

The Conflict of Tribe and

The Conflict of Tribe and State in Iran and Afghanistan

Edited by Richard Tapper



In 1978 and 1979, revolutions in Afghanistan and Iran marked a shift in the balance of power in South West Asia and the world. Shaken by events in Iran and the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, the world has once more been made aware that tribalism is no anachronism in a struggle for political and cultural self-determination.

In Afghanistan the Soviet army is encountering tough opposition from tribesmen, whilst in Iran the onset of the revolution gave the tribes, many of which are separate minority nations, an opportunity to move towards independence. Indeed, Iran is still threatened by the possibility that it may break up into smaller national units. Much new research in this book provides historical and anthropological perspectives necessary to the eventual understanding of the events surrounding the revolutions.

Richard Tapper is a Lecturer in the Department of Anthropology and Sociology at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London.

Jacket illustration is by courtesy of The Middle East Photographic Archive, London.

£19.95 net
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**THE CONFLICT OF TRIBE AND STATE
IN IRAN AND AFGHANISTAN**

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The Conflict of Tribe and State in Iran and Afghanistan

Edited by

RICHARD TAPPER

CROOM HELM
London & Canberra
ST. MARTIN'S PRESS
New York

INSTITUT KURDECI

Bibliothèque

© 1983 R. Tapper
Croom Helm Ltd, Provident House, Burrell Row,
Beckenham, Kent BR3 1AT

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

The Conflict of tribe and state in Iran and
Afghanistan.

1. Iran--History
2. Afghanistan--History

I. Tapper, Richard
955 DS295

ISBN 0-7099-2440-2

All rights reserved. For information write:
St. Martin's Press, Inc., 175 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10010
First published in the United States of America in 1983

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data
Main entry under title:

The Conflict of tribe and state in Iran and Afghanistan.

Based on papers from a conference held at the School
of Oriental and African Studies in London, July, 1979.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

1. Tribes and tribal system--Iran--Congresses.
 2. Tribes and tribal system--Afghanistan--Congresses.
 3. Iran--Social life and customs--Congresses.
 4. Iran--Politics and government--Congresses.
 5. Afghanistan--Social life and customs--Congresses.
 6. Afghanistan--Politics and government--Congresses.
- I. Tapper, Richard.

DS58.C66 1983 305.8'00955 83-3112
ISBN 0-312-16232-4 (St. Martin's)

Printed in Great Britain
by Billing & Son Ltd, Worcester

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED IN NOTES

- AA - American Anthropologist
AE - American Ethnologist
Annales - Annales: Economies, Sociétés, Civilisations
AQ - Anthropological Quarterly
AUFS Reports - American Universities Field Staff Reports (Hanover, NH)
BSOAS - Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies
EI - Encyclopedia of Islam
FO - Foreign Office Records, Public Record Office, London
IJMES - International Journal of Middle East Studies
IOL - India Office Library and Records, London
IS - Iranian Studies
JRAI - Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute
JRCAS - Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society
JRGS - Journal of the Royal Geographical Society
LPS - L/P&S, Political and Secret Department, India Office Records
MEJ - Middle East Journal
MERIP Reports - Middle East Research and Information Project Reports
MIDCC - M. Bonine and N. Keddie (eds.), Modern Iran: The Dialectics of Continuity and Change (SUNY Press, Albany, 1981)
PPS - Equipe Ecologie et Anthropologie des Sociétés Pastorales (eds.), Pastoral Production and Society (Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, Paris/Cambridge University Press, 1979)
ZKORGO - Zapiski Kavkazskago Otdela Imperatorskago Russkago Geograficheskago Obshchestva

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PREFACE

In 1978 and 1979, revolutions in Afghanistan and Iran marked a shift in the balance of power in South West Asia and the world. Since then, indeed, events in both countries have regularly dominated the media. Shaken by Khumeyni's overthrow of the Shah and the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, the world has once more been made aware that tribalism is no anachronism in a struggle for political and cultural self-determination. In both countries there has been the sort of tribal resurgence that so often in the past accompanied political upheavals such as they are now experiencing.

The Shah of Iran, miscalculating the strength of opposition to the secularism, excesses and western orientation of his regime, fell, with a suddenness and completeness that confounded the predictions of almost all the experts, to a genuine popular revolution led by the remarkable Ayatullah Khumeyni. In Afghanistan, where a palace revolution in 1973 had replaced the 200-year-old Durrani monarchy with a Republic headed by the last King's cousin, the government was unable or unwilling to put into effect its programme of reform, but here too the socialist military coup in March 1978 came sooner than expected by most experts, who also failed to predict the scale of the subsequent Soviet military intervention at the end of 1979.

By 1980 both revolutions were in trouble. The Taraki and Amin governments had not merely failed to win popular support in Afghanistan but rather managed to alienate it, while the Soviet forces and their puppet Karmal seemed unlikely to be able, by any means short of genocide, to defeat the nationalist insurgency, widely supported in the country especially by Islamic and tribal elements. In Iran the fundamentalist leaders, though continuing to inspire

Preface

fanatical loyalties, no longer had the support of all the disparate elements that once united behind them. A major problem for the Islamic Republic was the resistance on the part of regional, ethnic and tribal minorities. Within the country, substantial numbers of pastoral nomads settled over the last decades have now resumed their former way of life, and tribal leaders long used to exile in the West have been welcomed back.

It has been difficult for observers, whether interested laymen or supposed experts on the area, to evaluate reports from the two countries. The main obstacle has been lack of reliable information, particularly on current events and aspirations in the rural and tribal areas, and on the anthropological and historical background to the present crisis. This volume is intended to go some way towards fulfilling the second of these needs. It is based on a series of papers delivered at a conference held at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London in July 1979. The conference was in fact planned as early as 1977, when the convenors (Richard Tapper of SOAS and David Brooks of Durham) felt that in view of the considerable amount of research that had been done over the last two decades on the ethnography and history of the tribes of Iran and Afghanistan in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the time was now ripe for stock-taking and generalisation, and an attempt at systematic comparison within a historical perspective, both between Afghanistan and Iran and also with other areas of the world.

By the time of the conference, the topic had acquired added interest and contemporary relevance. Most of the papers were circulated in advance, and some useful and wide-ranging discussions took place. Participants - anthropologists and historians of many persuasions - came from various countries of Europe and North America, but a major disappointment was that the same political developments in Iran and Afghanistan which made the conference so topical also prevented the attendance of several scholars from both countries who had been invited, though there were valuable contributions to the conference discussions from some of their compatriots resident in Britain. Since then, the papers have been revised to take account of the discussions, of the central focus suggested by the editor, and of more recent developments. A few papers presented at the conference have been withdrawn, and their place taken by others written since.

The main concern of the volume is not an analy-

Preface

sis of the causes and courses of the revolutions themselves, nor of the sparse information available on tribal involvement - though some of this is examined in several chapters. It is rather to provide historical and anthropological perspectives necessary to the eventual understanding of the events surrounding the revolutions. Nor does the volume offer a single hypothesis or approach, but rather combines different approaches to a single theme, explored in a variety of contexts. It is maintained that, despite the spate of publications that have already appeared purporting to explain the revolutions, complete and credible analyses will anyway have to await further documentation of the motives and actions of a rather wider spectrum of society in both countries than has so far been represented. The volume, finally, pretends neither to a complete coverage of the topics addressed, nor to complete representation of experts on those topics - several well-known authorities are not included, though their works figure prominently in the volume through citation and reference.

Thanks are particularly due to the Social Science Research Council (UK), and to SOAS, for jointly and generously sponsoring the conference on which this book is based. The contributors to the book owe much to the other participants in the conference, especially Asger Christensen, Klaus Ferdinand, Alfred Janata, Nikki Keddie, Ann Lambton, David Marsden, David Morgan, André Singer and Susan Wright. The editor would like to acknowledge the promptness with which the other contributors, in spite of pressing commitments, responded to his communications, and to thank especially his fellow-convenor David Brooks for help and advice in planning and organising the conference. He is also grateful to the following: to Michael Strange, Keith McLachlan, Sarah Ladbury and Hugh Beattie for assistance during and after the conference; to the Editorial Board of the SOAS Bulletin for permission to republish chapter 7; and to Cambridge University Press for permission to make use of material to be published in Volume 7 of the Cambridge History of Iran. Unpublished Crown Copyright material in Public Record Office and the India Office Records reproduced in this book appears by kind permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office.

The book, finally, owes a great deal to the help and encouragement of Ernest Gellner and Andrew Strathern, who brought vital and stimulating non-regional perspectives to the conference and have

Preface

written the two concluding chapters. Neither they nor the other contributors saw the editor's Introduction (the last chapter to be written) before submitting their own final drafts. The editor is responsible for the final condition of the book, including the system of transliteration.

SOAS, London

Richard Tapper

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A NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION AND USAGE

The system of transliteration used is a compromise between the demands of consistency, convention, simplicity, literacy and closeness to spoken language. There exists no one conventional system adequate for both Iranian and Afghan Persian, let alone also for Kurdish, Azarbayjani Turkish, Luri, Baluchi, and the Pashto dialects represented here. For simplicity, and since linguistic questions are not crucial in this book, both hamzeh and ayn and all diacritical marks are omitted in the text; without them, linguistically expert readers will still easily recognise names and terms; others will not miss them.

The following system is employed: the letters a, i, u, represent both long and short vowels in Iranian Persian, supplemented by e, a long vowel in some non-Persian names and words (as in Gardez, khel, el), and by o, used as is conventional for the long u in some Afghan Persian, Pashto and Kurdish words (as in Dost, Pashto, kor, Simko). The letter a is also used for the Pashto sound sometimes elsewhere transliterated u (as in Pashto, mashar). The final eh of Iranian Persian words is transliterated a in many Afghan words (hamsaya, Paında, for example). Among diphthongs, ai represents two distinct vowels, separated in writing by ayn or hamzeh; ay (pronounced as in English 'high'), ey (as in 'hey!'), and oy (as in 'ahoy!') are diphthongs, as is ou (pronounced in Iran as in English 'home', in Afghanistan as in 'house'). The glottal plosive q is transliterated k in some Afghan names (e.g. Kandahar). The other consonants are more or less as in English, with the following combinations: ch as in 'church', sh as in 'sheep' (except in Ishaq, where the s and h are separate), kh as Scottish ch, gh as Parisian r. Some proper names (e.g. Herat, Tehran, Khyber) are left as familiar in English.

In this volume, through no conviction but conforming with current usage, 'Iran' is used for the country sometimes known as 'Persia', and 'Iranian' for a citizen of Iran, with no ethnic connotations. 'Persian' is used for the language spoken as first or second tongue by most people in both Iran and Afghanistan; in both countries Persian is called farsi, though in Afghanistan it is known officially as dari. There are numerous dialects of spoken Persian in both countries, though the written language is virtually uniform. 'Persians' will be used for those Iranians for whom Persian is first language. 'Afghan' is used, as is conventional, for citizens of Afghanistan; local usage is different: for most people in Afghanistan and Pakistan 'Afghan' ('Oughan') denotes speakers of the Pashto (Pakhto, Pushtu, Pukhtu, etc.) language (often also called 'Afghani'), perhaps half the population of Afghanistan, who are here termed 'Pathans', 'Pashtuns' or 'Pakhtuns' (otherwise Pukhtun, Pushtun).

The plural s is used for larger linguistic/ethnic categories: Turks, Turkmens, Pathans (Pashtuns, etc), Kurds, Lurs, Baluches, Uzbeks, Aymaqs, Hazaras, Tajiks, Nuristanis; and for ruling dynasties; but not for other explicitly unified political groups or sub-divisions of any of the above.

No apologies are made for the use of terms such as 'Persian' (for the language or its speakers) or 'Pathan' (for speakers of Pashto). The misconceived pedantry that insists that English adopt some approximation to indigenous equivalents (Farsi, Dari, Pukhtun) ignores the fact that neither is English accustomed to do the same to French, German or any other more familiar languages or nationalities, nor does it insist that Iranians or Afghans (or anybody else) do the same for English.

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**THE CONFLICT OF TRIBE AND STATE
IN IRAN AND AFGHANISTAN**

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Richard Tapper

The Scope of the Volume

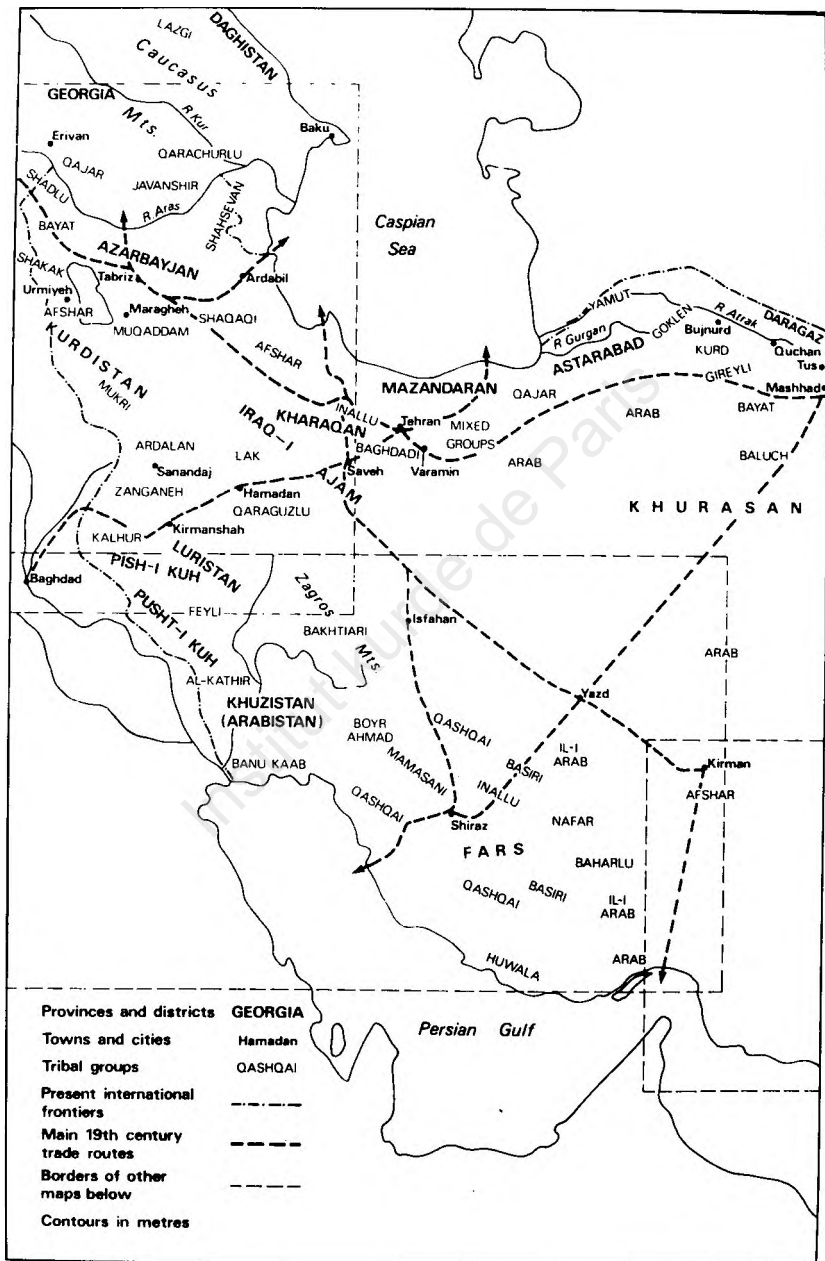
The notion of 'tribe' is notoriously vague. For some, 'tribes' are what anthropologists study, for others a 'tribe' is a very specific form of economic and political group. In fact the term has been used in such a variety of ways in social anthropology, as in other fields, that, as with 'race' in physical anthropology, it has almost ceased to be of analytical or comparative value. The issues are conceptual, terminological, and to some extent methodological. Can we talk of 'tribal society' as a particular stage of social evolution? Is 'tribal culture' an identifiable complex? Are 'tribes' groups with particular features and functions? Are they found at particular levels in a political structure? How far can 'tribes' or 'tribal groups' be analysed in isolation from wider political, economic and cultural contexts? Are 'tribes' the creation of states? Is it useful to contrast 'tribal' with 'peasant' society? Or 'tribalism' with 'feudalism', or with 'ethnicity'? Or 'tribe' with 'clan' or 'lineage' or 'state'? Is 'tribe' merely a state of mind?¹

Such questions are not merely academic. They are live political issues in many countries of the world, and in many cases, ignoring or sometimes deliberately exploiting the ambiguities of the notion of 'tribe', states adopt unfortunate and often disastrous policies towards their 'tribal' populations.

The following chapters tackle some of these questions as they affect two particular states, Iran and Afghanistan, in whose provincial and national history up to the present day 'tribes' and 'tribalism' have always played a prominent part. The relation of tribe and state emerges as two clearly

Introduction

MAP 1: Sketch-map of Iran and Afghanistan, to show places mentioned in chapter 1, with approximate tribal locations in the nineteenth century



Introduction

distinct but closely linked issues: the first is the relation of specific tribal groups with specific states as empirical political forces; the second is more general, and shades into the classic oppositions in the history of social philosophy, such as community and society, kinship and territory, status and contract.

Tribal groups in Iran and Afghanistan are conventionally viewed as historically inveterate opponents of the state. They were notorious as makers and breakers of dynasties, while both countries were ruled by dynasties of tribal origins until the twentieth century. Some years ago, Lambton observed of Iran,

Control of the tribal element has been and is one of the perennial problems of government ... All except the strongest governments have delegated responsibility in the tribal areas to the tribal chiefs. One aspect of Persian history is that of a struggle between the tribal element and the non-tribal element, a struggle which has continued in a modified form down to the present day. Various Persian dynasties have come to power on tribal support. In almost all cases the tribes have proved an unstable basis on which to build the future of the country.²

These remarks apply, though in very different ways, to both Afghanistan and Iran, and in different ways to the various tribal groups within each. They apply of course to much of the Middle East, where 'tribes' have never, in historical times, been isolated groups of 'primitives', remote from contact with states or their agents, but rather tribes and states have created and maintained each other as a single system, though one of inherent instability. The reason for a comparative focus here on Iran and Afghanistan is not merely that these two countries are currently undergoing radical upheaval - nor that the editor happens to have made a study of tribal groups in both - but that historical and cultural links between them and between their tribal groups are broader and deeper than between either country and any other of their neighbours. This is not to deny the importance of links between tribal and ethnic groups across the frontiers of Iran with Turkey, Iraq, the Soviet Union and Pakistan, or of Afghanistan with the Soviet Union, Pakistan and even China, which are referred to in several chapters.

Introduction

Nor is the historical period 1800-1980 chosen arbitrarily. By 1800, the Durrani and the Qajars, the last major tribal dynasties to rule each country, were in power, though shifts between the Sadozai and Barakzai branches of the Durrani were still to take place. Both dynasties survived until the twentieth century, at once because of and in spite of the Great Power rivalries which led to the end of independence and the apparent decline of tribalism in each country. The renewed, albeit changed importance of tribalism in the early 1980s needs no further comment at this stage. To have extended the historical baseline for the book back into the eighteenth century would have called for consideration of the rise of the Durrani and Qajars to power, and of their transformation from tribal chiefdoms into ruling dynasties. Although avoiding such important problems, subject perhaps for another book but beyond the scope of this one, several chapters do consider to what extent and in what senses the organisation and structure of the state in nineteenth century Afghanistan or Iran were permeated by the 'tribalism' of the ruling group.

The social, ecological, economic and other bases of the 'tribal problem' are considered in depth in this book, as is the role of the tribes and their leaders as actors and agents in the Great Game of Asia during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. But if the states involved were preoccupied by a 'tribal problem', the tribes could be said to have had a perennial 'state problem'; none was ever, at least during recent centuries, totally unaffected by any state. Another major theme of this book is an assessment of this 'state problem', that is the role of states in creating, transforming, or destroying tribal institutions and structures.

In considering the degree to which the differential impact of states and their policies can explain the variety of economic, social, and political forms evident among the tribes of Iran and Afghanistan, contributors to this book insist on the necessity for a multi-causal explanation. Several chapters, accepting that there can be no example of a 'pure' tribal society in these countries, seek to elicit the essence of 'tribe' by distinguishing 'internal' and 'external' factors impinging on tribal society. This has led many contributors to the second, wider view of 'tribe-state' relations, not as an opposition of substantive social, economic and political structures so much as an opposition of tendencies, modes or models of organisation, not just

Introduction

analytically distinct but consciously experienced as a tension within the tribal groups discussed. It is at this level that tribal forms and tribe-state relations in Iran and Afghanistan seem to be most fruitfully comparable with other parts of the world.

