-revolutionary class forces which claim the leadership of the armed struggle are deeply divided as to the path to follow. The two imperialist blocs led by the U.S. and the USSR respectively continue to bang heads over Afghanistan even as they sign the Geneva agreements.

For these reasons, the situation in Afghanistan is a particularly sharp and concentrated illustration of the correct principle made in the *Declaration*; “the current intensification of world contradictions while bringing forth further possibilities for these movements also places new obstacles and tasks before them.” Only the timely establishment of the vanguard party in Afghanistan will allow the proletariat to seize these excellent new opportunities while steering clear of the dangerous obstacles.

The simultaneous development of two organisations in Afghanistan based on Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought and supporting the *Declaration* is a reflection of the fact that other, non-proletarian, lines cannot lead the revolution to victory. The efforts of these organisations to work towards the establishment of the vanguard party

will no doubt have significant ramifications for the whole Afghan revolutionary movement—AWTW.

I want to talk a bit about the objective situation, the political terrain in Afghanistan today, particularly the situation with our enemies and the myriad divisions in their ranks, and why the withdrawal of the Soviet troops from Afghanistan represents an intensification of the war in a new form.

I don't think the pull-out will stop the war. There's no way that the crisis in Afghanistan and the Afghanisthan question will be solved by a treaty in Geneva, but it does mean a new stage in the war.

What is the nature of this new stage? It is very difficult to predict how it's going to go, but one thing that's certain and that the Soviet strategists are taking into account is that the U.S. will seek a bigger share of power and influence in Afghanistan through a new regime that would include pro-Western forces or the Islamic forces, the fundamentalists. The U.S. is going to go for a bigger chunk at this time because they're in a stronger position vis-à-vis the Soviets, who have been defeated on the battlefield. The Soviets, for their part, are predicting that their pull-out of Afghanistan will be followed by civil war. For the Soviets, it is a matter of taking advantage of the contradictions between the Islamic parties and the fact that the national liberation movement does not have a solid leadership, which really, in the end, could only come from a genuine communist party.

The Islamic forces form a big part of the resistance forces. Already there is a big split between the so-called moderates and the fundamentalists. They don't agree about what to do after the Soviet pull-out. There is contradiction over whether they should join together with the pro-Soviet forces, the People's Democratic Party (PDP) with its two factions, the Khalq and the Parcham, after the pull-out of the Soviet Union, or whether they should continue the war.

The fundamentalists are raising their slogan of fighting the government to the end, to the total collapse of the pro-Soviet forces and of liberating their “Moslem brothers” in the Soviet Union, raising the banner of Pan-Islamism to the point of trying to export the Islamic revolution of Afghanistan to the Soviet Union.

On the other hand the more so-called moderate, pro-King Zahir [currently exiled in Italy] forces hold a different position. They don't think the question will be solved by continuing the war and call for a diplomatic approach, including forming a coalition government with the Khalq and Parcham. They are warning the fundamentalists that a hard

line could impede the Soviet troop pull-out. Some of them say, this is a peak opportunity, let's take advantage of it and let the Soviets withdraw and after they are gone then we can deal with the PDP, then we can destroy the PDP. There are forces friendly to the USSR, like the ex-prime minister of Afghanistan, Dr. Yusof, who are saying, let's compromise with the Soviets and tell them we'll have friendly relations with them after they pull out and we will keep Afghanistan a neutral country and not go against the interests of the Soviet Union, because the important thing is that the Soviets pull out.

Some of the Islamic forces are calling on the field commanders to report their daily activities to their respective Islamic party. This is how they are trying to organise the surrender of the commanders and the armed resistance forces in the villages when they feel the time is right to capitulate to the government and build the coalition government. They will ask the commanders and the people to surrender to the government with the argument that the government is no longer secular, it's not "communist," as they call the pro-Soviet regime, the so-called communist forces have turned into Islamic forces.