Any comparative study must begin, however, with an attempt at definition, typology and classification, if only to establish what is being compared; only then can the comparison produce explanation of variation and generalisation. We begin here with an inability to produce a substantive definition of our subject - 'tribe' - which in Iran and Afghanistan specifies little about system of production, scale, culture or political structure. Historically, in these countries, groups defined by a wide range of different criteria have been called 'tribes'. Moreover, tribal groups commonly comprise several levels of organisation, from camp to confederation. Again, different criteria define membership of groups at each level, and it is not agreed at which level the term 'tribe' is appropriate. Definition is not aided by indigenous terminology, which includes a variety of words of Turco-Mongol and Arabic origins, often used interchangeably and without precision in the literature.³

Different writers - historians, anthropologists, political agents, travellers; Europeans, Russians, Iranians, Afghans - have, according to their previous experiences, their personalities and their objectives, constructed, maintained and only occasionally confronted widely varying images of the tribes they encountered in Afghanistan and Iran.⁴ The general view of tribal society among contemporary writers of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries opposed it to settled urban society, the civilised Islamic ideal. While the city was the source of government, order and productivity, the tribes had a natural tendency to rebellion, rapine and destruction, a tendency which might be related to the starkness of their habitat and its remoteness from the sources of civilisation, and also to the under-employment inherent in their way of life. Such a view has some justification, but it is superficial and over-simplified.

Beyond this, conventional images of tribes in the two countries differ. Afghan tribes are renowned as hardy, independent, warlike mountaineers, farming barren fields and rigorous if not fanatical in their devotion to Islam. The tribes of Iran by contrast are supposedly pastoral nomads, organised into strong centralised confederacies under powerful

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and aristocratic chiefs, and notorious for their ignorance of and indifference to Islam. There is some truth in these stereotypes too, at least as a basis for drawing a contrast between tribes in the two countries, but they are nevertheless exaggerated, and exceptions abound in each case.

A better understanding of the nature of tribal political organisations, and of relations between tribal and non-tribal society, must be sought in a closer historical examination of the social and economic basis of the tribal system. Unfortunately, research on this topic has hardly begun. The sources for it are mostly written from a distance by outsiders viewing the tribes with hostility or some other bias. They mostly concern matters such as taxation, military contingents, disturbances and measures taken to quell them, and inaccurate lists of major tribal groups, numbers and leaders. They rarely deal specifically or in reliable detail with the basic social and economic organisation of tribal communities, and mention individual tribes only when prominent in supporting or opposing the government, when involved in inter-tribal disorders, or when transported from one region to another. We still have only the vaguest notions of tribal economies in nineteenth and early twentieth century Afghanistan and Iran: what the relations or production were and how they have changed; who controlled land and how access was acquired; what proportion of producers controlled their own production, how many were tenants or dependants of wealthier tribesmen or of city-based merchants, and whether control of production was exercised directly or through taxation or price-fixing. The sparse information in the sources must be supplemented and interpreted by tentative and possibly misleading extrapolations from more recent ethnographic sources.

Some of the dangers are evident in the recent interesting exchange in Iranian Studies between the historians Helfgott and Reid. Helfgott, whose main study has been of the rise of the Qajars, argues that the Iranian state was composed of two or more separate but linked 'socio-economic formations'. Apparently extrapolating from the Basiri (Basseri) of the modern era, he characterises Iranian tribes as pastoral nomadic kinship-based chiefdoms that form closed economic systems; such nomadic socio-economic formations are distinct from but in constant relation with the settled agricultural and urban formations. Unfortunately he produces little evidence for his argument, overstates the role of

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pastoral nomadism, kinship and chiefship in Iranian tribal society, and underestimates the will and capacity of Iranian pastoral nomads to produce surplus. He is accused of theoreticism by Reid, whose own version of tribal organisation, to which he is led mainly by data on administration and the perspective of the state, is that its essence in Iran was the highly complex centralised oymaq system that flourished under the Safavids; oymaqs were neither simply pastoral nor based on kinship (though their sub-divisions may have been); they were 'states', but they were also 'tribes', says Reid, because their leadership was hereditary. Such groups, however, could not be called 'tribes' according to accepted criteria, but were rather 'confederacies', and they are not comparable with the nomadic tribal groups to which Helfgott is directing his argument; while on Reid's own admission the oymaq system disintegrated by the eighteenth century and hence was of no direct relevance to tribalism or pastoral nomadism in the period since.⁵

One fallacy that needs early correction is that tribes are essentially, if not generally, pastoral nomads. Numerous observers have noted how the geography and ecology of both countries favours pastoral nomadism. The terrain and climate make much of the land uncultivable under pre-industrial conditions, and suitable only for seasonal grazing; and as only a small proportion of such pastures can be used by village-based livestock, vast ranges of steppe and mountain are left to be exploited by nomads - mobile tent-dwellers. Such nomads until very recently numbered two to three millions in each country, and almost all were tribally organised. The difference was that, although most tribespeople in Iran were nomads, in Afghanistan most tribespeople were settled cultivators who had little or no leaning to pastoralism or nomadism.⁶ In other words, as has been argued by Barth and others, tribalism is more necessary to nomadism than nomadism to tribalism.

Another area of misconception is that of tribal political structures. The allegiance of tribespeople to a set of comparable political groups and leaders is often assumed, especially in the literature on Iran. But this assumption is the product of a state viewpoint, according to which even the most autonomous inhabitants of the territory over which sovereignty is claimed should have representatives and identifiable patterns of organisation. The sources tend to record these as 'chiefs' and

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'tribes', whereas such entities may not exist except on paper. We are left wondering, for example, who the Bakhtiari are: are they followers of the Bakhtiari khans? or merely the khans themselves? or the inhabitants of the territory known as Bakhtiari? Are all those described as Bakhtiari conscious of cultural or political unity? Tribal names found in the sources - and used in the narrative below - imply a uniformity of structure which (if it exists) may be entirely due to administrative action, and may disguise fundamental disparities of culture and society.

If such problems are appreciated, it will clearly be impossible to attempt a precise terminology that will not misrepresent the varied nature of the tribal societies under consideration. But it may be helpful to suggest some distinctions to bear in mind, to be applied less to groups and individuals than to the kinds of processes that affect them.

Tribes may be used loosely of a localised group in which kinship is the dominant idiom of organisation, and whose members consider themselves culturally distinct (in terms of customs, dialect or language, and origins); tribes are usually politically unified, though not necessarily under a central leader, both features being commonly attributable to interaction with states. Such tribes also form parts of larger, usually regional, political structures of tribes of similar kinds; they do not usually relate directly with the state, but only through these intermediate structures.⁷ The more explicit term confederacy or confederation should be used for a local group of tribes that is heterogeneous in terms of culture, presumed origins and perhaps class composition, yet is politically unified, usually under a central authority: examples include the Khamseh and Qashqai (chapter 9), the Shahsevan (chapter 14) and many Kurdish groups such as the Shakak (chapter 13). It is useful further to distinguish confederacies, as groups of tribes united primarily in relation to the state or extra-local forces, from coalitions or clusters of tribes, more ephemeral unions for the pursuit of specific local rivalries, perhaps within a confederacy and probably without central leadership.

It is better not to use the term 'tribe' for major ethnic groups or nations, such as Afghans, Pushtuns/Pathans, Kurds, Hazaras, Turkmens, Uzbeks, Tajiks, Lurs, Arabs, Baluches, which are culturally or linguistically distinct but not normally politically unified - though political and territorial units bearing these names have existed in each case.⁸

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A problem arises with some major subdivisions of these ethnic groups, that are culturally and politically distinct and hence constitute 'tribes', yet their own subdivisions, at perhaps more than one level, may also fulfil the criteria of 'tribes': for example, the Bakhtiari Lurs (chapters 10 to 12), or the Durrani, Ghilzai, Wazir and other Pathans (chapters 3 to 7). My own inclination, in spite of their relative cultural homogeneity, is to refer to these groups, on the grounds of scale, as confederacies, and to reserve the term tribe for their major components and those of the Qashqai, Shahsevan, Shakak, Khamsheh, etc. If we were to refer, as is sometimes done, to all these ethnic groups, nations and major confederacies as 'tribes', the problems of comparability would have been even grosser, except in a discussion of state policies to minorities. The definitions I have suggested aim to facilitate comparability through establishing some equivalence of scale and function among groups so designated by a single term. There is evidence of named groups for whom different terms (e.g. tribe, coalition, confederacy, nation) would have been appropriate at different points in their history.⁹

It is also useful to distinguish tribe from clan and lineage: a clan is a group of people, part of a larger nation or ethnic group, who claim common ancestry, though without necessarily being able to trace it; a lineage is a localised and unified group of people who can trace links of common ancestry; a clan may thus comprise several lineages, while clans and lineages at various levels may form a hierarchical, 'segmentary' nesting structure. Clan and lineage may be seen as the cultural or ideological dimension of tribes and their sections, when these are politically-defined groups. When tribe is used to denote a kinship-based group, then clan is its synonym. An almost inevitable confusion arises from the two rather different meanings of the adjective 'tribal': first, 'with the properties of a tribe' (or clan) especially in the sense of kinship-based; secondly, 'composed of tribes', which are not necessarily related to each other by kinship. The statement that a group or system is 'tribal' is therefore ambiguous unless clarified by context.

The state, finally, is a territorially-bounded polity (see Chapter 2) with a centralised government and a monopoly of legitimate force, usually including within its bounds different social classes and ethnic/cultural groups. Some scholars have declared modern concepts of the state to be inapplicable to

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pre-modern Iran and Afghanistan, in terms of degree of central control and the forms, functions and ideology of government;¹⁰ but for our purposes, the existence of territorial frontiers (however vaguely defined), a central government (however weak and limited in its aims) and a heterogeneous population, are enough to define the state. In these terms, some confederacies constitute states, while some states operate on the basis of tribal ties, or, in the form of empires, recognise the autonomy of other states and tribes within their territories.

Before proceeding to the historical survey which is the necessary background to the chapters that follow, it is appropriate to sketch some contrasts, in basic physical and cultural geography, that have affected the tribal populations in the two countries. Dominant physical features of Iran are a central plateau and the surrounding mountain ranges and steppes. The main centres of settlement are located in or on the fringes of the plateau, the mountains and steppes being occupied chiefly by minority tribal groups, often Sunnis in a predominantly Shiite population: Kurds, Turkmens, Baluches and Arabs. The centre of Afghanistan, on the other hand, is a mountainous backbone, where several minority tribal groups are found, including the Shiite Hazaras and the people of Nuristan, formerly Kafiristan. The majority Sunni population, including the dominant, tribally-organised Pathans, inhabit the surrounding steppes, plateaux and hills.

Persian was the language most understood in nineteenth-century Iran and perhaps also in Afghanistan, but the main tribal groups, as well as the ruling dynasties, were not originally Persian-speaking. In Iran the ruling Qajars and many other tribal groups (Afshar, Qashqai, Turkmen, Shahsevan, and other remnants of the Qizilbash confederacy of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries) spoke Turki, while others spoke Iranian languages distinct from Persian, such as Kurdish, Luri, Baluchi. The Durrani rulers and the main tribal groups of Afghanistan were Pashto-speakers, while significant tribal elements spoke Turki, Baluchi and the Kafir and Dardic languages of the north-east. But in both countries the urban centres were dominated by Persian language and civilisation, which often proved stronger in the long run than invading tribal cultures. Here too, major differences are relevant: for instance, Iran has always been more a city-oriented society, Afghanistan more a confederation of tribal groups. The Pathans who have dominated

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Afghanistan have been able to preserve their territorial and political integrity since the eighteenth century, far less affected by forced migrations than many tribal groups in Iran.

The dominant cleavage in Iranian society until recently, between Turks (dominant but 'uncouth' tribes, usually nomads) and Tats or Tajiks (subordinate but 'civilised' townsmen and peasants), is to some extent paralleled in Afghanistan by a cleavage, not between tribe and non-tribe, nor between nomad and settled, but between Pathans (Afghans) and the rest, whether urban, peasant or tribal. Pathans tend to refer to the rest as 'Parsiwan' (or 'Farsi-ban'), literally 'Persian-speakers'.

Iran and Afghanistan from 1700 to 1800

In the first half of the eighteenth century, the histories of Iran and Afghanistan were intertwined. In 1700 most of present-day Afghanistan was under at least the nominal sovereignty of the Safavid rulers of Iran based at Isfahan. Much of the Safavid Empire, however, was de facto autonomous, even independent of the capital, and soon after 1700 many tribal groups broke into rebellion, especially Sunnis who predominated on the margins of the Empire. Thus the Ghilzai Afghans made themselves independent at Kandahar in 1709 and the Abdali followed by taking control of Herat in 1715, while raids and incursions by Baluches in the south-east, Uzbeks and Turkmens in the north-east, and Lazgis and Kurds in the north-west intensified.¹¹

The Safavid capital fell in 1722 to Mahmud Ghilzai and his Afghan tribesmen; but Ghilzai rule was shortlived, and in 1729, after gaining control of most of the north-east, Tahmasp Quli Khan, an Afshar tribesman from Khurasan, subdued the Abdali at Herat and drove the Ghilzai from Isfahan, where he restored nominal Safavid rule under a puppet Shah. In the following years he recovered all the territories that had been lost to the Afghans, and to the Ottomans and Russians in the west and north-west.

Tahmasp Quli, or Nadir Shah as he became in 1736, was a military adventurer rather than a tribal chief.¹² Several branches of the Afshar remained opposed to him, and his following consisted of Turks, Afghans, Kurds, and Lurs, whose basis for unity was military discipline and a common interest in plunder. Nadir himself had little time for civil administra-

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tion. Although he established 'security' in the country, his exactions, in the interest of his perpetual martial exploits, caused much of the settled population to emigrate. Having deposed his Safavid puppet, he broke away from the precedents of that dynasty, establishing his capital at Mashhad in Khurasan, and favouring Sunni tribal groups such as Afghans and Turkmens. However he revived elements of the tribal policy of his great Safavid predecessor Abbas I (1587-1639). Generally he governed the tribes through their own leaders; in some cases he appears to have nominated paramount chiefs. To punish rebels and discourage the Ottomans during his campaigns against them, he devastated the provinces of the Caucasus, Azarbayjan, Iraq-i Ajam, and Fars. Numerous tribes were transported from these areas, from Kurdistan and Luristan and also from Herat and Kandahar, to Khurasan, where they could be supervised, defend his metropolitan province and supply pastoral produce and - most important - manpower for his army. In the east, where his conquests extended into the Mughal Empire beyond the Indus, he did less to disrupt the tribal peoples; indeed he paid tribute to the frontier tribes.

Nadir was assassinated in 1747, and his empire at once disintegrated under the rivalries of his successors. The eastern half, and much of his treasure, fell to his trusted Afghan general, Ahmad Khan Abdali. The Abdali were the most important Afghan tribal group, of whom the most powerful and numerous element was the Barakzai tribe, led by Hajji Jamal Khan of the Muhammadzai branch; Ahmad Khan, of the less powerful but more aristocratic Popalzai tribe (the Sadozai branch) was elected leader by a jirga assembly of Nadir's Afghan generals, as something of a compromise. He later changed the name Abdali to Durrani, supposedly after the title he adopted - Durr-i Durran ('pearl of pearls'); and his leadership among the tribal chiefs indeed remained that of primus inter pares.

Ahmad Shah's realm was based at the Durrani centre of Kandahar. Although he established a royal court 'formed exactly on the model of Naudir Shauh's', with a court ceremony conducted 'according to set forms in the Toorkee language',¹³ the government was essentially tribal and feudalistic in that tribal leaders were confirmed in their possession of lands and the main offices of state were distributed among the different tribes. The ruler moreover consulted with a council of nine tribal chiefs. 'Thus the Durrani kingdom more closely resembled a confedera-

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tion of tribes and khanates than a centralised monarchy.¹⁴ To maintain his rule and consolidate his monarchy, Ahmad Shah depended on the tribes. He was able to keep their unity and support by means of the revenue surplus gained in his campaigns into India, through which he incorporated Punjab, Multan and Kashmir into his empire. But, as Gregorian points out, he failed to create a strong, independent urban economy which could enable him to assert his authority over the tribes. In this major respect, the early Durrani monarchy differed from that soon to be established in Iran by the Qajars.

Ahmad Shah's son, Timur Shah, who succeeded him in 1773, pursued similar policies. He moved the capital to Kabul, a Tajik centre beyond the direct influence of the Durrani chiefs, and added other alliances to those he maintained with the powerful Barakzai, but in the end failed to do more than his father to make the monarchy independent of tribal support. Indeed some Durrani even allied with their rivals, the Ghilzai. Besides, the rising power of the Sikhs in the Punjab, a consequent reduction in state income from that quarter, and the increased burden of taxation that had to be imposed on the cities and the non-Pashtun population, weakened the forces that the Shah needed to impose centralisation. Timur Shah's son Zaman Shah (1793-1800) also failed to achieve centralisation, conducted abortive campaigns against the Sikhs and faced threats from Iran in the west. He tried to challenge the chiefs, but ended only in breaking the Barakzai-Sadozai alliance. In 1800 Painda Khan, son of Hajji Jamal Khan and leader of the powerful Muhammadzai Barakzai, met his death for plotting to remove Zaman Shah. As a consequence, Painda's son Fatih Khan removed Zaman Shah and initiated the takeover of government by the Muhammadzai leadership which had stood behind Sadozai imperial rule since Ahmad Shah's election in 1747. 'Afghanistan thus entered the nineteenth century a politically disunited, ethnically and religiously heterogeneous, tribal-feudal state.'¹⁵

Nadir Shah's reign had left much of Iran, particularly the west, drastically depopulated. Many groups escaped transportation, slaughter and the ravages and requisitions of his campaigns by flight beyond the frontiers or into mountain or desert fastnesses. After his death, various exiles began to move back to their original homelands. In 1748 or soon after, large numbers of tribespeople who had been sent to Khurasan seized the opportunity to return home. Meanwhile, for two years his surviving

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close relatives strove against each other for control of Iran, before succumbing to the efforts of leaders of various other tribes, particularly those returned from exile. Azarbayjan was for some years occupied by one of Nadir's Afghan generals, Azad Khan of the Suleyman Khel Ghilzai, against the opposition of most of the local tribes. In the central western provinces, Lurs, Laks and Kurds came together in their opposition to the Afghans, and were led first by Ali Mardan Khan of the Bakhtiari Lurs, and then by Karim Khan of the Zand Laks. Karim Khan won over the Bakhtiari, beat off the Afghans, and set up his base at Shiraz in Fars. In the north, Muhammad Hasan Khan Qajar gained the support of the tribes of Khurasan and command of the Caspian provinces, then in 1757 campaigned in Azarbayjan and the Caucasus, drove Azad Khan out, and proceeded the next year against Karim Khan in the south. The Zand leader, however, again won over his adversary's forces, and Muhammad Hasan was killed early in 1759. Karim Khan spent a few seasons in Azarbayjan reducing rebel leaders of the Dunbuli, Shaqaqi and Shahsevan tribes, and especially Fath Ali Khan Afshar, who controlled Urmiyeh and Tabriz. He then established the comparative security and prosperity that lasted throughout his domain, with few interruptions, until his death.

While Ahmad Shah Abdali, Azad Ghilzai, Muhammad Hasan Qajar, Ali Mardan Bakhtiari and Fath Ali Afshar were tribal chiefs, Karim Khan, like Nadir Shah, was not. He was more of a bandit by origin. His own tribe, the Zand, amounted at most to a few hundred families, and his following was composed of a mixed collection of Lak, Lur, Kurd and Turk tribesmen. His final success in winning much of the western part of Nadir's empire was due less to tribal loyalties or military conquests than to diplomacy and luck.¹⁶

Karim Khan was renowned for his peaceful and equitable rule. He attracted back many of the craftsmen and others who had fled the country during the troubles of Nadir's reign and after. With the tribes, he employed similar policies to his predecessors', though on a smaller scale: the more important tribes were governed through their chiefs; he sent punitive expeditions against rebel groups, and in one case carried out a wholesale transportation, and he also brought groups to Fars to supplement his standing army. He made no attempt to devastate or colonise his frontier regions, which remained virtually independent of him. Khurasan served as a buffer against Ahmad Shah Durrani, under whose

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influence Nadir Shah's grandson Shahrukh reigned at Mashhad. To the north-west the Ottomans and Russians were no threat but rather were preoccupied with each other. The Trans-Araxian districts were only nominally in Karim Khan's domains, while he managed to claim the allegiance of the Azarbayjani chiefs by taking hostages to Shiraz.

Karim Khan Zand's death in 1779 was followed by a further period of dynastic struggles and the usual accompanying insecurity and devastation in the countryside. In the south, Zand chiefs fought for the succession, while elsewhere local leaders pursued their own ambitions. In Mazandaran and Astarabad, the Qajar chief Aqa Muhammad (son of Muhammad Hasan) carefully united the dissident elements of his tribe, then he recruited support from the Turkmens of the Atrak, reduced most of the chiefs of Azarbayjan, and by 1794 had defeated the Zand in the south. Next year, in the face of the Russian threat in the Caucasus, he took swift measures to reassert Iran's hegemony over Georgia and other Transcaucasian areas, then in 1796 took Khurasan from the Afghan puppet Shahrukh, having severely chastised the Turkmen tribes, who had been allowed to move south to the Gurgan plain in return for their aid to Aqa Muhammad and his father but had not ceased their marauding expeditions into Khurasan. During Aqa Muhammad's brief reign (he died in 1797) order was established in his domains through the terror of his wrath and the might of his army, but the countryside was laid waste in his continual campaigns. He secured the allegiance of tribal leaders by keeping members of their families in or near Tehran, the new Qajar capital.

The Population of Afghanistan and Iran around 1800

The Kingdom of Kabul - the Sadozai Afghan Empire - stretched to the Indus in the east and nominally included Kashmir, Turkistan (south of the Oxus) and much of Baluchistan, though not Badakhshan and Kafiristan. The dominant Durrani (with their component tribes Nurzai, Ishaqzai, Alizai, Atsakzai (or Achakzai), Barakzai, Popalzai, Alikozai) occupied the south-western region from Herat to Farah, Kandahar and Kalat-i Ghilzai. Between these last two places they mingled with their rivals, the Ghilzai (with their major tribes Suleyman Khel, Hotaki, Kharoti, Andar, Taraki, Tokhi), whose lands were mainly around Ghazni and as far as Kabul.

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Durrani and Ghilzai territory included extensive pastures and some irrigated farmlands, suited to mixed farming; many of the tribesmen were pastoral nomads, many were settled farmers, and substantial numbers combined the two. South of the Durrani and Ghilzai were the Kakar, while near Kabul were other settled Pushtun groups: Wardak and Safi. The eastern Pakhtuns, mainly conducting irrigated farming, included the Mohmand, Yusufzai and related tribes of Peshawar and Swat and other valleys to the north. In the mountains to the south were the 'highlanders', later famous as the frontier tribes: Afridi, Orakzai and Shinwari of the Khyber; south of them the Khatak and Bangash, and the Jaji and Jadran of Khost; towards Baluchistan, the Wazir and Mahsud. Almost all these frontier highlanders conducted a marginal agriculture, irrigated where possible (especially to the north and round the Khyber area), but mostly rain-fed. Beyond, in arid Makran and Sistan, in a relation of partnership rather than allegiance to Kabul, were the numerous but scattered Baluch and Brahui tribes, mainly pastoral nomads.

In the vicinity and hinterland of Herat, near the disputed frontier with Iran, were the Persian-speaking Chahar Aymaq tribes: Timuri (who were at this time crossing in numbers to Iran near Turbat-i Jam and Khaf), Jamshidi, Firuzkuhi, Taymani, Qala-i Nou Hazaras, and many smaller groups, mixed farmers and semi-nomads for the most part. To the north and east, in Turkistan south of the Oxus, were the lands occupied by various Turkmen groups and the Uzbek tribes and khanates, only nominally in submission to Kabul; nomads included Turkmens, Uzbeks and Arabs, while most Uzbeks and the non-tribal Tajiks were settled in villages and towns. In the high mountains of the centre of the realm, east of the Aymaqs, were the Persian-speaking Shiite Hazaras, still to a large degree autonomous, as were the numerous unsubdued pagan tribes of Kafiristan in the even higher mountains further to the east. The rest of the population of the eastern areas near Kabul and to the north were mostly non-tribal Tajiks, though in Kabul itself there was also a substantial group of Shiite Qizilbash, remnants of Nadir Shah's tribal forces from Iran, mainly of Turkic origins.

The total population of the Durrani realm must have exceeded some 14 million, of which no more than five million dwelt within the present frontiers of Afghanistan. Half the population (as now) were Pashto-speaking tribespeople. Most of the rest - Hazaras, Kafirs, Aymaqs, Turkmens, Uzbeks, Baluches -

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were also 'tribal' in organisation; only the Tajiks were not - they are often considered by definition to comprise a residual category of all the 'non-tribal' elements in the rural population.¹⁷

The tribes of Iran were by 1800 already in a state of extreme dispersal. Defined in broad terms, the tribal population, predominating in the frontier districts and in areas better suited to pastoralism than cultivation, probably varied between one-and-a-half and three million people during the nineteenth century, forming at times a quarter or more of the total population, but falling in this century to a tenth or less.

Starting in the north-west, the mountainous provinces of Kurdistan, Azarbayjan and the southern Caucasus, marked by higher rainfall and colder winters than areas to the south-east, provide excellent grazing grounds but climatic conditions in which pastoral nomadism is comparatively precarious. Most tribal groups here practised cultivation and tended to settle, or at least to spend the colder season in villages. The frontiers of this region were occupied by independent Sunni mountain tribes - Lazgis and others to the north in Daghistan, and Kurds in the west. There were also numerous Kurdish tribes in the south: Zanganeh and Kalhur (partly Shiite) near Kirmanshah on the main road between Baghdad and Khurasan, and the Mukri towards Souj-Bulagh and Maragheh. The Ardalan of Kurdistan proper were under a Vali at Sanandaj. Elsewhere in the region Kurds were mingled with Turks, tending to become 'Turkicised' in language, religion, and sometimes culture. Muqaddam Turks dwelt at Maragheh, and a large branch of the Afshar held Urmiyeh while north of Lake Urmiyeh were Kurdish tribes such as Shadlu near Ararat and the Turkicised Dunbuli at Khoy. There were Bayat Turks at Maku, and a branch of the Qajar in Erivan and Qarabagh, where Javanshir Turks and Qarachurlu Kurds also lived. Mughan and Ardabil were occupied by the Shahsevan, Qaradagh by a variety of small Turkic and Kurdish groups, and Sarab, Khalkhal and Mianeh by the Shafaqi and other Turkicised Kurds.

Between the high central Zagros and the torrid plains of Arabistan ranged the largest concentration of nomadic tribes in Iran, numbering up to a million people. Most of these were Lurs, and prominent among them were the Bakhtiari, while at Khurramabad the Vali of Luristan proper ruled over the Feyli and an amorphous collection of other Lur tribes of the Mamasani and the Kuhgiluyeh; in Arabistan lived the

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Banu Kaab, Al-Kathir and Mullai Arab tribes, many of them Shiite.

In the province of Fars lived a heterogeneous collection of nomad tribes. East of the Lurs and ranging north and south of Shiraz were the Qashqai, who had been dispersed after opposing Aqa Muhammad Khan, some to the Bakhtiari and some to Mazandaran, but were now reforming and included many groups from the likewise dispersed Zand confederation. East of them were the Il-i Arab, the Inallu, Nafar and Baharlu Turks, and the Persian-speaking Basiri: these five groups were to be united later as the Khamseh confederacy. On the southern coast were Sunni Arabs such as the Huwala.

In the arid south-east, various Baluch and Brahui tribes remained more or less autonomous of Iran, while nearer Kirman the largest tribe was another branch of the Afshar. Numerous Arab groups, and Qarai Turks, were scattered through the desert zone of Sistan and southern Khurasan. Aymaqs from Herat were also moving westwards into Iranian territory. North of Mashhad, Afshar Turks held Daragaz and Tus, and towards Marv there were Qajar and Jalayir Turks. In the mountain and plateau districts to the west and north-west lived Gireyli and Bayat Turks and substantial groups of Kurds introduced by Shah Abbas I. The province of Astarabad near the Caspian was occupied by the Sunni Turkmen tribes, Yamut and Goklen, and further groups of Qajar and Jalayir. Most of the 100,000 tribal families which Nadir Shah was reported to have moved to Astarabad and his metropolitan province of Khurasan had now returned to their various homes in western and north-western parts of Iran and to Herat and Kandahar, though remnants were left among the longer established groups.

Meanwhile Aqa Muhammad Khan had introduced large numbers of Lurs, Laks, Turks and Kurds from the west and south to his own metropolitan area, stretching from Astarabad through Mazandaran (the Qajar homeland) to Iraq-i Ajam. Major tribal groups in the latter region were the Inallu and Baghdadi Shahsevan, the latter near Kharagan and Saveh; and the Qaraguzlu Turks towards Hamadan.¹⁸

In several ways, the history and geography of Iran and Afghanistan brought them into the nineteenth century with similar political and cultural problems. Most significant perhaps was a similarity of frontier problems. In 1800, both countries were bordered on the north (in the Caucasus and Central Asia) by semi-independent khanates, later replaced by the

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expanding Russian Empire. On the west and south Iran confronted the Ottoman Empire and later the British; on the east and south Afghanistan faced the Sikhs and was soon to face British India. In Cottam's opinion,

Although Iran and Afghanistan remained independent, at least to a degree, in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries when much of Asia and Africa was falling under foreign control, the freedom of these countries cannot be attributed to the courage and devotion of their inhabitants. Nor was their independence due to geographical obstructions, which by the nineteenth century were already beginning to lose their effectiveness. The reason for their continued independence was that Iran and Afghanistan occupied a geographical belt at which the dynamics of Russian expansion and British expansion met. Neither Britain nor Russia could have gained and solidified control there without risking a major war.¹⁹

In such a situation, both countries were inevitably major arenas for the Great Game, the conflict between Russia and Britain in Asia; but both had, on their frontiers, tribal populations which in fact played prominent roles - often displaying both 'courage and devotion' in that conflict.

As stated earlier, certain scholars hold that nineteenth-century Iran and Afghanistan cannot be analysed in the same terms as modern states. Lambton has put the issues thus:

At the beginning of the Qājār period the theoretical purpose of the state had been to secure the temporal framework within which the individual Muslim could live the good life according to the precepts of the sharī'a, from which it followed that the stability of the state and good government were bound up with right religion. The functions of government had been confined broadly to defence against external aggression and the maintenance of internal order. Political power had lain in the hands of the military classes, consisting primarily of the tribal leaders...By the end of the period Persia had become a modern territorial secular state, drawn into and affected by international politics.²⁰

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These remarks also apply broadly to Afghanistan under the Durrani, and much of the history of Qajar Iran and Durrani Afghanistan concerns the very different processes and rates by which the ruling dynasties were transformed from tribal elites into constitutional monarchies, and their realms from near-theocratic empires into 'modern territorial secular states'.

Iran from 1800 to 1980

On Aqa Muhammad Shah Qajar's assassination in Qarabagh in 1797, there were further outbreaks of tribal dynastic ambitions in Azarbaijan, but Fath Ali Shah (1797-1834) established control of the realm and set about consolidating the state. He deliberately revived Safavid concepts of the absolute and irresponsible power of the sovereign. No warlord himself, he devoted his time rather to civil administration and court life, and to riding and hunting, the traditional tribal alternatives to warfare, and left the active generalship of his numerous campaigns to his heir Abbas Mirza.

A major threat to the stability of the state and peace in the countryside was the tribal system, which had both caused and thrived on the disorders of the previous century. The tribespeople were a valued source of revenue and irregular cavalry, but leaders of the larger tribes could withhold their dues, while in the more remote regions, particularly among Sunni and non-Turkic groups, virtual autonomy prevailed. Seeing the hereditary chiefs, and the fanatical devotion with which they were regarded in many cases, as a central feature of the tribal system, Fath Ali Shah determined to destroy or at least to limit their power. The policies he initiated to this end were continued by his successors.

Like previous rulers, Fath Ali kept the chiefs or their relatives near him as security for the good behaviour of their followers. At the same time, tribal leaders used to have their representatives at court, to keep them informed of matters concerning them. Also Fath Ali Shah created a wide network of marriage alliance linking his family with those of the important chiefs, and in addition he took advantage of the inability of the tribal leaders to unite and the endemic state of rivalry in the chiefly families and jealousy between different groups in a region. The principle of divide and rule was widely practised. When necessary, punitive expeditions were sent, a force recruited from one tribal group being

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used to chastise another, often their traditional enemies. Rebel chiefs were arrested, often by deceit, and many were executed. The Qajar rulers, further, appointed ilkhanis and ilbegis over the more important tribal groups; though in fact they usually had to nominate individuals acceptable to their tribesmen, most often the hereditary chiefs. Recognised chiefs were expected to collect and pay the taxes, to maintain order and to organise military levies, which were due both to the Shah and often to the provincial governor as well. Irregular tribal levies continued to form the main body of the army, though attempts were made to introduce more regular disciplined troops.²¹

Some of the tribes were broken up and others relocated. The policy of forced migration to the metropolitan area was continued under later rulers. In the early 1800s, Morier observed that, apart from the Arabs, whose chiefs were still feared, 'The different tribes are now so much spread throughout the provinces, that they have almost lost that union which could render them formidable.'²² In fact, dynastic ambitions on the part of the tribes ceased to be realistic with the advent in Iran of Great Power rivalry, whereby the Qajar succession was virtually guaranteed. This new factor also gradually brought to an end the Qajars' own military endeavours on the frontiers, and hence limited their ability to provide the tribal militia with a legitimate source of plunder. Thus, with the advance of the Russians in the Caucasus, Iran's north-western frontiers closed in. During the two Russian wars, ending in the Treaties of Gulistan (1813) and Turkmanchay (1828), a major preoccupation of the Shah was to ensure the continued allegiance of tribes on both sides of the Aras. Abbas Mirza succeeded in bringing various tribes south of the Aras and settling them in Azarbayjan. Migrations across the frontier in both directions appear to have continued after 1828, and also occurred extensively among the Kurds on the Ottoman frontier.

The north-eastern frontiers were a major problem for the early Qajars. They carried on constant military activity both in their attempts to regain Herat and the western parts of Afghanistan, and against the Turkmens and other slave-raiders, whose expeditions depopulated Khurasan, penetrating at times as far as the vicinity of Isfahan and seriously disrupting the important trade of the north-east. British protection of Afghanistan brought an end to Iranian efforts in that direction in the 1850s, and

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Russian victories in Turkistan later in the century terminated raids from that quarter, but within Iran the nomad sections of the Yamut Turkmens continued to resist domination by the Qajars into the twentieth century.

Other tribal groups in Khurasan, the Kurds of Quchan and Bujnurd, and the Arabs, Aymaqs and Baluches towards the south and east of the province, were more amenable to the authority of the government. The Baluch chiefs of Sistan and Baluchistan had, under the earlier Qajars, evaded all but trifling payments to the government, but they now saw more of the tax officials, though they otherwise maintained considerable autonomy until the 1920s (see chapter 8). The Mamasani and Kuhgilu Lurs were pacified by 1882, and authority was also extended over the Arab tribes of the south-west during Nasir al-Din Shah's reign (1848-96). The Validom of the Ardalan Kurds was effectively taken over in the 1860s, and the Kurds of Kirmanshah were by 1907 administered by the Kalhur ilkhani. On the other hand, the settled Lurs under the Vali of Pusht-i Kuh were inaccessible enough to remain independent throughout Qajar times, as were the nomad Lurs of Pish-i Kuh and also most of the Kurds of western Azarbayjan, the location of the abortive Kurdish uprising under Sheykh Ubeydullah in 1880 (see chapter 13).

In the second half of the nineteenth century, the power of many other tribal leaders was further weakened. Some were replaced by local government officials. Security in the country generally improved, and raiding was suppressed. In many areas, nomadic elements were settling in increasing numbers. This tendency was strong, as always, in Azarbayjan, where the only major tribes to remain nomadic were the Shahsevan of Mishkin, who retained comparatively temperate winter quarters in Mughan and were not yet tempted to exchange their tents for more substantial dwellings (see chapter 14). Settlement was also widespread among groups recently introduced to the north-central region, between Mazandaran and Iraq-i Ajam.

Soon after 1900, Aubin held that ethnic and tribal identities were losing their importance in a general increase of national consciousness; the only exceptions to this process of integration were the small religious minorities, the larger tribes, and those tribes which were remote from the centre or could take refuge in the mountains, though none of these could escape the royal power completely.²³

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In fact, this general impression of settlement and 'detrribalisation' was superficial and deceptive. The conduct of the administration in some areas, so far from undermining the tribal system, served rather to accentuate its evils. For one thing, the Iranian army had little to do in the latter part of the nineteenth century; it was lacking in experience and had deteriorated in quality since the introduction of 'disciplined' troops. The nomad tribes remained the only effective militia, but they could be relied on only when defending their own territory. Tribal levies, which had been drawn from the families and retinues of the chiefs, were now unemployed for long periods, and increasingly turned their energies to banditry. At the same time, the main emphasis of administration being on the collection of revenue, in some areas the demands of officials, including the appointed chiefs, were so oppressive, extortionate, and arbitrary, that ordinary tribesmen sought the security of joining the retinues of the most effective of the local brigands. Meanwhile the official chiefs themselves, whether through assimilation to the government bureaucracy or through detention as hostages, became urbanised and estranged from the majority of tribesmen, and could no longer exercise direct control over them.

This was particularly the case in some frontier areas of Kurdistan, Azarbayjan, Gurgan and Khurasan, where the government of the later Qajars appeared to foster both nomadism and tribalism. In the territories of the Kurds, Qaradaghis, Shahsevan and Turkmens, where the nomads had continued for much of the nineteenth century to cross the Ottoman or Russian frontiers seasonally for grazing purposes, a policy of maintaining a frontier strip of endemic 'tribal disorder' seems to have been tacitly revived (from Safavid precedents) at the end of the century as a defence against possible incursions. Local authorities did little to curtail raiding activities there, and indeed were sometimes said to be reaping a share of the proceeds. When punitive expeditions were sent, they frequently chastised not the real culprits but some more accessible group. Often it was only when the tribesmen raided across the frontier and the neighbouring power complained, that the Iranian administration took measures, usually half-hearted. In extreme cases, such as with the Shahsevan of Ardabil and Mishkin in 1860, a programme of enforced settlement was initiated, though without permanent effect (see chapter 14).

The tribes on the north-west and northern fron-

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tiers, preoccupied with a near-anarchic situation of generalised brigandry, posed no major threat to security in the period before the First World War, except at a local level. Only rarely did any of them unite in groups of more than a few thousand warriors under a leader with ambitions on a national scale, on occasions such as the Kurdish revolt of 1880 already referred to, and the support given in 1909 to Muhammad Ali Shah against the Nationalists by the Turkmens and by the union of some Qaradaghi and Shahsevan tribes under Rahim Khan Chalabianlu. None of these lasted more than a few months. It was otherwise with the large and powerful tribal confederacies of the central and southern Zagros, the Bakhtiari, Qashqai and Khamseh, whose leading families were among the most influential in the country and, whether among their tribesmen or in Tehran, played an increasingly important part in political affairs of the later Qajar period.

The Bakhtiari tribes, numbering up to 50,000 families, mostly nomads, were the source of much trouble to the government, and were never wholly brought under control. Their chiefly families were constantly split by rivalries, a factor which the government was able to exploit. In the first half of the nineteenth century, the Bakhtiari chief Muhammad Taqi Khan carried out various measures beneficial to the tribes, but excited the jealousy of the governor of Isfahan and was arrested by deceit in 1841. Bakhtiari influence grew under Huseyn Quli Khan, who was appointed the first official ilkhani. After his assassination in 1882, his successors continued to dispute the leadership and the inheritance of the considerable landed property which he and his brothers had accumulated. With the discovery of oil in their territory, the main contenders for leadership were able to compose their differences and play a deciding role in the restoration of the Constitution in 1909, and they also dominated the government in the period immediately before the First World War (see chapters 10 to 12).

In Fars, the Qashqai confederacy emerged under Jani Khan early in the nineteenth century, and his successors as ilkhans of the Qashqai rivalled the family of the merchant Hajji Ibrahim at Shiraz for influence in the province. This rivalry was exploited by the Qajar government to prevent an alliance (such as was nearly formed in 1831/2) which might threaten their own position. In 1861/2 the government created the Khamseh confederacy from the Il-i Arab, Inallu, Baharlu, Nafar and Basiri tribes, and

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placed it under the leadership of Hajji Ibrahim's grandson Mirza Ali Muhammad Khan, Qavam al-Mulk, to balance the Qashqai power in Fars. The Qashqai were stricken by the famine of the 1870s, their numbers falling from around 30,000 to under 15,000 families, many sections joining the Bakhtiari or the Khamseh, but they became powerful again under Ismail Khan, Soulat al-Douleh. During the Bakhtiari hegemony, which had the support of Qavam al-Mulk and the Khamseh tribes, Soulat al-Douleh made a pact with the Vali of Pusht-i Kuh and the Arab Sheykhs of Khuzistan, but this alliance came to nothing. The settlement of the Baharlu, Inallu and Nafar, initiated by the government, was largely complete before 1900; the Il-i Arab and Basiri tribes, and the majority of the Qashqai, continued to be nomads (see chapter 9).²⁴

Government control over the tribes weakened, in frontier areas before the turn of the century, elsewhere during and after the Constitutional period (1906-11). In most tribal areas, the period from the 1890s to the 1920s was one of 'anarchy', known as khankhani or ashrarlikh. Some tribal chiefs managed to maintain a degree of local stability within the general turmoil, but other areas were simply battlegrounds for rival brigands, where raiding went unchecked, taxes were not collected, trade was disrupted, and farming peasants were forced to leave land and village to take refuge in town or among the brigand leaders' retinues. At the same time, measures had already been undertaken to establish the infrastructure necessary for the ultimate control of the tribes: a telegraph network was spreading, the roads were improving, and plans were made for railways. There were occasional government successes, as when a small but well-disciplined force under the Armenian Yeprem Khan and Sardar Bahadur Bakhtiari dealt piecemeal with the Qaradaghi and Shahsevan rebels in 1910, to show that at the end of the Qajar period, as at the beginning, it needed only a strong leader to subdue the tribes, which were as incapable as ever of uniting against determined military action.²⁵

When Riza Khan came to power as Minister of War, one of his first steps to bring order to the country was to deal severely with the tribes. During a series of campaigns in 1921-5 he managed to defeat and largely disarm the major groups: Shahsevan, Bakhtiari and other Lurs, Qashqai, Turkmens. Later revolts among the Arabs of Khuzistan, the Kurds and the Qashqai were subdued. In most areas, pacifica-

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tion and disarmament brought an abrupt end to banditry and armed inter-tribal hostilities, and established an unprecedented degree of security and government control, maintained by strong garrisons of troops and later the gendarmerie as a rural police force.