What the Soviets are counting on is that after they pull out the "moderates" will be attracted to the political vacuum and be drawn into the state apparatus and hopefully attract some of the armed resistance forces, who would surrender, go over to the government and supplement the Soviet soldiers coming out. The Soviets hope that a section of the population that resisted them will join the government troops, either as paid militia or soldiers of the Republic of Afghanistan. The Soviets know this can't happen overnight; that's why this so-called withdrawal is a process, spread out over nine months, or maybe over years. A civil war between the moderates who go over to the government and the fundamentalists who will resist joining the coalition government is exactly what the Soviets have in mind.

Let's go into the contradictions within the PDP itself, since the PDP's weakness is a part of what has made this retreat necessary. Factionalism has gone on for a long time between the Khalq and the Parcham, and the Soviets have not been able to unite these two puppets under the same banner. One faction has been killing the other and vice-versa. When one of the Soviet generals was interviewed about how long he thought the regime would last, he complained that the Soviets had been unable to unite these factions for the past eight years — it's time to pull out and see if these people can swim. The Soviets are admitting to the factionalism within the PDP, to its weakness, to the fact that it really is incapable of controlling the masses of people, that they are not really in command.

Within the Khalq faction there is another split into subfactions, the Nagib faction versus the Babrak Karmel forces. After Gorbachev took over, Nagib was promoted, replacing Babrak Karmel who was sent to the USSR for his "health."

Nagib is already trying to facilitate things for these so-called moderates. He took the word "democratic" out of the country's name to indicate that it is not a secular republic, and changed the colour of the national flag from red to Islamic green. Now he claims he never was really anything but a good Moslem. He goes to mosque every day to pray. In an interview, the German magazine *Der Spiegel* asked him how he feels when he goes to mosque, and he replied, "Well, I feel just like any other Moslem, obedient to my God." He was trying to send a message to the Western imperialists and to the fundamentalist Islamics that he is willing to compromise at any level, to grovel.

Now Nagib has been proposing the king be brought back. He made a trip to India to get his Indian "comrades" to ask the king to come back. Nagib said, "It's time for you to come and do your duty for the people of Afghanistan and stop the bloodshed and save your country." What is King Zahir's position? He knows that the question of Afghanistan is not going to be settled by a simple reform, by the Soviets pulling out their troops. There is an intense class struggle going on and the king does not have a solid class force to rely on. Even the Islamic forces are divided on how to view him. The moderate forces want the king to come back, while the fundamentalists are saying we don't want a king, we want an Islamic republic, led by someone like Khomeini. So the king wants to stay out of it until things clear up. The Soviets and Nagib are begging him to come back and take "any position in the government, even the most important position," as Nagib said, so as to stabilise the situation for them. And these people called themselves communists! But Zahir is holding out for a better bargain, because he knows that being the king is a valuable card.

I want to mention the U.S.'s delicate approach to the Islamic parties. The U.S. sees that the moderates are capable of creating a bureaucracy to run the government, and the U.S. is willing for such forces to dominate the regime, but at the same time the U.S. does not want a Khomeini-type regime headed by Gulbuddin and the Moslem fundamentalists. To a certain extent the U.S. has had to rely on the fundamentalists, because the latter are more organised and more determined to fight through to the end, but this sweet cookie has a little bit of bitterness inside. The U.S. is afraid that such a regime might become another Khomeini-type regime with which they could only have secret dealings, a regime which would not allow the open U.S. political, economic and military influence.

The U.S. would love to have Afghanistan in its sphere of influence, but they have other objectives as well, and they don't want to win it too fast. They want to kill two birds with one stone: to reap the maximum amount of anti-communist propaganda from the atrocities the USSR is committing, to bleed the Soviets to the end, as Reagan has said, fighting to the last Afghan, which is very clearly the

U.S.'s policy, and eventually win Afghanistan as well, which they would like to be able to use as they use Pakistan. Kissinger or one of the other think-tank types wrote recently that the Soviets, the "communists," really punished the U.S. by backing Vietnam against them, and it's the U.S.'s turn now, the U.S. should do the same thing to the USSR. They want to use Afghanistan as broadly and as long as possible for their anti-communist propaganda while preparing to grab Afghanistan for themselves. They are imperialists; they do need spheres of influence, and they need Afghanistan to strengthen their position in the area, alongside Pakistan, especially because of their problems in the Indian Ocean and the Gulf.