The new security enabled long-abandoned lands to be brought back under cultivation, and many former peasants, who had taken refuge in towns or in the tribal chiefs' retinues, now returned to their villages. Both peasants and nomads were subject to the new conscription laws, and men were forced to wear 'western' forms of dress. In spite of the end of banditry, the peasants continued to suffer as ever from the exactions of landowners and government officials. Riza Shah's plans for industrialisation and modernisation included little provision for the agriculture on which the economy of the country continued to depend. But the nomad tribesmen now often recall the period as a golden age, compared with the chaos that went before and the enforced settlement that was to come after, though the army, Riza Shah's new nobility, was greatly feared both by the tribesmen, among whom sheep-lifting was almost unknown for a decade or more, and by the gendarmerie who, whenever an army officer was to visit, were sure to make arrests among the tribesmen, to demonstrate their vigilance. None the less, effective administration of the tribes still depended on the co-operation of their traditional leaders, and it was official policy to conciliate them as far as possible. Many chiefs had been killed in battle or executed during the pacification campaigns; others who proved recalcitrant were removed from the tribes; but most of them, impressed with the strength of the new regime, were willing to co-operate and to transfer to the Pahlavi dynasty the allegiance which they had once owed to the Qajars.

So far, Riza Shah's tribal policy had been only a more effective and thorough version of those attempted by the strongest of his predecessors, such as Fath Ali Shah and Nasir al-Din Shah. However, in his programme for unifying Iran and creating a modern, secular, Persian-speaking state, he saw in the nomad tribes symbols of much that he was trying to replace: alien cultures and languages, allegiance to hereditary chiefs, a 'primitive' way of life, and a mobility that made the tribes inaccessible to the new legal system. Judging their organisation and leadership to be a continuing political danger, and their nomadism and autonomy to be anachronisms in a

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modern state, Riza Shah eventually determined on the more revolutionary step of destroying the tribal system altogether. The nomads were to stop their migrations, build houses, cultivate their pastures, and submit to the same rural system of administration as other villagers.

The policy was implemented in the early 1930s. It was not intended to put an end to the pastoral economy: the settlers could entrust their flocks to herdsmen with special permits to continue migration to seasonal pastures where necessary. This was consistent with the semi-nomadic village-based pastoralism customary in various parts of the country and also with the kind of dual economy already practised by many tribal groups, where settled sections sent their flocks to pasture with nomadic sections, providing the latter in return with agricultural produce from the tribal villages. None the less, the settlement policy has received considerable notoriety as a brutal failure, though few details have yet reached print concerning its effects on individual tribal groups. Politically less than successful, it was a social and economic disaster. There was little increase in agricultural and a considerable drop in pastoral production. The health of the former nomads suffered in the unfamiliar sedentary life, and few medical or educational facilities were available to them. The pastoralists had not been converted to cultivators; the tribesmen had learnt no new attitudes, unless an increased contempt and hatred for the peasant life they had now experienced for themselves.²⁶ By the early 1940s, the tents were brought back or rebuilt, the pastures were reoccupied, and the chiefs resumed control, in some cases even before Riza Shah's abdication, in September 1941, following the British and Soviet occupation of Iran to establish a supply route to the Eastern Front.

During and after the occupation (1941-5) the main tribal groups maintained a newly-regained degree of autonomy under their chiefs. This was particularly the case with the Kurds, whose leaders with Soviet support established a short-lived Republic at Mahabad in 1946. At the same time, their neighbours the Shahsevan demonstrated their loyalty to the Pahlavis (as they had almost unanimously since their pacification in 1923) by helping in the destruction of the Soviet-backed regime of Azarbayjan. To the south the Bakhtiari, though not politically united, were generally well-disposed to the Pahlavis; the Qashqai on the other hand never

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forgave the Pahlavis for the death of their chief Soulat al-Douleh; more unified than other tribal groups, they rebelled in 1946, successfully demanding the removal of Communists from the Cabinet. Later they demonstrated support for Dr Musaddiq between 1951 and 1953.

During the 1950s and the 1960s, after the downfall of Musaddiq, Muhammad Riza Shah resumed his father's policy to the tribes, though more cautiously. The chiefs were deposed, chiefships were abolished, nomad settlement was encouraged and aided by the instigation of irrigation projects in tribal territories, and the Land Reform of the 1960s had some success at least in undermining the economic power of tribal chiefs. Resistance, such as the 1963 revolt of the Qashqai and Boyr Ahmad in Fars, was ruthlessly suppressed. Often the very existence of 'tribes' and even 'nomads' was officially denied. In a generally depressed agricultural sector, which suffered heavily from discrimination in the increasingly centralised and industrialising state, pastoralism suffered most of all. Capitalist penetration, rapid inflation, and government measures such as the nationalisation of pastures and the strict control of prices, especially of meat, ruined the economy of nomad tribespeople by the later 1960s and 1970s.

So effective was this economic suppression that by the mid-1970s the tribal political threat was held to have disappeared; tribal cultures were now 'discovered', particularly by the Empress Farah, as respectable objects of academic and touristic interest. The growth of opposition to the regime during the 1970s, however, though largely urban, found strong echoes among some tribal groups. This was mainly among Sunnis in border areas, and coincided with movements for autonomy among large ethnic groups which straddled the frontiers: the Kurds, the Arabs of the south-west, and the Baluches of the south-east. Whatever the political colour of the various movements, they demonstrated increasing resentment of discrimination at both local and national levels and of the imposition of ethnic outsiders in positions of authority, and articulated aspirations for some regional autonomy and the right to cultural self-expression. Tribalism, as a basis for the recruitment of support and the organisation of resistance forces, appears to remain important at least among Kurds and Baluches, much less so among the Arabs.

Tribespeople as such played a very minor role in 1978 in what was essentially an urban revolution.

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It was only as central control broke down in winter 1978-9 that some tribal groups began to take advantage of the situation, and only with the establishment of the Islamic Republic in spring 1979, and the clarification of the nature of the new regime, that a tribal resurgence became widespread around the country.

Reaction to the breakdown of control took several, predictable forms: there were attacks on government offices, and on army and gendarmerie posts, with the apparent aims of seizing arms and settling old scores; there was a reformation of old tribal social and political groups, and the return to power of former leaders; and there was a recovery of pasture-lands that had been seized by government and the ejection of city-based stockmen and merchants. Land has been a major factor in events since the revolution, in tribal areas as elsewhere. Early actions involving Kurds and Turkmens were apparently associated with their seizure of lands which had been removed from tribal possession under the Pahlavis, while more recent owners received support from agents of the new government. There was everywhere great competition and confusion over land, with a general rejection of the results of the Shah's Land Reforms.

From early on the tribal groups were wary of, and often hostile to, local representatives of the revolution: the fanatical and insensitive pasdaran guards, and the kumitehs - which usually represented the continuing interests of landowners and merchants under the Pahlavis. The consciousness of 'national minorities', tribal or ethnic, was awakened and inflamed by the government's attitude to them, early shown in 1979 by Khomeyni's treatment of the Kurds and Turkmens; later declarations of sympathy and support for the minorities have not deceived them.

There appears to have been little interest among the tribes in the stated aims of the revolution. The only Islamic response of any scale has been among Sunni groups, Kurds and Baluches, where religious figures have led their followers in resistance to Shii/Persian domination. The left is generally distrusted, although some educated younger tribespeople, students, professionals or former soldiers, have tried to organise leftist activity among their fellows. Among tribal groups, only the Kurds and the Baluches again have political parties, with connections across the frontiers; the Arab resistance (for example as manifested in the London Embassy siege in spring 1980) is not tribal in

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character. Few people among the minorities want independence from Iran, but most appear to want local autonomy and self-expression, control of their own land, and at least much greater involvement in development projects instituted in their territory under the Shah; these demands have in most cases been formulated and presented to the government, which has so far shown little sign of granting any of them formally, though informally it has conceded control of many tribal groups and sometimes whole districts to tribal leaders. It has once more become respectable and relevant to belong to a tribal group.

The revolution has had some beneficial economic effects for the tribespeople, especially pastoral nomads, who have not only regained their pastures and returned to pastoralism on a large scale, but have found much more favourable markets for their produce. Like peasant cultivators, tribespeople may have gained considerably from the cancellation of interest payments on debts. The recovery of agriculture, on the other hand, has been slow, and is not helped by the continuing political uncertainties.

During 1980 and 1981 attitudes seemed to have hardened. The new regime's policy towards tribal and other minorities is emerging as, if anything, harsher in its discrimination and Persian chauvinism than that of the Pahlavis. Though the tribal role, if any, in the war with Iraq is not known to the present writer, there do appear to have been armed clashes between government forces and several tribal groups other than the continuing conflict in Kurdistan.

Beck, who has written the most comprehensive available accounts of the role of the tribes during and following the revolution, notes that:

The resurgence of tribalism, rather than being the 'survival' of an archaic form of organization, is instead a very contemporary response to current conditions of central weakness and to the center's attempts to establish political domination.²⁷

Afghanistan from 1800 to 1980

By 1800 both Sadozai rule and Pushtun imperial pretensions were rapidly fading.²⁸ The first quarter of the century was marked by intense rivalry between the Sadozai Popalzai and Muhammadzai Barakzai branches of the Durrani, and by considerable loss of territory. Timur Shah's sons Zaman Shah (1793-1800),

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Shah Mahmud (1800-3, 1809-18) and Shah Shuja (1803-9) alternated on the throne at Kabul, until the last was forced into exile in India by the Muhammadzai, while Shah Mahmud was driven off to Herat. In 1818 Fatih Khan Muhammadzai was blinded and executed by his protégé Shah Mahmud; this brought to an end Muhammadzai acceptance and support of Sadozai leadership of the Pashtun tribal confederacy, which had now been long cut off from its Indian revenues and relied on the tribes for support. The Muhammadzai, who since Hajji Jamal's time had been the most powerful tribal faction in the empire, now formally took over control. Separate provinces (Peshawar, Kashmir, Kandahar, Kabul) fell under the independent rule of Fatih Khan's brothers, while Herat remained in Sadozai hands under Shah Mahmud, who acknowledged Qajar suzerainty until 1829.

The youngest brother, Dost Muhammad, eventually consolidated the Afghan provinces; but he began in 1826 with only Ghazni, Kabul, Charikar and Jalalabad under his control, while Baluchistan and the eastern territories of Kashmir, Multan and Peshawar were lost to the Sikhs under Ranjit Singh, and the Uzbek khanates of the north were autonomous of Kabul. Dost Muhammad made up the loss of revenue from the east by forcing non-Durrani tribes into payment of back-taxes. He set about creating a Barakzai-led confederacy, using various strategies to gain the support of the disparate groups. He appealed to Muslim unity in the struggle against the Sikhs; he won over the Shiite Qizilbash at Kabul and conquered their co-sectarians in the Hazarajat, but prevented them from uniting; he took wives from families of religious leaders, wealthy merchants and tribal and regional chiefs. At the same time he cultivated the support of the frontier tribes such as Mohmand and Yusufzai, and paid subsidies to the Khyber tribes, continuing the practice of his predecessors since Nadir Shah. Lack of funds prevented his completing the political and economic integration of the country by 1839, when the British, having previously supported the deposed Sadozai Shah Shuja in an attack on Kandahar, occupied Kabul in Shah Shuja's name (see chapter 4). With the help of considerable subsidies to tribal chiefs, the British remained in Kabul and Kandahar for two years, until the Afghans rallied under Dost Muhammad's son Akbar Khan to eject the invaders.

British policy towards the frontier tribes since the 1830s, of dealing firmly by taking hostages, imposing taxes and inflicting punishments, rather

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than negotiating, served to sharpen tribal resentment of them and their representatives, so that any Afghan ruler who openly had British support forfeited that of the tribes. On his return in 1843 from exile in India, Dost Muhammad emerged from the first Anglo-Afghan war with a new role as Defender of the Faith against the infidel invaders, and as redeemer of Afghanistan from an Empire whose power would seem increasingly formidable with the passing years. But after he unsuccessfully took the offensive against the British in alliance with the Sikhs in 1848, the Afghans gradually fell into dependence on the British for their own defence.

For two decades from 1855 British policy towards Afghanistan was formally one of non-intervention, or 'Masterly Inactivity'. Their main objective remained consolidation in India; as for the frontier tribes, the Afghan Amir's authority over them should not be recognised but they should be used as a buffer and dealt with by strategies of divide and rule. By the agreements of 1855 and 1857, British support in defence of the western frontier against Iran was guaranteed, and the Afghans, receiving substantial subsidies, remained quiet during the critical period of the Indian mutiny, which started shortly after the second treaty was signed. The expanding Russian Empire was becoming a clear threat to the Afghans in the north, as the British Empire was consolidating its power to the east and south. These two European Empires determined the environment in which the Muhammadzai emirate in Afghanistan acquired fixed territorial boundaries and evolved into a state (see chapter 2).

During his second reign (1843-63) Dost Muhammad succeeded with British assistance in reunifying the Afghan realm. In the 1850s he took over the various northern provinces and khanates, and Kandahar, while just before his death he recaptured Herat, to which Iran had abandoned claims, and thus completed the consolidation of the present territory of Afghanistan. The court at Kabul resembled a tribal council. The non-Barakzai Durrani maintained their privileges jealously, but the Amir challenged the non-Durrani, especially the Ghilzai at Ghazni; and he claimed sovereignty over the frontier tribes, though the British still refused to recognise this.

After Dost Muhammad's death, civil war once more ensued, until Sher Ali gained control in 1869. He secured the co-operation of the tribes, on whom he continued to depend. Meanwhile, as the Russians advanced in Central Asia, advocates of 'Forward

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Policy' gained ground in British Indian circles. By 1873 (without Afghan knowledge) the two Empires reached a territorial understanding that Afghanistan south of the Oxus would remain outside the Russian sphere of influence. Around the same time British arbitration settled the Sistan boundary with Iran, to Afghan disapproval.

While the British were thus defining his borders, Sher Ali was attempting to obtain subsidies from them, assurances of support against the Russians, and recognition of his son's succession in Kabul. Negotiations over this eventually broke down, whereupon Sher Ali turned to the Russians, and admitted a Russian envoy to Kabul while denying a similar privilege to the British. This was interpreted as a casus belli by the British, who invaded in late 1878. Sher Ali died while escaping towards Russia, and was replaced by his son Yaqub, who ruled in Kabul under British patronage until the September 1879 uprising, when for the second time Afghans slaughtered a British mission. After Yaqub's abdication, the British ruled directly in Kabul until August 1880, when they permitted Abd al-Rahman, Sher Ali's nephew and rival, who had spent the preceding decade in exile north of the Oxus, to accede to rule in Kabul under a settlement whose terms would govern Afghan-British relations for nearly 40 years. In return for subsidies, the Afghans yielded conduct of their foreign affairs to Britain.

While the British settlement with Abd al-Rahman was being negotiated, Sher Ali's son Sardar Ayub Khan advanced from Herat and defeated the British forces at the historic battle of Maywand. Assisted by Abd al-Rahman, General Roberts marched from Kabul and routed the Afghans, but even before Maywand the British had learnt for the second time that conquest of Afghanistan would be expensive and less likely than a friendly alliance to provide the defence they sought against the Russians. As Roberts wrote from Kabul on 29 May 1880, 'I feel sure that I am right when I say that the less the Afghans see of us, the less they will dislike us.'²⁹ Accordingly, although British troops had withstood the major attack by about 30,000 Afghan tribesmen on 23 December 1879 in their Sherpur cantonment, they left Kabul in August 1880 never to return. It would be another hundred years before foreign troops would again fight in Kabul.

Abd al-Rahman's consolidation of the modern state of Afghanistan and his relations with the tribes have been exhaustively and brilliantly dis-

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cussed in two books by Hasan Kakar, and major aspects of his tribal policy are described in chapter 7 below.³⁰ He gained British support in having his borders defined in the north with Russia and in the south and east with British India. With British aid, again, he built an army with which he undertook military campaigns against groups that had retained varying degrees of autonomy within his borders, including invasions of Kafiristan, where he performed perhaps the last conversions to Islam by the sword. He was the first Amir seriously to attempt to break the power of the tribes, using a mixture of force, alliance, reprisals, bribes, and intrigues. His campaigns were performed piecemeal, and he made every use of traditional inter-tribal rivalries, obtaining religious injunctions from the mullahs whenever he could. He reduced many independent tribes to order, broke some and scattered them around the country, destroying their strongholds. However, rebellions were continuous throughout his reign - Kakar says there were more than 40 - and many tribes retained their economic and hereditary powers. The Amir failed to extend his authority over the frontier tribes, in the face of their own resistance as well as continuing British policy of using them as a buffer.

The effect of the Durand Line, which was established in 1893 as the frontier between Afghanistan and India (now Pakistan), was to divide the state allegiance of many tribal groups, to create a 'no-man's land' between effective Afghan and British control (see chapter 5). It failed to result in the imposition of authority, but rather strengthened the tribes' political position in Afghanistan, whose rulers from then on paid more heed to their wishes in formulating domestic policy.

Abd al-Rahman's achievements in providing Afghanistan with some of the forms and symbols of statehood marked new ground in the transition from the tribally-based Durrani Empire to the Muhammadzai state of Afghanistan, but the Amir retained many of the attributes of a tribal khan. He received subsidies from and maintained peace with the British; by becoming adept in diplomacy with them, and keeping relations cool and remote, he was able to avoid the appearance of being a mere creature of his imperial patrons. Another source of revenue was the fertile non-Pashtun and largely non-tribal regions which made up as much as half his domain and furnished lucrative employment and landholdings for his supporters. Revenues from these sources provided a

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surplus to be distributed in tribal fashion as subsidies as well as to finance the centralising institutions of the state.

Abd al-Rahman's son and successor Amir Habibullah (1901-19) found the central government in a strong position. At first he offered amnesty to many rebel chiefs, and generally sought to co-operate with the tribes rather than to coerce them. He established a council of state for tribal affairs, and other measures to allow the will of the tribal leaders to be felt. But neither he nor his father succeeded in freeing the Muhammadzai from dependence on the support or at least the acquiescence of the tribes.

While Abd al-Rahman and Habibullah had been content with the role of mediator between their largely tribal polity and its powerful neighbours, building a strong central army in the process, Amanullah, who succeeded to rule in Kabul after his father's assassination in 1919, was intent on perfecting the state order in Afghanistan as a means for implementing social and economic reforms inspired by the west. Where his predecessors viewed isolation from their neighbours as a measure of their own independence, and cultivated a diplomatic style calculated to preserve this, Amanullah sought to open the doors to foreign influence as an instrument of intentional social change, and fought the Third Anglo-Afghan War (1919) to ensure that access would not be impeded by the existing alliance with British India. But the tribes who supported his rule in Kabul found that British subsidies were not replaced, while their tribal culture suffered an intrusion of foreign ideas and values. Amanullah assembled a national jirga to approve Afghanistan's first written constitution. When he was obliged to amend this as a result of the Khost tribal rebellion in 1924, he received notice of the discontent with his policies that would contribute to his overthrow.

Amanullah sought a revolution from above through his comprehensive plans for change; his modernising legislation was perceived as impinging on tribal and religious jurisdiction, and he soon came under attack from the tribes and religious leaders who depended on the tribes for support. In a polity where power was decentralised and the state primarily an urban phenomenon, he erred in not taking better account of tribal values and tribal politics in the formulation and implementation of his programme. His plan for an economically developing liberal bourgeois state, while displaying real genius for state-building formulas, neither reckoned with the

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realities of tribal power, nor (perhaps his main failure) provided the national army required for quelling the predictable tribal rebellions. Where Ataturk in Turkey and Riza Shah in Iran, contemporary rulers with similar programmes to his, came to power by overthrowing previous long-established tribal dynasties, Amanullah succeeded to power as a tribal chieftain himself. His difficulties with the tribes tended to focus on central cultural issues raised by his reforms, such as the role of women, but the source of his troubles seems to have been his abandonment of the role of tribal leader, treating Afghanistan as the state he sought to build rather than the tribal society that it was. He was in 1929 finally deposed, significantly not by the Pashtuns, who were temporarily content with preserving their independence from central government, but by a Tajik bandit, who ruled briefly in Kabul as Amir Habibullah II, otherwise known as Bacha Saqao, before tribal forces led by Nadir Khan turned power over to a family descended from a brother of Dost Muhammad: the Musahiban.

Nadir Shah (1929-33), who had successfully dealt with a tribal revolt in 1910 and had led border tribes in successful campaigns against the British during the Third Afghan War, was more adept in the role of tribal chief than was Amanullah. During his short reign he set in motion the policy, which would continue under his son Zahir Shah (who ruled 1933-73) and nephew Daud (Prime Minister 1953-63, President 1973-8), of reintroducing much of Amanullah's programme. Balancing the forms of the modern state against the realities of tribal power typified the whole Musahiban era. Nadir's legitimacy primarily rested on the support of those tribes who placed him on the throne in Kabul, and on the co-operation of the urban classes most interested in the development of the secular state. In return for their support, some of the frontier tribes secured privileges such as exemption from taxation and conscription. As Nadir and his brothers Hashim and Shah Mahmud slowly rebuilt the capacity of the central government to deal with the occasional tribal rebellions, they also practised adroit tribal politics as a means to reattain the 'tenuous balance between central government authority and tribal power'.³¹

With the impending British withdrawal from India, the Afghans began looking elsewhere for economic assistance. After the Second World War they turned to the United States, who reluctantly

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became involved, first privately in the Hilmand irrigation project, then in a government subsidy to meet its escalating costs. Meanwhile the Pakhtunistan issue emerged, a campaign to secure the independence of Pathan frontier territory from the new state of Pakistan. This resulted in the transfer of power in 1953 from the generation of Nadir's brothers to that of his son, the reigning Zahir Shah, whose first cousin and brother-in-law Sardar Muhammad Daud replaced Shah Mahmud as Prime Minister. Daud's first aim was to strengthen the armed forces, both to bolster the Afghan position on Pakhtunistan, and to aid control of domestic opposition. Compared to his uncles, who were experienced and adept at tribal diplomacy, Daud relied more on modern weapons and the power they gave him over the tribes. Failing to get military aid from the United States, Daud turned to the Soviet Union, which, through sales of military equipment and provision of training programmes and advisors in the armed forces, developed the influence, especially in the tank corps and the air force, that would grow and eventually surface as political power in 1978.³²

Daud's Pakhtunistan policy was a largely unlamented failure, his authoritarian style of dealing with political dissent objectionable to modern liberals, and his relations with the Soviet Union ominous to all but the small pro-Soviet left. He did however leave power (in 1963) with the widespread respect of Afghans for his ability to maintain order, however repressively, and for his success in attracting subsidies and aid for public projects. There was a growth in real disposable income which also led to a growth in the urban classes, who were demanding greater political participation. One element of these, the left, had been working underground to develop the pro-Soviet Khalq and Parcham parties, which emerged as the main organised political groups in Zahir Shah's new constitutional democracy.

The decade of Zahir (1963-73) was dominated by his new Constitution of 1964, marking a shift of power from the monarch to the urban elite, together with an accommodation to traditional tribal and rural leadership in the elected parliament. Various reforms were instituted, the general thrust being in the direction of greater American involvement so as to redress the balance with Afghanistan's powerful neighbour. Development proceeded slowly, however, largely through administrative inefficiency and increased corruption, factors which were responsible

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for the inexcusable failure to deliver relief food supplies to stricken central and north-western areas in the droughts and famine of 1970-2. But remote rural areas were becoming politically integrated with the centre, and Zahir had no major problems with the tribes.

It was rather from the left that trouble came. In the freer atmosphere of the Constitution, the left's power of organisation, access to subsidies, and influence in the armed forces, far outstripped its representation and numerical strength in parliament or its political connections in government. It was with left support that Daud was installed as President in July 1973 after a nearly bloodless coup. Pakhtunistan, and the aggressive posture of Bhutto on the frontier, once again became the leading problem of foreign policy, while the Soviet Union became the new Republic's major friend. Opposition came from organised Islamic groups; most notable was a substantial guerrilla operation in Panjshir in 1975.

Daud made sure, however, not to alienate the religious leaders too far, and continued to project himself to the tribes in terms of the legitimacy of the Musahiban family. His accession to power was more a palace coup than a revolution. Daud also sought to reduce his precarious dependence on the left and on the Soviet Union. He put the Pakhtunistan issue on the shelf, and was in the process of reaching settlement with Bhutto when the latter was overthrown. Meanwhile post-Vietnam, post-Watergate America gave no diplomatic priority to Afghanistan and made little effort to counter growing Soviet influence. Daud turned to the American proxy in the region, the Shah of Iran, who offered to share some of the post-1973 oil wealth, and may have assisted Daud in his purges of the left; but by 1976 the Shah was forced to cut back expenditure, and Daud was disappointed. Economic and political conditions worsened, and by early 1978, when the revolutionary process was well under way in Iran, Daud was isolated both internationally and within the country. As he started to move on his own against the left in response to a mass demonstration at the end of April 1978, the armed forces, led by the Soviet-dominated tank corps and air force, struck, ending nearly two-and-a-half centuries of Durrani rule.

The People's Democratic Party which formed the new government was very small, almost entirely urban-based, and fatally ignorant of affairs in the

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countryside. The two factions of the party, which combined in the revolution but later fell apart into bitter conflict, were distinguished by ethnic and class background, and by policy orientation. The Khalqi faction, led nominally until summer 1979 by Nur Muhammad Taraki but dominated by Hafizullah Amin until the Soviet intervention, had strong support among students, and drew members from among non-Durrani Pashtuns. They were more radical, claimed to be leading a 'proletarian' revolution, and instituted what they hoped would be popular measures such as land reform, cancellation of rural debt, and abolition of brideprice. The Parchami faction, whose members were ousted in early purges but returned to power under Karmal with Soviet support at the end of 1979, came largely from middle-class intellectual Tajiks and Persian-speaking Pashtuns; less hasty in their programme, they followed their Soviet mentors' line in labelling the revolution 'national democratic'.

As in Iran, the role of the tribes as such in the 1978 revolution was negligible. Some observers, however, have interpreted it as a further episode in the long-standing Durrani-Ghilzai conflict: Taraki himself, and possibly Amin, as well as several members of their government, were Ghilzai by origin, a factor which was used to canvas support in the Ghilzai homeland between Kandahar and Ghazni. In fact the revolution had considerable popular support at the start, though it is hard to know how people in the countryside viewed it, whether in ethnic, class or other terms. Certainly over the previous decade resentment of Musahiban domination had built up and peasants and labourers in areas where Pashtun landlords (and others) had proved oppressive were becoming aware of their class interests.³³ Non-Pashtuns resented the Musahibans as Pashtuns, while other Pashtuns resented the fact that like many other urban Durrani the Musahibans had become Persianised. The Khalqis too were generally identified as Pashtun, though they included many non-Pashtuns in the government and declared a policy of self-expression for all national minorities.

The manner in which the Khalqis implemented their reforms, the severity of their treatment of opponents, and the growing Soviet presence, soon alienated much of their support. Resistance grew, both in town and countryside, and intensified in response to Amin's brutalities in the latter half of 1979. The resistance has been notorious from the beginning for its lack of unity. The different

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ethnic and tribal groups have had different aims, and different class interests are also represented. Thus most of the vocal groups familiar to the world's press on the Pakistan frontier are more or less reactionary, with an Islamic banner and a programme that envisages abandonment of socialism and restoration of Pashtun control. Other frontier Pathans, with their egalitarian and democratic traditions, have proved ambivalent and sometimes accommodating to the Kabul regime. Groups most active in resistance inside the country, especially Tajiks, Hazaras and Uzbeks, have other ideas. Although Islamic elements have received considerable support from outside (from Pakistan and the Arab world, and particularly since the events of 1978-9 from Iran) there has not been great interest inside the country in the idea of an Islamic Republic, other than a general insistence on ridding Afghanistan of a regime which is selling Islam to atheist Russians. The Shiite Hazaras, who have had much success in liberating their territory, have received support from Iran but are not doctrinally committed to Khomeyni. The Baluches and Brahuis of the south-west have mostly gone to join their national liberation movements in Iran or Pakistan. The Tajik and Uzbek population of the north, where much of Afghanistan's industry has been located, are more progressive than others, have long been anti-Pashtun, and many have had bitter experience of life under the Soviets. One of the most active and widely supported resistance groups in 1980 was the United National Front, a Chinese-favoured union of the independent left and centre largely composed of Hazaras and other groups operating in the northern half of the country: many of them used to follow a Maoist line, but by 1980 they called themselves 'national democrats', though non-aligned and of a very different character from the Karmal regime. Their leader, Majid Kalakani, a Tajik from the same village as Bacha Saqao, was arrested in early 1980 and executed in June; he became something of a nationalist martyr.³⁴

1980 and 1981 have seen the further promotion of a Soviet-style 'nationalities' policy, designed apparently both to undermine the unity of opposition to the regime and to prepare the way for eventual assimilation of non-Pashtun groups of the north with the nationalities of Soviet Central Asia. Meanwhile some of the most effective resistance operations have taken place among non-tribal Tajiks, for example in the Panjshir valley, while the Pashtuns, the major tribal element, however successful in

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pursuing their traditional guerrilla activity against the regime, have offered a far less effectively coordinated resistance, being frequently pre-occupied with their own internal (tribal) conflicts.

None the less, it is clear that whatever the political or religious platform of the different resistance groups, in the present crisis tribal and ethnic ties continue to provide most Afghans with their strongest loyalties and most effective mode of organisation.

The 'Tribal Problem' and the 'Problem of Tribe'

The foregoing narrative, following the main emphases in the sources, has summarised tribal political history largely from the state perspective, in terms of the way successive rulers have dealt with the 'tribal problem': how both to make use of and to control the tribal elements in the population. The use of the terms 'tribe' and 'tribal' has, however, concealed a wide diversity of social, economic, cultural and political forms. This diversity - almost as great within this region as anywhere in the world - precludes any substantive definition of 'tribe' as a particular kind of social group but raises more general theoretical issues associated with the 'problem of tribe' and the related problem of 'the origin of the state'.³⁵

There are several major issues here. Are tribes precursors of the state in an evolutionary sequence or, as several writers have suggested, creatures of the state? How far are tribes defined in terms of their relations with states - and vice versa? What conditions bring about the combination of disparate elements, the development of hierarchical inequalities and the centralisation of government, in other words, the formation of confederacies or 'secondary states'? Does the state arise from social stratification or vice versa? How far are tribal systems necessarily segmentary, egalitarian, decentralised, autonomous, and hence opposed to the state as the source of inequality, central authority and government? Can we resolve the paradox presented by the perspective, perpetuated in the preceding account and in some of the following chapters, of the city as centre and the tribes as peripheral, while the political reality was often of the state and its dependant peasants and urban population dominated by tribal leaders? How far have tribal responses to the two recent revolutions been historically pre-

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dictable as reactionary and anti-state?

Before such issues can be discussed further, the various forms of tribal organisation in the two countries should be summarised - at the risk, for the moment, of attributing a static nature to what were, throughout the period, changing and dynamic social systems.

Tribal Socio-Political Forms in Afghanistan. Afghan tribalism, which has remained a strong political force throughout the twentieth century, has not on the whole been based on pastoralism or nomadism, although the tribal groups that formed the Ghilzai and Abdali confederations and provided the basis for central, expanding leadership in the eighteenth century included large pastoral nomadic elements. Politically active ('troublesome') tribes were more often settled villagers or traders than pastoral nomads. Most nomads were tribal, but many more tribespeople were settled than nomadic. Nomads were indeed more vulnerable to oppression or attack than the warrior tribesmen of the hills with their strong forts.

There are two main dimensions of variation in socio-political forms among Afghan tribal groups: between different Pathan groups, and between Pathans and others. Of all tribal groups in Afghanistan and Iran, the Pathans had perhaps the most pervasive and explicit segmentary lineage ideology on the classic pattern, perpetuated not only in written genealogies but also in the territorial framework of tribal distribution. Since the time of Ahmad Shah (and earlier) the notion of the ethnic and cultural unity of all Pathans (in religion, genealogy, language, custom, especially features like Pashtunwali, jirga, seclusion) was familiar as a symbolic complex of great potential for political unity, but in spite of their centralisation in the monarchy the Pathan tribes were predominantly characterised by endemic inter-tribal hostilities and by diffuse political organisation, throwing up petty lords at most.

Among Pathans during the nineteenth century there were three main socio-political forms.³⁶ One involved marginal agriculture or pastoralism, practised in remote mountain valleys and producing little surplus; probably there was a regular short-fall, made up by trading or raiding or long-distance labour-migration; egalitarian, communal social forms flourished among independent tribal groups, fierce in their defence of territory but rarely persuaded

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to campaign far away. Typical were North West Frontier groups such as Afridi, Mohmand, Wazir (chapters 3 to 5), often regarded as living closest to the principles of Pakhtunwali. Another type, equally remote from urban centres but inhabiting more favoured, well-watered valleys where agriculture was capable of producing a large surplus, exhibited social stratification, usually with a leisured class of martial Pakhtuns owning the land and dependant groups working it; the best known example is the Yusufzai of Swat.³⁷ A third, intermediate form was found in areas that were more accessible to cities and rulers, and where agriculture was reasonably productive; here the influence of the state produced a feudalistic, 'Asiatic' form of stratification, involving a chiefly class with limited powers, a broad mass of tribespeople, and a sizable substratum of dependants. Many Durrani groups were of this type (chapter 7).

Socio-economic differences between Pathans and other tribal groups in Afghanistan were less significant than ethnic, cultural and political distinctions between them. Pathan relations with non-Pathans are defined by rules proscribing inter-marriage, by differences of language and sometimes religion, and by economic exchanges that usually mark the Pathans in superior status. Some non-Pathan groups - Aymaqs, Hazaras and Uzbeks - had rather more powerful chiefs than most Pathans. Within the Durrani kingdom, where the pastures were dominated by Pathan nomads, who could claim ethnic and political identity with the rulers, pastoral nomadism could not be the refuge of subordinate political groups that it was in Iran. Those that resisted Pathan domination did so in mountain fastnesses (the Hazarajat, Kafiristan/Nuristan) where they practised a mixed agriculture similar to that of some of their would-be rulers.

Pastoral nomadism in Afghanistan was an economic adaptation. More important than nomadism or settlement as criteria for political or cultural affiliations were ethnic and tribal identities. Pastoral nomadism was not the basis for tribalism, but tribal organisation, whatever its economic base, has been an advantage for groups eager to maintain their independence or to expand their frontiers. Afghan rulers were more dependant on the main tribal chiefs than were the Shahs of Iran, but neither rulers nor chiefs kept close links with nomadic elements among their followers.

Tribal Socio-Political Forms in Iran. In Iran, by contrast, tribal organisation and nomadism may be seen as political and cultural responses to a condition of alienation from and opposition to the state, as much as economic or ecological adaptations. In general, the city-based central authority in Iran considered tribes and nomads synonymous as a major focus of opposition. The Qajar rulers soon became an urban elite, and other tribes grew alienated from them, with no strong reason or means for identifying themselves with the rulers culturally or otherwise. In the late nineteenth century, the Qajar 'tribe' was very small, a mere one or two thousand families; perhaps aware of the inevitability of losing touch with their original wider tribal support, the rulers for some time continued a kind of migration to summer quarters. The chiefs of the other major confederacies too, though establishing settled bases in towns or cities, maintained nomadic households and pretensions.

Within nineteenth-century Iran, three main socio-political formations among the nomad tribes can be identified. Centralised, state-like nomad confederacies developed in the southern Zagros area (chapters 9 to 12) in conditions of comparatively high population density, in close contact with settled cultivators, in proximity to major cities and trade routes, but at some distance from state frontiers. In similar conditions in north-western Iran, a number of confederacies were more fragmented and ephemeral, but still unified (chapters 13 and 14); they differed from the southern Zagros groups in being on or close to important frontiers, in regions where a network of competing, semi-autonomous, town-based khanates had flourished in the eighteenth century. Thirdly, in the east were diffuse and uncentralised tribal groups such as the Turkmens and Baluches (chapter 8), some of which the Qajar government attempted to control through immigrant Kurdish chiefs; these groups were near more open frontiers and steppe areas, where population was scattered and major cities were more remote; similar were some groups in north-western Afghanistan (chapter 6).

It is unclear how far the Iranian stereotype of tribespeople as nomads had its roots in the culture of settled Iranian society, in the self-image of nomads/tribespeople themselves, or merely in the perceptions and writings of foreign visitors to the country. There have certainly been shifts in perceptions and self-perceptions of the tribespeople/nomads, particularly with the recent suppression of

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both tribalism and nomadism in Iran. There has never been a simple correlation of the two, though the usage of several ethnic/tribal names would suggest there were: in various parts of Iran, 'Kurd', 'Lur', 'Arab', 'Shahsevan', 'Baluch' are synonymous with 'tent-dwelling pastoral nomad';³⁸ in such areas settlement (the abandonment of pastoralism and mobile tent-camps for cultivation and fixed dwellings) entailed loss of political mobility and probably independence and commonly led in other ways to 'detrribalisation' unless in areas where the tribespeople could claim identity with the dominant ethnic group or where they settled as kin-groups to cultivate their own land or that of their chief. But these same names (Kurd, Lur, etc.) are also used, in other contexts, of and by tribal groups whose members are by no means all nomads or even pastoralists; moreover, many Zagros groups (Bakhtiari, Boyr Ahmad, Kuhgiluyeh, Mamasani) bear names referring to their territory and not to nomadism.

On the whole, however, the nomad/settled conceptual distinction coincided with tribal/non-tribal; at any one time substantial parts of many tribal groups were settled or half-settled farmers, but the economic basis of most tribally organised society in Iran was pastoral nomadism or semi-nomadism. Politically important tribal groups, at least until this century, were almost all nomadic or semi-nomadic, their importance related to their potential, when united by a strong leader, for raising bodies of cavalry. Such armies, mobilised for campaigns away from tribal territory, rarely exceeded a few thousand men, but they were still the best organised and most formidable in the country at the time. On the other hand, the militia that settled leaders could muster numbered only in hundreds and were usually active only locally. Those local elements active as a 'problem' in national political affairs were however by no means drawn exclusively from the nomads. The core of the military forces wielded by the larger confederations comprised, first, warriors from leading families, who tended to form part of both settled and nomad society at once, and secondly, their armed henchmen, recruited from the destitute and refugees of both nomad and peasant origins.³⁹

The most tangible variations among tribal groups in the two countries are in production systems and political structures: the former ranging from pastoralism to intensive agriculture, long distance trade, raiding or labour migration; the latter from fragmentary and independent communities somewhat

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resembling the bands of hunting and gathering peoples, to centralised chiefdoms involving hundreds of thousands of people, considerable differentiation of wealth and status, and many of the trappings of states.⁴⁰

A major contrast, superficially at least, can be drawn between on the one hand nomadic tribal groups of western Iran, such as some Kurds, Shahsevan and many groups located in the Zagros area, and on the other the settled Pathan groups of eastern Afghanistan. The former have a long history of local tribal chiefdoms and confederacies, yet they never (in recent centuries) ventured far from home, let alone to found major dynasties in Iran, Anatolia or Arabia (exceptional are the Bakhtiari, with their dynastic efforts earlier this century). By contrast, the Pathans have on the whole avoided the formation of chiefdoms or centralised confederacies in their own territory, yet over the past centuries have sent a number of expeditions of conquest into Iran and India, and indeed founded states and dynasties there.⁴¹

One approach that attempts to explain the variation in tribal forms and the emergence of confederacies and central leadership, posits a single, ideal-type tribal system, whose features may include (apart from pastoral nomadism, which we have already had to reject) a simple division of labour, a segmentary lineage system, egalitarian ideals or organisation, and political autonomy. This sort of approach has a long-established pedigree in studies of Middle Eastern societies. Very similar are theories of a tribal (pastoral nomadic) mode of production or socio-economic formation.⁴² There is little agreement, however, on which features are essential to the ideal type (or mode of production or socio-economic formation). Thus, among our contributors, following anthropological orthodoxy, Hager, Ahmed, Garthwaite and van Bruinessen have taken the segmentary lineage system as a minimal criterion to distinguish tribal from non-tribal society; yet the necessity for this very feature is explicitly questioned by Anderson, Glatzer, Salzman, Beck and Digard. In some cases, political autonomy and cultural distinctiveness are more significant features of so-called 'tribes'. As for egalitarianism, Glatzer, Ahmed and Garthwaite argue, whether from economic or logical a priori grounds, that it is inherent to tribalism and nomadism; while one of the earliest and best models of Pathan tribes includes a hierarchy of authority as a basic feature.⁴³

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Whatever the nature of the ideal type proposed, deviations from it are attributed to a series of differentiating variables, commonly grouped into internal (such as culture, demography, ecology, economy) and external (such as the role of the state, the proximity of frontiers, cities and trade routes). We should consider these factors in turn.