So the enemies are tremendously divided and disorganised. There are some other favourable factors as well which the revolutionary forces can also turn to good account.

Some independent resistance Mojahadeen fighters do not accept either of these two groups, the moderates or fundamentalists. Referring again to the *Der Spiegel* interview, they ask some Islamic field commanders what the situation is there. The commanders replied that the Islamic parties are split into all kinds of groupings, probably 43 in Pakistan. But as far as we're concerned, they said, we have been the ones to lead the war these eight years while they squabble amongst themselves about how to split the money they have been pocketing since the beginning of the war. Our task is to liberate Afghanistan; these people can stay in Pakistan, or Germany or wherever they are with their squabbling over selfish interests because we are the ones who will determine the fate of the future government and resistance forces in Afghanistan.

The commanders, who are the main leaders of the fighting forces, are somewhat separate from the Islamic party leadership — there is a split between the commanders and nationalist forces from the moderates and the fundamentalists. This independent movement of commanders wants to keep fighting, and in a united way — more than before when they were under the command of the Islamic parties. Some commanders have the idea that each commander should try to form some kind of local government in the village where they have been fighting. This situation goes against the authority of the Islamic parties to form an overall Islamic republic and impose their fascist regime on the people of Afghanistan and on the resistance forces, and also goes against the civil war which the moderates and fundamentalists are going to impose on the masses of people in Afghanistan. Revolutionary forces must pay attention to this contradiction and seek guidelines and criteria to separate these commanders from the reactionary leadership of both the moderates and fundamentalists, although this is not the most important task for communists nor the basic strategy for revolution in Afghanistan.

The present situation is a fine school in which the communists can expose to the Afghan masses how

phony the mask of communism and democracy on the face of the Soviet puppets really was. The PDP, which worked with the Soviets to commit all sorts of atrocities in the name of communism and democracy, has revealed itself to be just another regular opportunist party. As for the Islamic forces who were fighting the so-called atheist government, now they are working for a coalition government. Islam is a reactionary ideology and reactionaries use the faith of the people in order to serve their class interests. So this is another good thing for the revolutionary forces, to be able to expose the nature and interests of the various classes in the context of this fierce class struggle.

The situation is, however, fraught with dangers, particularly in regard to this civil war the Soviets are counting on and all the imperialists are promoting. Earlier, the people had a common enemy. They were fighting an invading imperialist power. But after the pull-out, this scenario changed and will change completely. This is going to be a dirty and intense war. The same trick the U.S. used to "Vietnamise" the war will happen here, to "Afghanise" the war. With the Soviets gone, there will be a lot of calls for blood revenge, this village against that one, this tribe against that tribe, unless the revolutionaries expose the dirty tricks the Soviets are pulling to divide the Afghans. With the signing of the so-called peace treaty in Geneva, the imperialists reserved the right to pump more and more arms into Afghanistan and with these arms the pro-Soviet puppet government and the Islamic forces are going to arm their own troops; the arms will be used against the masses. That's why I say the war will intensify. The Soviet pull-out is not a "peace" process, it's not a treaty about peace, it's the intensification of war.

The reactionary forces are neither organised nor united. On the other hand, the revolutionary forces are not either. The question posed for all the different political forces and classes is who can most quickly and effectively unite and unite others in order to wage and win the war, which will certainly continue, even if in a different form. The strategy of revolutionaries for building up a communist party and a people's army and united front is still valid. The main enemy to fight is the government, even if it becomes a coalition government of pro-Soviet and moderate forces, even if the king joins in too. The Soviet Union has continued to protect its interests economically, politically and especially militarily in the region and is going to continue to support the regime and is trying to find more of a base for their disintegrating government. In the past the USSR used its so-called Red Army there to uphold this reactionary regime, whereas now they're buying certain sections of the reactionary classes (within the Islamic forces) to serve as the class base for the Soviet interests. Even if the Soviets pull out, the revolutionary forces and liberation movement must direct their armed struggle against the coalition government until its complete overthrow. □