Internal Dynamics of Tribal Organisation. In terms of cultural factors, all the tribal peoples discussed here adhere at least nominally to Islam (whether Sunni or Shii), recognise individual rights to property, observe rules of patrilineal succession and inheritance, give primacy in political and social activities to males (especially to paternal kin), express preferences for marriage among kinsfolk, and value egalitarianism, individualism and independence. Differences in these values and in kinship, religious and other symbolic and cultural systems are of degree rather than kind, and can often be only subjectively assessed. For example, differences between Pathan and Kurdish political organisation might be attributed to Pathan aversion to authority and insistence on equality, as opposed to comparative acceptance of chiefship and stratification among Kurds; but such an explanation is too easy, and even if it were based on a valid assessment of cultural differences there are certainly further historical and sociological reasons for them and they must also be put in the context of ecological and economic differences.⁴⁴

In the ecological, economic and demographic conditions in which pastoral nomadism is practised in Iran, these common cultural factors have (it has been argued) led, particularly at the level of households, camps and economic organisation, to certain basic similarities, namely the practice of allocating grazing rights to patrilineal descent groups, an expanding population, the ability to field large bodies of armed men, and a long-term tendency to encroachment on settled society or to settlement.⁴⁵ In pastoral systems, although animals are owned by individual families, grazing rights are usually held jointly by camps or groups of camps, guaranteed by their membership of a politically united tribal group or allocated to them by a leader. Some tribal cultivators operate a similar form of joint tenure, with periodic redistribution within the local community (Kurdistan) or between communities (some Pathans). If local communities thus have joint access to territory, a major potential cause

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of internal conflict is absent. Most agricultural groups, however, and some pastoralists (see chapters 6 and 14) recognise individual rights to territory, which provide a cause of endemic conflict among paternal kin within local communities. This is certainly at the basis of the tarburwali cousin-rivalry among settled Pathans (chapter 5).⁴⁶

At whatever level territory is held, rivalries tend to develop between neighbouring holders, whether brothers, cousins, camps, lineages or tribes. Particularly among settlers with individuated rights, local-level rivalries over access to territory may lead to pervasive factionalism, contradicting a segmentary ideology, and inhibiting unity in the face of an outside threat. Nomads, with their tendency to allocate territorial rights to larger groups, are likely to co-operate politically on a larger scale against outsiders; but even here, in the absence of effective superior authority, relations between autonomous political units within a region take on the familiar chequer-board pattern: neighbours maintain relations of hostility on their boundaries, but ally themselves with their neighbours' neighbours, forming a larger pattern of two coalitions or blocs throughout or even beyond the region. Such patterns have been recorded at various levels, sometimes several at once.⁴⁷

Factional oppositions in a region mainly involve the leaders of the political units, and subordinate leaders may upset a balanced relation by defecting with their own followers to the other side. Sometimes regional alignments of tribal groups extend into urban society. Out of this tendency arises the notorious reluctance of tribal groups to combine on a regional, let alone a national basis (see chapter 12); but ephemeral tribal combinations were still the largest and most effective organised political groups in nineteenth-century Iran and Afghanistan.

When a strong leader seeks to control a whole region, he usually gains support first from one bloc alone and forms it into a coalition or confederacy to overcome the other. Such tactics were employed by the main conquerors of the period, by established rulers in their tribal policies and by imperial agents.

In some areas, especially among predominantly segmentary Sunni groups such as Turkmens, Baluches, Kurds and Pathans, factional rivalries among tribal groups were mediated by locally-based religious leaders: either Sayyids, sometimes from lineages

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merged in the tribal system, or charismatic mullahs, or Sufi sheykhs or pirs. On occasion such religious leaders could move beyond their role of mediation and unite large groups into at least an ephemeral confederacy for specific politico-religious purposes.⁴⁸ It should be stressed that the ability to unite usually rested on the hope of material gain and the absence of material cause for conflict, as much as, if not more than, on any 'tribal' notions of common descent, or religious or other ideology of unity.

At the local level, effective leadership can be sustained as a non-productive role only if a surplus is produced, whether from a pastoral or agricultural economy, or from raiding, and whether traded or consumed within the tribal group. The ability to produce surplus also attracts state attempts at control and extraction, but does not necessarily lead to meaningful inequalities in the form of leaders or a ruling elite: tribespeople may deliberately under-produce or suppress potential leaders in order to frustrate outside attempts at control. Large-scale political co-ordination and the control of conflict certainly call for leaders, but do not necessitate them.

'External' Variables: State Control. This discussion of 'internal' factors and processes in tribal organisation has treated them as systematically interconnected and to a degree culturally autonomous, that is, controlled by the perceptions and strategies of the tribespeople themselves. However, the main variables determining the emergence of central leadership and the political nature of individual tribal groups are generally agreed to be external, particularly the history, degree and kind of state control. Glatzer, Garthwaite and Gellner suggest that uncentralised, diffusely organised tribal groups are found either in the absence of state control or within a strong state. Garthwaite adds that tribes develop inequalities and form strongly centralised confederacies in order to confront the state, and are able to maintain such strength so long as the state bureaucracy is weak. Digard, accepting the importance of the state factor, draws attention to internal, evolutionary processes whereby such inequalities develop within a tribe, while van Bruinessen argues strongly that, in Kurdistan, tribes as political groups were the creation of the state and that when state influence was withdrawn there was a 'devolution' in scale and complexity of

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tribal organisation. Yapp, more reluctant to generalise than his fellow-historian Garthwaite, nevertheless suggests the principle that modern states cannot tolerate diffusely organised, 'jellyfish' tribes, but that in order to destroy them the state must first provide them with a 'backbone' in the form of chiefs. Indeed, many so-called tribes owe their existence as political, even cultural units, to the imposition of territorial limits and central leadership by a state.⁴⁹ Many tribal groups lack indigenous terms for chiefs and political groups, using Turkish and Arabic terms presumably introduced by the state.

At any time, state control extends over only some of the tribal areas, and any one tribal area comes under control only part of the time. Tribespeople commonly contrast 'tribal' with 'government' periods in their history, while governments and tribes refer to 'government' and 'tribal' areas. The Pathans, for example, distinguish yaghistan from hukumat (chapter 3), categories equivalent to the Moroccan opposition bled es-siba/bled el-makhzen.⁵⁰ These terms do not denote objective conditions, but are cultural categories referring to perceptions of particular places at particular times, for which I shall use the term 'situation', whether 'government' or 'tribal'.

In fact, rulers' notions of 'control' - and indeed of 'tribe' - may be very different from the perceptions of the tribespeople themselves. Also relevant is Yapp's suggestion (chapter 4) that the character of the state (or empire) itself determines its attitude to tribal populations. He and other contributors, moreover, stress that no state or empire with which tribespeople have had to deal was ever monolithic: it was represented at different levels by individuals, each with political or cultural biases.

The nature of state control depends partly on the strength of government and partly on the accessibility of the tribal group concerned, in terms of both terrain, for example the proximity of mountain or desert refuges, and distance from cities and roads, the main organs of government. It also depends on the will and attitude of both government and tribes, their motives for seeking or avoiding control.

One notion that has been extensively used in anthropological studies of tribe-state relations is that of 'encapsulation', a situation arising from a variety of state policies whereby a degree of

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cultural and political autonomy is allowed to tribal groups located within the territorial boundaries of the state. Policies towards encapsulated groups range from nominal or geographical inclusion, through 'indirect rule', to 'integration' which breaks down the encapsulation.⁵¹ Strictly speaking, states do not recognise the existence or operation of any semi-independent or autonomous polities within their territorial frontiers, so that when states deal with encapsulated tribes they are usually acting as empires (see chapter 2): 'indirect rule', for instance, is the policy of an empire not of a state.

In both Afghanistan and Iran up to the present century, state attitudes to encapsulated tribes have been ambivalent. Aspirants to power have relied on tribal support, while established rulers cultivated the tribes as sources of revenue, military levies, and agricultural produce. But tribes were also feared as disruptive elements, prone to raiding non-tribal society, to damaging crops, to armed opposition to government, often to dynastic ambitions of their own, though these, as well as the martial ambitions of the rulers (and hence the spoils they could offer their tribal supporters) were checked by the commencement of the Great Game in the nineteenth century, when Russia and Britain interfered to impose frontiers and keep them intact, to safeguard trade routes, as well as to keep dynasties in power (chapters 2, 5, 7, 14).

In Iran during Qajar times and Afghanistan under the Durranis, a form of 'indirect rule' of the tribes was usually attempted: the tribes were allowed autonomy so long as they kept within certain bounds of action defined by government.⁵² Stronger rulers would control the tribes by nominating leaders, keeping chiefly members as hostages, establishing marriage alliances between chiefly and royal families, executing dissidents, or fostering dissension between rivals for leadership or between neighbouring tribes. Following earlier precedents, Fath Ali Shah in Iran and Amir Abd al-Rahman in Afghanistan practised wholesale transportation and relocation of tribal groups, a more drastic policy which could achieve several results, not all intended. Later rulers in Iran - Nasir al-Din Shah and the Pahlavis - sought to assimilate the tribes by integrating them into the rest of the population, and attempted to break tribal power and extend state control in the tribal areas by replacing hereditary chiefs with local governors, developing disciplined and non-tribal troops in the state army, improving

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communications, and in some cases forcibly settling nomadic elements (chapter 14). Far longer than the Qajar Shahs, the Durrani Amirs of Afghanistan remained paramount chiefs of a tribal confederacy on the imperial pattern; Abd al-Rahman attempted to establish a state in the modern sense, but only Amanullah sought to break away completely from reliance on tribal support, with results fatal to his reign. The Musahibans strove rather to extend state control into tribal areas, while retaining their role as chiefs (see chapter 2).

At various times, however, and almost continuously in several areas, government was unable to follow even indirect methods of rule, and had to recognise a 'tribal situation' in which its claims to the allegiance of certain tribes were purely nominal and territorial. Government might be able to mount a predatory military expedition, with the aim of collecting revenue. Tribes located on state frontiers might be encouraged by either side, by the payment of open or secret 'subsidies', to remain quiet as a buffer or to operate actively as 'wasps'. This was particularly the case with the independent tribes on Afghanistan's frontier with India/Pakistan, whose relations with either state have always been heavily influenced by the payment of such subsidies (chapters 4 and 5).

In the present century, the fate of tribes in Iran under the Pahlavis contrasts with the continued dependence of the Durrani rulers of Afghanistan on tribal support. As narrated earlier, by the 1970s the Pahlavi regime had so effectively undermined the economic base and political potential of the tribes that it could increasingly direct public, academic and touristic attention to tribal cultures as picturesque and now harmless relics of a previous age. This new attitude, undoubtedly influenced by Western interest in the exotic, was partially echoed in pre-revolutionary Afghanistan in regard to the more colourful aspects of nomad and tribal life, but here attitudes remained ambivalent in view of the continuing importance of tribal affiliations in many social and political contexts.

Tribal Attitudes and Strategies. State control is clearly an important determinant of tribal political organisation; but it is not simply an 'external' force; its impact depends on how it is 'internalised' by the tribespeople, and how they react to it. Tribespeople normally have a number of choices.

When a government is serious about administering

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tribal groups within its frontiers, these can react by submission or resistance, that is, they can seek a 'government' or a 'tribal' situation. Voluntary submission is usually conditional, government continuing to tolerate tribal patterns of organisation and ruling indirectly through chiefs responsible to them. If the state is intent on unconditional submission and the more drastic measures of total destruction of the tribal structure and integration of people into the wider population, resistance is likely and can take various forms. Tribespeople may organise for military confrontation as a confederacy. Another strategy is to avoid engagement, for example by refusing to recognise any leader, indigenous or imposed, and by maintaining a diffuse form of organisation - Yapp's 'jellyfish tribes' (chapter 4), and Gellner's 'divide that ye be not ruled'; in some cases the avoidance strategy even leads to the abandonment of 'tribal' forms of organisation such as segmentary lineages (chapter 6); or tribespeople may choose flight rather than fight.⁵³ All such avoidance strategies, whose most successful practitioners have managed not to attract government attention at all, are more feasible in frontier, desert and mountain locations, and in marginal conditions where surplus is not produced and strong indigenous leadership is unlikely, but they commonly go together with an institutional inability to unite in extremis to resist determined military aggression.

The strategies of particular tribal groups may alternate over time between acceptance of indirect rule, military resistance, and avoidance, depending on variations in the abilities and ambitions of both their own leaders and government. The most successful tribal groups are probably those that maintain a set of alternative institutions (for example, leadership roles, institutionalised councils, segmentary lineages) and ideologies (both egalitarian and materialist) by which they can adapt to conditions of autonomy as well as to the different aggressive policies of states - of different states or the same state at different times (cf. chapter 8). Tribesmen are often reported (e.g. chapters 6 and 12) to refer wistfully to an earlier 'golden age' when supposedly there were 'real khans we could willingly have followed, not like the charlatans of today'; this could be interpreted as evidence of alternative ideologies, an acceptance of the idea of leadership under certain conditions.⁵⁴

In no case can tribal groups avoid some accommodation of their behaviour and organisation, either

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in conformity with the aims and perceptions of one state or another, or in opposition to the state so as to maintain a degree of autonomy on their own terms. In many cases, egalitarian ideals conflict with a situation of real inequality due to interaction with the state.⁵⁵ On the other hand, the coincidence of democratic ideals with the achievement of social forms approximating them, as in tribal groups such as Wazir and Mohmand, is not evidence of a 'pure', 'untouched' condition of tribal society, unaffected by any state or empire (chapter 5), but rather the privileged and precarious result of 'encapsulation' in Bailey's sense, and is possible only in certain frontier conditions and as a direct reflection of relations with states. That is, in my view, the social structure of the North West Frontier tribes in the twentieth century is a historical result of their ideological if not military confrontations with states.

Types of Leadership. Tribal and government situations give rise to contrasting types of tribal leadership, which may be termed the 'brigand' and the 'chief'. In tribal situations there are opportunities for successful brigands to collect followers and challenge states or their appointed agents. Where tribespeople accept government authority, however, there is usually a difficulty of communication, especially where there are disputes between tribal nomads and settled peasants, and both sides need an intermediary such as a hereditary chief, with the resources both to represent his tribal constituents and to deal on equal terms with government agents. Quite different abilities and strategies seem called for by the two types of leader. The contrast corresponds to that drawn by Bailey between the 'hirelings' and the 'faithful', bound to their leaders by transactional and moral ties respectively.⁵⁶

Actual leaders combine elements of the two types. A brigand commonly begins with moral authority over a core of his fellow-tribespeople, though the allegiance of other followers depends on his ensuring a continuous flow of booty, and his authority over them is strictly limited to this transaction. Then, unless he has the abilities of a Nadir Shah, he reaches the limits of his expansion, and to retain his wider leadership he must extend his moral authority by establishing a hereditary dynasty or by acquiring recognition by a more powerful ruler as the legitimate, official leader of his

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followers.

A chief, on the other hand, has to prove himself more able to command than his kinsmen; then, however strong the moral and symbolic authority of the chiefship, he has to maintain his personal position not only by performing the specific functions of chiefship, but by rewarding his followers, if not with booty, at least with lavish entertainment and hospitality; otherwise they may abandon him and support a rival, even the chief of another tribe. A chief with government support can maintain his position more easily than a brigand can widen his authority. A chief has duties to both government and followers, and his position is close to that of a feudal lord. Typically he collects tax and military levies, and maintains order for the government, while for his followers he conducts external political relations, adjudicates disputes, and (for nomads) allocates pastures and co-ordinates migrations.

These various 'functions' and 'duties' of chiefship, which followers may not accept as necessary, even where they consent to them, are all likely to provide the leaders with additional sources of wealth and power. Among some nomads, for example, the right to allocate pastures, particularly when recognised by government, was a major base of a chief's continuing power over his tribal followers. In addition, apart from various customary dues, he took for himself a large proportion of the tax he collected, and was given land grants for his services by some rulers. With this wealth, supplemented by private lands and flocks, a chief can not only display conspicuous hospitality and generosity to his followers and others, he can also support a large retinue of servants and henchmen to coerce opponents.

Although actual leaders combine elements of both brigand and chief, indigenous categories of leadership to some extent correspond to the two ideal types. The prototype khan in most tribal societies comes close to the brigand: khans are self-made men who achieve their position through personality, not age or genealogical position, though these may help; they create unity out of difference, or restore a previous unity; they are patrons, acting on behalf of trusting clients, but use their own initiative in action, risking their followers' disapproval; they speak to government as representatives rather than delegates. Anderson analyses (chapter 3) the problems of a Ghilzai

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leader who has gained power through leading a faction but must legitimise it by 'tying the knot' of a lineage group. The similar problems faced by the Kurdish leader Simko are described by van Bruinessen (chapter 13).

A khan who achieves, or relies on, recognition by the state, becomes something else - a chief - for which there are other indigenous categories: the Turkish beg, or ilbegi, the Kurdish agha, elsewhere the katkhuda, malik, kalantar, sometimes sardar. By contrast with khans, these are appointed by government or its agents among the tribespeople. An extension of the chief is the 'paramount chief': sardar or ilkhani, leader of a large tribal group, recognised almost as a 'feudal lord' by the state.

Other categories of leader include the 'elder' or 'grey-beard' (mashar, spin-zhirey, sar-khel, mastair, rish-safid, rispi, aq-saqal, etc.), a respected spokesman for a small lineage group or community. The elder is usually qualified on grounds of age and seniority, and his political function is likely to be impersonal, as a delegate not a representative. Elders do not bring unity to a group, they emerge from unity.

Leaders, Cities, Trade and Frontiers. There was always a close and necessary relation between tribal leadership and cities. The first aim of a politically ambitious 'brigand' was the capture of a city; a hereditary chief, on the other hand, would find himself in a city, either as a hostage or on official business, and he too inevitably made a base there. When any leader came to town, he brought some of his immediate followers and they would settle as his servants or henchmen. Then there developed the well-known paradox that a tribal dynasty needed a settled urban base, but once established there it was corrupted by the luxuries of city life and sooner or later drew away from most of its original tribal support.

The distance of a tribal group from cities, frontiers and trade routes affected the ease with which it could be controlled by government, and also the ease with which in tribal times a leader could acquire a source of wealth and security and a base for expansion. Not only were remoter tribes comparatively free from interference, but it was more difficult for a leader to persuade people to leave home and join an expedition to capture a distant city. Ambitious leaders needed both urban bases and tribal support, and no ruler could rely on just one

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of these elements. Each of the ruling tribal dynasties after the Safavids (Ghilzai, Afshar, Durrani, Zand, Qajar) had a different metropolis, though each conqueror first captured that of his predecessor before moving to safer, neutral ground, which was then diluted with forcibly transported elements.

In Afghanistan the Durrani dynasty was first set in the tribal centre Kandahar but later moved to Kabul, a comparatively neutral centre. Rulers then had to make a choice between installing tribal chiefs as official governors of their local towns, thereby recognising their autonomy, or sending their own state officials as governors with the difficult task of conciliating and controlling the local tribes. Control of trade routes was also a central factor in the importance of the tribes on the Afghan-Indian frontier, especially those in the vicinity of Kabul and Peshawar, though for other reasons the frontier tribes did not produce chiefs who used either the trade routes or the cities as springboards, unlike the various ambitious and competing khans of nineteenth-century Afghan Turkistan.

In Iran, Isfahan, Shiraz and Tehran were important in the rise of tribal dynasties other than the rulers. The Bakhtiari khans grew in influence in Safavid times as leaders of the tribal group closest to the capital Isfahan, occupying at the same time comparatively inaccessible territory. Tehran too, the Qajar capital, was close enough for the Bakhtiari chiefs to occupy in 1909. Meanwhile the rise of the Qashqai khans in the late eighteenth century was probably connected with the location of the Zand capital at Shiraz, though they were always vulnerable in that their migration routes passed close to the city. In the nineteenth century, Bakhtiari, Qashqai and Khamseh chiefs gained power from their ability to control the increasingly important trade crossing their lands. Later these chiefs acquired further influence from their relations with the British. Many smaller cities were left in the control of local tribal chiefs for all or part of the period. Although no other confederacies developed central leadership on the scale of the Bakhtiari and the Qashqai, some groups such as the Shahsevan, Kurds, Turkmens and Baluches became of as much concern as the former to the Qajar government, mainly because of their widespread raiding activities and disruption of the main trading routes. Baluches raided widely in the south-east, while Turkmen forays, particularly on the

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Tehran-Mashhad road, made both cultivation and trade perilous in north-eastern Iran throughout the Qajar period.

Many tribal groups have had a historical, if intermittent role as guardians of state frontiers, though in less secure times they may have served as buffers, in effect to prevent too close definition of a disputed frontier. This role was transformed in the nineteenth century, when the states of the region had their frontiers defined by the Great Powers, and when communications began to improve. Frontier tribes became increasingly a source of dispute between neighbouring states, and even more preoccupied with their own role and situation. A frontier location was a mixed blessing for any tribal group: cross-frontier raiding and the attention of governments could be a limited source of wealth or local power for leaders, but their homelands were now vulnerable and an insecure base for further expansion. It was otherwise with groups further away (such as the major Zagros confederacies), whose interest for government, and whose vulnerability, came from other sources: trade routes, proximity to cities, location and accessibility of pastures and migration routes.

Although the material is not yet available for a systematic comparison to be made, location and history of settlement clearly influence tribes-peoples' perceptions of time and space, of descent and territory, of tribe and state. Tribal groups (such as Shahsevan) relatively recently located on a frontier will have very different notions from those (such as Kurds) whose lands have long straddled state frontiers, and these will all differ again from groups (such as Bakhtiari, Qashqai, Durrani, Ghilzai) located for centuries well inland. Frontier tribes, for example, are more likely to internalise the notion of territory (see chapter 14). Such matters require much further research.

Kurds and Pathans Contrasted. The contrast noted earlier, between centralised groups in the Zagros and north-west Iran and the 'republican' frontier Pathans, could be rephrased as a question: why did the latter never develop the chiefdoms of the former, even on the limited scale of the Shahsevan or the Kurds? Some assessment can now be made of the relevant ecological and historical variables. First must be that some at least of the frontier tribes, such as the Wazir (chapter 5) but perhaps not those of the Khyber (chapter 4), were too poor

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economically to produce surplus necessary either to support a class of leaders or to attract revenue-seeking administrators; they were also too inaccessible. This poverty, and the individuated system of land tenure, rather encouraged local rivalries, emigration in search of employment, and expeditions in search of plunder. Frontier tribes resisted control by the competing Safavid and Mughal empires: using 'jellyfish' tactics, they refused to recognise chiefs. In the eighteenth century, the tribes participated in the Afghan empire to the extent of giving their support in return for subsidies and recognition of their autonomy. In the nineteenth century the British, alternating between inactivity and forward policy, sought control, whether through conquest or subsidy, in order to keep the frontier quiet and the trade routes open, but the tribes, who had not accepted even fellow-Pashtuns as rulers, had no intention of recognising the hegemony of outsiders. By the twentieth century, egalitarianism and independence of authority had been historically validated long enough to have become central elements in the Pakhtunwali ideology dominant on the frontier.

The Kurds, on the other hand, have a long history of at least nominal subordination to surrounding states: Ottoman, Safavid and Qajar rulers insisted on a measure of administrative control over the tribes, however indirect, using emirates and chiefships to this end. Many emirates took the form of vassal (or 'secondary') states, with established hierarchies of wealth and authority, and notions of tribal autonomy, democracy and egalitarianism were not strongly rooted in Kurdish self-consciousness. Among Pathans, the Abdali/Durrani most resemble the Kurds in history and structure. They too had a history of chiefship and involvement with empires such as the Safavids before forming their own. Features of Kurdish society picked out by van Bruinessen are also characteristic of the Durrani: a mixed ethnic milieu; a sharp division between a tribal (Durrani) military land-owning aristocracy with a pastoral nomadic base, and a non-tribal (Parsiwan) peasantry; a segmentary organisation of society based on a descent ideology. This resemblance fades somewhat after the eighteenth-century emergence of the Durrani ruling dynasty and tribal state in Afghanistan, and the abolition of the Kurdish emirates by the Ottoman and Qajar governments in the early nineteenth century.

Among Zagros groups, the Bakhtiari display some

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marked (if subtle) similarities to Pathan groups such as the Ghilzai and the frontier tribes: all inhabit inaccessible mountains, in which there is comparative local ethnic homogeneity, with tribespeople combining pastoral nomadism and settled agriculture; the Bakhtiari relate to Isfahan and Tehran as urban centres just as the Pathan tribes do to Peshawar, Kandahar and Kabul; the nomads, whether Bakhtiari or frontier powindahs, avoided the attention of authority, organising under local headman only for defence on migration. The Bakhtiari chiefship of later Qajar times may be explained away, in this perspective, by their wealth and their relations with government; the ordinary tribespeople came to hate chiefs (chapter 12) in a way that is not reported, for example, of Kurds or Qashqai, but resembles the attitudes of Ghilzai and frontier Pathans. The tarburwali of the latter (chapter 5) echoes the Bakhtiari 'enemy within' (chapter 12).

Some Models of Change in Tribal Society. The tribal groups under consideration show evidence of processes of both evolutionary and cyclical or alternating change. Political evolution in scale and complexity, from a tribal polity into a state or state-like confederacy, involving processes of unification of disparate groups, centralisation of authority, and stratification, has occurred in cases ranging from the major confederacies such as Bakhtiari, Khamseh, Qashqai and Durrani, to local chiefdoms such as the Yarahmadzai Baluch. The reverse process is also seen, however, in Kurdistan, with the dissolution of the emirates in the nineteenth century and their consequent 'devolution' or 'retribalisation' into more diffuse organisation and simpler groups; and also among the Shahsevan, whose unified confederacy, formed in the eighteenth century by the state, broke up in the nineteenth into independent tribes and rival coalitions.⁵⁷ On the other hand, in terms of a shift from society organised on kinship/descent principles to one based on territorial allegiance and control of the means of production, the Shahsevan could be said to have 'evolved' in the nineteenth century; but in these terms too, 'devolution' is possible: abandonment of territorial principles in favour of segmentary lineage ideology and 'jellyfish' tactics can be an adaptive move by a tribal group resisting state control.

None of these cases of apparent evolution or devolution however can be interpreted as clear-cut evidence in support of any particular theory of

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'tribe' or 'state' formation; in all cases, the role of the state and tribal reactions to state policies are the central factors in change. Clearly tribe and state form a single system, whose dynamics are the concern of other theories and models. Thus, cyclical processes are evident in the history of tribal dynasties in Afghanistan and Iran, which at both national and local levels appear to pass through four phases of development. In the expansion phase, a leader recruits followers from different groups, rewarding them usually with booty from successful banditry. Those tribesmen most likely to leave home on raiding expeditions with the hope of booty are the otherwise unemployed: men from families wealthy enough to employ others to work their property (land or flocks), and men who have lost their own property and are unwilling to work that of others. The leader uses this support to gain control of a city and its surrounding region, including dependant non-tribespeople. Eventually the expansion ceases and the establishment phase begins, whereby the leader settles in the city and takes over the administrative machinery, with the aim of collecting revenue and controlling the tribes, who are now frustrated in their drive for booty. In due course the dynasty becomes used to urban life and enters a phase of decay. The tribes, now alienated from the dynasty, refuse support, rebel in favour of other leaders, take over outlying regions and begin to converge on the city, which is now helpless without their support. In the final, replacement phase, one tribe or coalition under a strong leader invades the city and a new cycle begins.

This cycle is similar to the model developed by Ibn Khaldun with reference to early Islamic history, largely on the basis of his observations in north-west Africa.⁵⁸ He laid down a variety of rules defining relations between cities and tribes, and the nature and importance of the 'solidarity' that characterises tribes and their original attachment to the leader. The duration of a dynasty, before it was replaced by another conqueror from the periphery, he put at three generations.

The different Durrani dynastic branches appear to show just such a pattern. The Sadozai rulers lasted about sixty years, passing three generations from Ahmad Shah to his grandsons in the early 1800s. They were replaced by the Barakzai, who provided three different family dynasties in succession: first came a cycle of three rulers, lasting over fifty years from Dost Mohammad (who came, however, not from

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the periphery but rather from the centre of a highly disunited tribal polity) to his grandson Yaqub. Next, Yaqub's cousin, Abd al-Rahman, came from Turkistan, largely with the support of non-Pashtuns; after another three generations and fifty years, Amanullah lost the throne to a Tajik bandit. The final Barakzai family, the Musahiban, won the throne with the aid of Wazir frontier tribesmen, and they too lasted three rulers (though only two generations) and fifty years, to be replaced in 1978 by a new regime led by non-Durrani intellectuals educated beyond the frontier. It must be remembered that Ibn Khaldun's three generations would have lasted 120 years, so the brevity of the four Durrani cycles (little more than 50 years each) must be attributed at least in part to constant external interference in dynastic rivalries and the succession, especially by the British in India.

The far longer duration of the Qajar dynasty in Iran in a single line of succession - seven Shahs, but conforming in time (125 years) to Ibn Khaldun's prediction - may by contrast be attributed to the fact that succession was for long guaranteed by the Great Powers. Moreover, by the late nineteenth century, when the cyclical model would predict a revolt from the periphery, political and economic pressures from Russia and Britain were becoming intense, while their support of the dynasty was confirmed; but at the same time, a tribal resurgence was indeed occurring in outlying areas in the form of escalating brigandry and frontier troubles which hastened the end of the dynasty, though eventual replacement came from a non-tribal periphery. The Pahlavi regime - which saw the completion of the transformation of Iran from eighteenth-century tribal empire, through nineteenth-century 'Asiatic'/feudalistic state, to twentieth-century nation-state - lasted little more than the 50 years of the Durrani cycles, and involved only two rulers, but encompassed immeasurably greater changes in society than any other cycle. Rapid growth of oil wealth and massive industrialisation and urbanisation produced a large middle class committed to the regime but also a large, alienated intelligentsia and proletariat. The revolution that eventually overthrew the Pahlavis was led by a mullah from beyond the frontier, but supported by intellectuals and proletariat from within the geographical centre.

Bases of Tribal Solidarity. Ibn Khaldun's 'solidarity' ('group feeling', asabiya) is a moral sentiment

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arising from common descent and ethnic and cultural similarity. Such a sentiment would seem to have played a minor part in the rise of ruling dynasties in eighteenth and nineteenth-century Iran, which all came to power with the support of coalitions of disparate ethnic elements held together for the most part by non-tribal, transactional bonds such as military discipline and a desire for plunder. But a major source of solidarity, and basis for leadership, is religious in character. The Shiite tribes of Iran had a history of following Sufi leaders with aspirations to the throne, the most prominent example being the establishment of the Safavid dynasty around 1500. The religious fellowship that united the Qizilbash tribes under the Safavids had its legacy under their successors: both Nadir Afshar and Karim Zand used Safavid puppet Shahs to help legitimise their authority, while the Qajars attempted to revive Safavid notions of absolute and near-divine sovereignty. None the less, the tribal forces that brought the Ghilzai, Afshar, Zand and Qajar rulers to power in Iran in the eighteenth century were heterogeneous, and all except the Zand included substantial Sunni elements. Ahmad Shah Durrani, on the other hand, was himself a Sufi, and had some success with appeals to elements of Pashtun self-consciousness, including common descent and Sunni Islam. From 1800 onwards, differences widen between Afghanistan and Iran and between Sunni and Shii tribal groups.

The Shiite ulama in Iran, who were commonly in dormant or active opposition to the Shahs, particularly when they acted autocratically, have led or participated in a series of confrontations that culminated in the events of 1978. Sunni leaders in Afghanistan, however, supported the Durrani rulers as defenders of the faith, opposing individual rulers only when they appeared to be endangering that faith. Throughout the period, it was Shiite tribal groups that had the most developed chiefship: in Qajar Iran the major Shiite groups under their powerful leaders supported the dynasty, though they sometimes rebelled against individual members in the name of their political rivals. In Afghanistan the Shiite minority consisted mainly of the tribal Hazara, who preferred to play down their religious status and rely on secular forms of political leadership and organisation. Among Sunni tribal groups, apart from the Durrani dynasty itself, political leadership was poorly developed, ranging from the petty chiefdoms of Kurds, Baluches and Aymaqs, to the independent

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Turkmen and Pathan tribes who in the absence of strong (or any) chiefship were often willing to rise at the call of a religious leader against a given ruler. There is an apparent paradox: Sunni groups, whether in Iran or Afghanistan, have been politically less centralised and have responded more readily to religious appeals to rise against the state, although in religious theory they should be more tolerant of temporal leadership and the state than Shiites, among whom in fact chiefship and support for the state have been more prominent.

Populations on a local level are more likely to be united by moral sentiments, especially within regions that are of comparative ethnic homogeneity, such as Azarbayjan, Kurdistan, Luristan, Baluchistan, the Hazarajat, and the central Pathan highlands. But this does not mean that people of such regions are necessarily all tribally organised, let alone likely to form large tribal confederations. Actually, the history of tribal transportations meant that many other areas such as Fars, Kirman, Khurasan, Herat, Kabul and Turkistan, and the region between Hamadan, Tehran and Mazandaran, were ethnically quite mixed, and anyway the major confederacies, some of which came from these regions, were of composite origins. None the less, tribal groups in a locality are capable of developing 'solidarity' over time, even when of different origins and languages. When such groups occupy neighbouring territories and give their allegiances to a common chiefly dynasty, although this political union may have begun fortuitously as a result of forced migration, or with quite material objectives, it may well, after a few generations, develop cultural symbols of common identity, and disparate origins may then be discounted as politically irrelevant. Even an ideology of common descent may be constructed out of political-territorial unity. At the same time, descent can as well be the source of dissent as of consent, of factionalism as of unity: where common descent also brings neighbouring rights to property, factions and blocs (see above) are likely to emerge; similarly, differing descent may be the basis of an 'ethnic' stratification, of landowners as against non-landowners.⁵⁹

Tribe and State as States of Mind. The cyclical model elaborated above throws some light on relations between tribes and states as empirical groups in eighteenth to twentieth-century Iran and Afghanistan. The model is, however, based essentially

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on 'ideal-type' notions of both tribe and state, and these should be examined further, particularly in terms of their nature as conceptually opposed tendencies, modes or models of organisation, not just analytically distinct but consciously articulated as cultural categories within the groups discussed.

As bases of identity and political allegiance and behaviour, 'tribe' gives primacy to ties of kinship and patrilineal descent, while 'state' insists on the loyalty of all persons dwelling within a defined territory, whatever else their relation to each other. 'Tribe' stresses personal, moral and ascriptive factors in status, while 'state' is impersonal and recognises contract, transaction and achievement. The division of labour in the 'tribal' model is 'natural'; in the 'state' model it is complex. The 'tribal' mode is socially homogeneous, egalitarian and segmentary, the state is heterogeneous, egalitarian and hierarchical. 'Tribe' is within the individual, 'state' external to him.

The opposition between these two models, their confrontation with each other and with social reality, creates a tension, a dialectic with varying resolutions. Thus, whether because of ecological limitations, state pressures or inherent contradictions, the 'pure' tribe is an empirical impossibility. Most groups that have been termed tribes have some form of segmentary ideology as the basis for political loyalties, but all use other principles too, to guide action and association at different levels of organisation. All tribal groups discussed here have a territorial dimension, though they tend to ascribe common descent to all those who, by whatever means, have acquired rights in their territory.⁶⁰ But there are some 'tribes', especially in Iran, that do not even pretend to an ideology of common descent, organising as explicitly political local groups with a common leadership; in these terms, they are proto- or mini-states within larger, empire-like states. The strength of egalitarian ideals varies widely, as does the extent of inequality in practice; even the most 'egalitarian' tribal groups (as described for example in chapters 3 to 6 and 8) display some inequalities of wealth (however narrow) and leadership roles (however lacking in authority). Conflict over material interests, between rivals or between rich and poor, is endemic to all tribal groups; and 'anti-segmentary', territorially-based blocs and factions are regular tribal phenomena.

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The 'pure' state is similarly impossible. Citizenship (that is, in pre-modern Iran and Afghanistan, subjection to the ruler) is acquired through a mixture of territoriality and descent. Every state must boost its legitimacy, claim the moral allegiance of its citizens, by promoting elements of a common national culture and way of life. The most powerful symbols in a nationalist ideology are shared religion and a concept of mother/fatherland, but insofar as the ideology stresses common descent or origins (real or fictive, plausible or otherwise) it resembles a tribal one. Some states go so far as to deny the existence of any internal ethnic differentiation, but most have to recognise 'minorities', which may be 'tribal' in culture or organisation though today they are often termed 'ethnic' or 'regional' groups or 'nationalities'.⁶¹

In other words, there is 'state' within every tribe, and 'tribe' within every state; state is partly defined in terms of tribe, tribe in terms of state. Most empirical tribes and states are various forms of hybrid, such as tribal states, confederacies or chiefdoms. A confederacy is a union for political purposes, sometimes an alliance of groups on the basis of imputed common descent, usually with a central leadership (e.g. Bakhtiari, Durrani), but sometimes without (e.g. Yamut Turkmen, and see chapter 4), though some would deny the term confederacy to such an uncentralised alliance, naming it a coalition. Other confederacies are more heterogeneous in composition, unified under a leader either by state action (e.g. Shahsevan, Khamseh) or electively as an indigenous response to state or other external pressure (e.g. Qashqai, Shakak Kurds). Centralised tribal unions, territorially based and stratified under a ruling elite, are states in form, though dependant, vassal or 'secondary'. They may be 'tribal' only in the sense of being composed of tribes.

'Tribal states' may be of two forms. Some modern states have promoted a 'tribal' nationalist ideology, claiming common descent or origins for all citizens and denying or eliminating differences. Others, controlled by one 'tribal' (descent-based) elite, may make no attempt to disguise cultural differences under a national ideology, rather reserving privileges and power for the dominant tribal group. To this extent, Durrani and Qajar states were 'tribal', and in this respect empires rather than states, strictly speaking.

How are 'tribe' and 'state' articulated by

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tribespeople? Both modes exist as opposed cultural categories within the experience of individuals, as well as in the structure of systems. This experience, and the tensions it brings, are the concern of several chapters, in which the categories appear in various forms. Hager (chapter 2) shows how the distinction between tribe and state as ideal-type polities is grounded in 'fundamentally different bases for exercising legal jurisdiction', namely personal and territorial spheres of validity. Anderson (chapter 3) discusses the dialectic involving the oppositions khan and khel, qoum and gund, as paired sets of concepts articulating contrasted realms of Ghilzai experience. Ahmed (chapter 5) counterposes nang (honour) and galang (rent, taxation) as 'key features' of contrasted models dominating two distinct categories of Pakhtun society - though he maintains that the former represents tribal purity and the latter its inevitable corruption by the state. Salzman (chapter 8) shows why and how a chiefly hierarchy and a segmentary lineage system coexist as 'organisational alternatives' within a Baluch tribal political structure. Beck (chapter 9) quotes with approval Helfgott's discussion of the 'constant dynamic in Iranian history' between two distinct 'socio-economic formations' (sc. the 'tribal' and the 'state'). Garthwaite (chapter 10) contrasts 'tribe' and 'confederation' as heuristic models differentiated primarily by function and operating at different though overlapping levels of Bakhtiari political organisation, while Digard (chapter 11) prefers to see them as different but complementary processes (sc. incorporation by descent, and political transaction) of formation of the same groups, operating at all levels.

In these cases, 'tribe' and 'state' can be seen not just as empirical groups, nor merely as analytical distinctions, but as representations of explicit cultural categories articulating opposed modes of organisation. They are terms for models used both for explaining social organisation and as guides for practical action in crises and disputes.

These distinctions closely parallel similar oppositions reported from many other contexts. One of the best known in anthropology is the gumsa-gumlao system of the Kachin of Highland Burma. Leach analysed three 'types' of community as part of a single system: the egalitarian gumlao, the hierarchical Shan kingdom, and the intermediate and unstable gumsa chiefdom. These types were ideal patterns, set out for Kachin in ritual and myth, but

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by means of ambiguous symbols allowing alternative interpretations, which individuals could exploit. The whole system was full of inconsistencies, and Leach showed evidence that individual communities in the long term oscillated between the extremes, each of which was inherently structurally unstable.⁶²

This analysis has been criticised on various grounds. Friedman, for example, has recently and influentially attempted a major reevaluation, showing how, in his terms,

What appears as oscillation is but part of a multilinear development generated by a specific structure of social reproduction, and the evolution of 'Asiatic' states as well as devolution towards more permanently 'egalitarian' big-men societies both result from the underlying properties of a single tribal system...The dynamic of the Kachin system might be envisaged as an evolution towards increasing hierarchy and state-formation which comes into contradiction with its own material constraints of reproduction but which, by means of gumlao revolts, succeeds in re-establishing the conditions for a renewed evolution.⁶³

Such a Marxian approach may bear fruit if applied to tribal history and society and state-tribe relations in Afghanistan and Iran. Recent papers by writers such as Digard and Helfgott apply similar hypotheses, though a good deal more primary research needs to be done before adequate materials will be available to substantiate them.

Leach's model of oscillation, derived from Pareto's discussion of the alternating dominance of 'lions' and 'foxes', has often been compared with Ibn Khaldun's theory of the circulation of tribal elites, in reference to North Africa, and its development by Montagne and later Gellner, in terms of relations between siba (peripheral, dissident, segmentary and egalitarian tribes) and makhzen (areas administered by the state).⁶⁴ This model also has recently been subject to debate. A too literal application of terms such as 'segmentary' and 'egalitarian' to North African places and people has been criticised as part of a general reconsideration of classical anthropological segmentary theory. These terms, the critics insist, as well as siba and makhzen, are not descriptive but cultural categories, idioms which are inadequate to

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explain the fluid and complex workings of actual tribal societies, let alone the relations of tribe and state; account must be taken of the formation of 'anti-segmentary' communities at certain levels of organisation, of the patterns of bloc alliances among them, and of increasing centralisation involving hierarchical relations of patronage.⁶⁵

I would argue that varying articulations of all three processes - segmentarity, community and bloc formation, and centralisation/patronage - produce the transformations of tribal society that are observed. The major variable is the influence of the state, both as an external force and as an idea in opposition to the idea of tribe. The essence of the latter is indeed kinship and egalitarianism (the basis of a segmentary lineage system), while that of the former is territoriality (the basis of communities and opposed blocs) and central authority (the basis of patronage). It is in these terms that we can understand both variation in actual tribal forms and changes that have occurred, whether we adopt a cyclical (oscillation) model of change or acknowledge the apparently irreversible (evolutionary) changes that have now taken place in the transition from tribe to state.

The most purely segmentary tribal groups are, as argued earlier, not those completely independent of state influence, but rather those in a position, and with the motivation, to maximise their segmentarity practically and ideologically in opposition to either a real state or the idea of state. Diffuseness of organisation, where segmentarity is also weakly developed, occurs either in tribal groups beyond the influence of states (real or ideal), or as a strategy by a weak tribal group to resist encroaching state control. When state control strengthens, state principles (territoriality, hierarchy of authority) grow in influence, and so then do the roles of factionalism and patronage. Finally, as an 'alternative ideology', or 'social structure in reserve', segmentarity persists in many modern tribal societies in spite of bearing little relation to political groups and behaviour.

New Frontiers, New Oppositions. In concluding this introduction, rather than attempting either to construct a theory of the revolutions or to summarise each chapter and its argument, I merely offer a few speculative observations on the continued relevance of a cyclical model and on the relation between the tribe-state opposition and that of empire and revo-

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lution.

The essential elements in the cyclical model, it will be recalled, were the foundation of a dynasty in the centre by a conqueror with support from the periphery; settlement in the centre; loss of support from the periphery; and replacement thence by another conqueror within (in Ibn Khaldun's version) three generations. I have suggested that such a cyclical pattern can be discerned in tribe-state relations in Iran and Afghanistan at both local and state levels during recent centuries, subject to some modification by external political and economic pressures, especially from the Imperial Powers since the nineteenth century. I also implied that the Khalq-Parcham revolution in Afghanistan and the rise of Khomeyni in Iran can also be seen as continuing the pattern, if our notions of 'frontier' and 'periphery' are transformed somewhat.

We have already seen how frontiers are a key element in the confrontation between tribe and state, whether as empirical groups or as conceptual categories. Frontiers need not be territorial. In order to maintain an ideology of independence when threatened by confrontation with the state and other outsiders, a tribal group must erect a cultural frontier; some achieve this by means of a spatial frontier, through avoidance; others maintain a social frontier, using middlemen and chiefs. Some sacrifice of freedom, whether of movement or of choice, allows the maintenance of an ideology of independence of action.

Such frontiers are in the mind. Perhaps all frontiers should be seen as cultural categories. The conception of city as central and tribes as peripheral frontier groups is, after all, the bias of the state. Evidence presented here supports arguments from elsewhere suggesting that for tribespeople it is the state that is peripheral; the frontier, the cultural 'mirror' in which they perceive and sometimes experience the contrary to tribal values (see chapter 3), is located in the city.

In both countries, though more pronounced in Iran, we can see the emergence of this other frontier, which is neither geographically peripheral nor strictly tribal in nature. As territorial frontiers were better defined during the last century, and geographically peripheral tribal groups came under more direct central control than ever before, the new frontier has been emerging within the centre among people alienated from the ruling elite either by ideology (often of external inspiration) or by

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deprivation of control of means of production. The new frontier is located spatially, if anywhere, in the factories, slums and prisons. In the early days, for example with the rise of urban mobs under the Qajars, the new frontiersmen had no common interests and made no common cause with the still powerful tribes on the geographical periphery; but it is interesting that more recently, with tribes, urban proletariat and intellectuals forming alliances in opposition to oppressive governments, the legendary endurance and struggle of the tribes have inspired the efforts of the rest.⁶⁶

So tribe and state, centre and periphery, are not geographically distinct but exist within each other; this should be predictable from the fate of other dichotomous formulations that have been examined in recent years, such as Great and Little Traditions, mosque and shrine religion. For example, the city has been shown to be not only the centre of the Great Tradition and of formal, doctrinal religion, but also the location of flourishing Little Traditions and shrine cults. Simple dichotomies are attractive and ideologically very powerful; but they lead to confusion among actors and those interpreting their actions; they are of little use as sociological models unless interpreted as actors' conceptual categories. As such they tend to merge with each other, and also with other slippery conceptual dichotomies: worker/bourgeois, illiterate/literate, primitive/civilised, dar al-Harb/dar al-Islam, nomad/peasant, pastoral/agricultural...

Recent events in Iran and Afghanistan are constantly discussed in terms of the opposed ideologies involved, particularly with the changed meaning given to 'revolution' by that in Iran, and the realisation of an Islamic political ideology opposed to both socialism and capitalism. Both revolutions were against regimes seen as Western-oriented (the Shah's and Daud's), and against Western imperialism generally; but while the Khalq-Parcham revolution was wholly socialist and Soviet-oriented, the movement against the Shah was primarily under an Islamic banner, rejecting both Eastern and Western materialism and imperialism. Since the revolutions, there have been complications in both cases. In Iran, the union of socialist elements which aided (they would say, brought about) the revolution, has since been rejected by the religious fundamentalist rulers; Khomeyni's opponents now include a variety of bourgeois monarchists, regional-tribal minorities, socialist elements, and Muslim

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moderates. The Khalq-Parcham regime in Afghanistan attempted at first to discount three main ingredients of Afghanistan's national ideology: Islam, independence of foreigners, and tribal loyalties; each of these then became key symbols of the resistance, which here too includes a variety of elements: bourgeois and tribal monarchists, Islamic fundamentalists, and pro-Chinese socialists.

So the revolutions of 1978-9 (and other not so recent events) call for understanding in terms of a further conceptual dichotomy: empire and revolution. I suggest that these opposed ideal types are related to, if not derived from, the tribe/state dichotomy with which we are concerned. Hager (chapter 2) discusses Hans Kelsen's four 'spheres of validity' of legal norms, namely the personal, territorial, material (i.e. subject matter) and temporal. As bases for exercising legal jurisdiction, these correspond to the following ideal-type polities respectively: tribe, state, empire, and I suggest, revolution.

To elaborate: tribe (ethnic group) is a polity in which personal identity and kinship ties are basic to membership, and social reproduction (through marriage ties) is the underlying concern of interaction. State overrides tribal or ethnic affiliations and claims political authority over all occupants of a defined territory. Empire accepts - or ignores - the personal ties of tribespeople and the political allegiances of territorially-defined states, in its concern with the exploitation of economic resources and the channelling of material wealth to the centre. A revolution, particularly one with a millennial ideology and totalitarian methods (which includes the founding of both the fascist Third Reich and the communist Soviet Union, and of both the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran), demands total personal commitment, claims universal relevance beyond territorial frontiers, and denies established relations of production and exchange; it promises a morally better system and focuses on a temporal event (the Revolution) in which a complete break is made with the past and a glorious future is inaugurated.

We have seen how tribe and state as ideal types are in a relation of opposition and contradiction. I suggest that empire and revolution are in a similar relation. Empires are this-worldly and materialistic, intent on expansion, while revolutions are other-worldly and moralistic, particularly in the case of

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millennial movements, classic expressions of opposition to imperialism. Revolution may take place within a given state, but the avowed enemy is not that state itself but the international system said to be supporting that state - Western capitalism or international socialism, both forms of imperialism.

In each case of opposition, various resolutions are possible; that is, each type of polity has two main empirical options for dealing with its opponent, involving the adoption of organisational features of either its opponent or one of the other types of polity. These options may be summarised as follows:

First, a tribe wishing to confront a given state can either transform itself into a centralised, state-like confederacy, or take a revolutionary path after a religious leader. A state intent on controlling tribal groups can either appeal to nationalist (sc. 'tribal') ideals, or adopt an imperial policy of indirect rule. An empire, finding that blatant economic exploitation of subject peoples leads inevitably to revolutionary tendencies, may appeal to universalistic (i.e. 'revolutionary') moral ideals (freedom, progress, human dignity, collective good...), or may follow a 'tribal' strategy: either by appeal to a common cultural heritage or historical experience (as in the Commonwealth today), or by adopting a diffuse segmentary form of organisation: in the modern age of revolutions, the functions of empire are no longer overtly performed by formal political entities such as governments, but by quasi-autonomous, multi-national corporations, economic empires that are less vulnerable to revolution in any given state. A revolution, finally, in its attack on imperialism, may adopt an 'imperialist' policy of infiltration and subversion of the production process, picturing in its ideology a highly materialist millenium, whether as 'cargo' or as paradise, as reward for support; when the millenium does not arrive and harsh economic realities must be faced, the revolution can define itself territorially and organise as a state, whether theocratic or totalitarian.

Such a model is clearly incomplete and simplistic, but it has the virtue of depicting, and relating to each other, many of the different forms of polity that have operated in recent Iranian and Afghan history.

I end this discussion with a plea for the reconsideration of the image of tribalism in the modern world. The record of tribal societies should speak for them: they have been less savage than historical

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states and empires, less 'clannish' than many ruling elites; neither the evils that the twentieth century has ameliorated (such as ignorance and disease), nor the evils that it has brought (such as over-population, alienation, ecological disaster and mass destruction) can be attributed to tribalism. In many cases, such as the Pathans, Kurds, Baluches and Turkmens, states and empires have not only created tribes as political groups, but they have then prevented them from developing their own political identities as nation-states. Tribalism has its faults and limitations, but its provision of social security and its long-term survival value should recommend it as no anachronism in the last decades of the twentieth century.

NOTES

1. For earlier discussions of the 'problem of tribe', see: M. Sahlins, *Tribesmen* (Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, 1968); J. Helm (ed.), *Essays on the Problem of Tribe* (American Ethnological Society, 1968), esp. papers by M. Fried and E. Colson; M.H. Fried, *The Notion of Tribe* (Cummings, Menlo Park, 1975); M. Godelier, 'Le concept de tribu: crise d'un concept ou crise des fondements empiriques de l'anthropologie?' *Diogenes*, 81 (1973), pp. 3-28; E. Marx, 'The tribe as a unit of subsistence: nomadic pastoralism in the Middle East', *AA*, 79 (1977), pp. 343-63.

2. A.K.S. Lambton, *Islamic Society in Persia* (School of Oriental and African Studies, London, 1954), p. 6.

3. A.K.S. Lambton, 'Īlāt', *EI*, 2nd ed., 3, pp. 1095-6.

4. In chapter 4, Yapp clearly shows the mistaken stereotypes with which British Indian agents approached the Pathans, while chapters 2, 7 and 14 include discussions of Russian attitudes to the tribes they encountered in their drive through Central Asia.

5. L. Helfgott, 'Tribalism as a socioeconomic formation in Iranian history', *IS*, 10 (1977), pp. 36-61; id., 'The structural foundations of the national minority problem in revolutionary Iran', *IS*, 13 (1980), pp. 195-214; J.J. Reid, 'The Qajar Uymaq in the Safavid period, 1500-1722', *IS*, 11 (1978), pp. 117-43; id., 'Comments on "Tribalism as a socioeconomic formation"', *IS*, 12 (1979), pp. 275-81.

6. This is discussed further below. Potentially misleading conflation of pastoral nomadism with tribalism are particularly common among writers on Iran, e.g. Helfgott, 'Tribalism'; F. Halliday, *Iran: Dictatorship and Development* (Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1979), pp. 11-12, 214; J.-P. Digard, 'Les nomades et l'état central en Iran: quelques enseignements

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d'un long passé d'"hostilité réglementée"', *Peuples Méditerranéens/Mediterranean Peoples*, 7 (1979), p. 45; N. Keddie, most recently in her Introduction to *MIDCC*. E. Marx's recent proposal (in 'The tribe ...', p. 358) to define the Middle Eastern tribe as 'a subsistence unit ... a social aggregate of pastoral nomads who jointly exploit an area providing subsistence over numerous seasons', cannot apply to Iran or Afghanistan.

7. See the useful summary discussion of pastoral nomadic tribal chiefdoms in Sahlins, *Tribesmen*, pp. 32-9.

8. Afghanistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan are recognised states; Kurdistan, Luristan, Arabistan and Baluchistan are sometime provinces of states; Pakhtunistan is a territory disputed between states; while unlike all these, only the Hazarajat, a region with no political definition, coincides roughly with an ethnic distribution.

9. The authors of the three chapters on the Bakhtiari disagree on what to call this group: a 'confederation' (chapter 10), a 'tribe' (chapter 11), or a 'failed state' (chapter 12). Clearly in the context of Afghanistan and Iran the 'problem of tribe', and problems of definition and analysis of substantive tribal groups and their relations with the state, are quite different from those in the nations of Africa, see P. Gutkind (ed.), *The Passing of Tribal Man in Africa* (Brill, Leiden, 1970).

10. See e.g. N. Keddie, 'The Iranian power structure and social change 1800-1969: an overview', *IJMES*, 2 (1971), p. 4; other writers, such as V. Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan* (Stanford University Press, 1969), talk of any unified and centralised policy as a state.

11. Passages concerning Iran in this and the two subsequent sections are derived largely from my 'The tribes in eighteenth and nineteenth-century Iran', forthcoming in P. Avery and G. Hambly (eds.), *The Afshars, Zands and Qajars*, vol. 7 of *The Cambridge History of Iran* (Cambridge University Press), where full references and more detailed instances can be found.

12. A.K.S. Lambton, 'The tribal resurgence and the decline of the bureaucracy in eighteenth-century Persia', in T. Naff and R. Owen (eds.), *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Islamic History* (Southern Illinois University Press, Carbondale, 1977), pp. 108-29.

13. M. Elphinstone, *An Account of the Kingdom of Caubul* (London, 1815), vol. 2, pp. 252-3.

14. Gregorian, *Emergence*, p. 48.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 51.

16. See J.R. Perry, *Karim Khan Zand* (University of Chicago Press, 1979).

17. The best source on the distribution of tribal and ethnic groups in Afghanistan in 1800 is Elphinstone, *Account*, whose description of their social organisation too has yet to be surpassed.

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18. On the distribution of tribal groups in Iran in 1800, see Lambton, 'Ilat', and my 'The tribes'; the best sources are A. Dupré, *Voyage en Perse*, etc. (Paris, 1819), vol. 2, pp. 452 f.; P. Amedée Joubert, *Voyage en Arménie et en Perse*, etc. (Paris, 1821), pp. 250 f.; J. Morier, 'Some account of the Īliyāts, or wandering tribes of Persia, obtained in the years 1814 and 1815', *JRGS*, 7 (1837), pp. 230-42.
19. R. Cottam, *Nationalism in Iran* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 1964), p. 158.
20. A.K.S. Lambton, 'Kadjar', *EI*, 2nd ed., 4, p. 399.
21. Compare the policies of Mackeson on the Indian Frontier (chapter 4), also those of Amir Abd al-Rahman (chapter 7).
22. Morier, 'Some account', p. 236.
23. E. Aubin, *La Perse d'Aujourd'hui* (Colin, Paris, 1908), pp. 177-8.
24. See also P. Oberling, *The Qashqā'i Nomads of Fārs* (Mouton, The Hague, 1974).
25. On the Qaradaghi and Shahsevan tribal union and its fate, see my 'Raiding, reaction and rivalry: the Shahsevan tribes in the Constitutional period', forthcoming in M. Bayat (ed.), *The Constitutional Revolution in Iran*; for tribal distributions around 1920, see H. Arfa, *Under Five Shahs* (Murray, London, 1964), pp. 439-46.
26. On the effects of Riza Shah's settlement policy, see my 'The Shahsavan of Azarbaijan ...', unpublished PhD thesis, University of London, 1972, pp. 676-82. Quantitative data on economic and social effects in any tribal group are totally lacking.
27. L. Beck, 'Revolutionary Iran and its tribal peoples', *MERIP Reports*, 87 (May 1980), p. 18. For further relevant background information on recent events in Iran, see other articles in *MERIP Reports* 86, 87 and 88 (all of 1980); *MIDCC*; F. Kazemi (ed), *Iranian Revolution in Perspective*, special issue of *IS*, 13 (1980).
28. This account of Afghan history and the relation of the rulers to the tribes draws heavily on a manuscript by Rob Hager, to whom I am much indebted; I remain responsible for any errors in this version.
29. J. Dacosta, *A Scientific Frontier; or, the Danger of a Russian Invasion of India* (W.H. Allen, London, 1891), p. 10.
30. H. Kakar, *Afghanistan: a Study in Internal Political Developments 1880-1896* (Punjab Educational Press, Lahore/Kabul, 1971); id., *Government and Society in Afghanistan: The Reign of Amir Abd al-Rahman Khan* (University of Texas Press, Austin, 1979).
31. L. Poullada, *Reform and Rebellion in Afghanistan 1919-1929* (Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1973), p. 212.
32. Cf. L. Poullada, 'Afghanistan and the United States: the crucial years', *MEJ*, 35 (1981), pp. 178-90.

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33. On this issue see my 'Ethnicity and class: dimensions of inter-group conflict in Afghanistan', forthcoming in N. Shahrani and R. Canfield (eds), *Revolutions and Rebellions in Afghanistan*.

34. See D. Khalid, 'Afghanistan's struggle for national liberation', *Internationales Asienforum*, 11 (1980), pp. 197-228. Other useful sources of background information on recent events in Afghanistan are: L. Dupree, *AUFS Reports* (S. Asia Series), 1979, nos. 32, 44, 45, and 1980, nos. 23, 27, 28, 29, 37; *MERIP Reports*, 89 (1980); and newsletters of national groups supporting the Afghan resistance, e.g. the *Swiss Afghanistan Info*.

35. See note 1 above. On the 'origin of the state', see F. Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (International, New York, 1972 (1891)); R. Lowie, *The Origin of the State* (Harcourt, Brace and World, New York, 1927); M.H. Fried, *The Evolution of Political Society* (Random House, New York, 1967); L. Krader, *The Formation of the State* (Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, 1968); E.R. Service, *Origins of the State and Civilization* (Norton, New York, 1975); R. Cohen and E.R. Service (eds.), *Origins of the State* (ISHI, Philadelphia, 1978); H.J.M. Claessen and P. Skalnik (eds.), *The Early States* (Mouton, The Hague, 1978); id., *The Study of the State* (Mouton, The Hague, 1981). For a classic study of states and tribes in one region (East Africa) see L. Mair, *Primitive Government* (Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1962); for discussion of the problem in a Middle Eastern context, see E. Gellner, 'Flux and reflux in the faith of men', in his *Muslim Society* (Cambridge University Press, 1981).

36. Elphinstone, *Account*, Books 3 and 4; for a summary of the similar formulation by I.M. Reisner, *Razvitie feodalizma i obrazovanie gosudarstva u Afgantsev* (Akad. Nauk, Moscow, 1954), see Gregorian, *Emergence*, pp. 42-3.

37. F. Barth, *Political Leadership among Swat Pathans* (Athlone, London, 1959).

38. Cf. B.J. Spooner, 'Politics, kinship and ecology in south-east Persia', *Ethnology*, 8 (1969), pp. 149-50.

39. Contrary to Gellner's observation on Moroccan tribes ('Flux and reflux', p. 20) Iranian tribes had a low Military Participation Ratio (Andreski's phrase), dependant on the supply of surplus, tribute and booty.

40. It should be noted that several tribal groups in Iran and Afghanistan not discussed explicitly in this volume have been recently studied by anthropologists and historians; many of the published accounts are referred to below.

41. For previous comparisons of 'dissident' tribal groups such as Berbers, Kurds and Pathans, see for example C.S. Coon, *Caravan; the Story of the Middle East* (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York, revised ed., 1958), chapter 16; J.D. Seddon, 'Introduction' to R. Montagne, *The Berbers*, tr. J.D. Seddon (Cass, London, 1972), pp. xxxiv-vii.

42. Helfgott, 'Tribalism'; J.-P. Digard, 'Histoire et anthropologie des sociétés nomades: le cas d'une tribu d'Iran',

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Annales, 28, 6 (1973), pp. 1423-35. Helfgott seems to equate 'socioeconomic formation' with 'mode of production', on the grounds that for Marx the former is characterised by the latter; while Digard appears to follow Althusser and Terray in analysing any social formation as comprising two or more modes of production.

43. Elphinstone, *Account*, vol. 1, pp. 215 f.; see also R. Loeffler, 'Tribal order and the state: the political organization of Boir Ahmad', *IS*, 11 (1978), pp. 145-71, who considers that for some tribes of Iran the political system is 'intrinsically centralized'.

44. Cf. F. Barth, 'Ethnic processes on the Pathan-Baluch boundary', in G. Redard (ed.), *Indo-Iranica* (Wiesbaden, 1964).

45. See my 'The tribes ...'; variation in camp and household size and structure may be related to the differential impact of these cultural factors, see my *Pasture and Politics: Economics, Conflict and Ritual among Shahsevan nomads of north-western Iran* (Academic Press, London/New York, 1979), chapter 8.

46. See also A.S. Ahmed, *Pukhtun Economy and Society* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1980); on tribal forms of land tenure, see F. Barth, *Models of Social Organization*, Occasional Paper no. 23 (Royal Anthropological Institute, London, 1966), chapter 3; on individuated grazing rights among nomads, see my 'Individuated grazing rights and social organization ...' *PPS*, pp. 95-114.

47. Opposed blocs are pervasive among Swat Pathans, see Barth, *Political Leadership*, also his 'Segmentary opposition and the theory of games', *JRAI*, 89 (1959), pp. 5-21. Blocs have also been recorded among Shahsevan camps, see my *Pasture and Politics*; among Caucasian and East Azarbayjani khanates in the eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries, see my 'Shahsavān of Azarbaijan', chapters 7 and 8; among Yamut Turkmen tribes, see W. Irons, *The Yomut Turkmen*, Anthropological Papers no. 58, Museum of Anthropology (University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, 1975). Institutionalised local rivalries, which often relate to such bloc oppositions, include the pervasive Heydari/Nimati factionalism in Iran, see H. Mirjafari, 'The Haydari-Ni^cmatī conflicts in Iran', *IS*, 12 (1979), pp. 135-62; see also the divisions of the Qajar tribe into upper and lower branches, the Kurds into Left and Right, the Bakhtiari into Chahar and Haft Lang, various Pathan groups into Zirak and Panjpay, Spin and Tor, Gar and Samil ...

48. See chapters 3 and 13; also Irons, *The Yomut Turkmen*; Gellner, *Muslim Society*.

49. Similar points are made by D. Eickelman, *The Middle East: an Anthropological Approach* (Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, 1981), pp. 87 f. On tribes created by states, see R. Cohen, 'Introduction', in Cohen and Service, *Origins*, p. 16; Colson and Fried, papers in Helm, *Essays*; R. Cohen and J. Middleton (eds.), *From Tribe to Nation in Africa* (Chandler,

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Scranton, PA, 1970), p. 27.

50. See Barth, *Political Leadership*, p. 133; Montagne, *The Berbers*; E. Gellner, *Saints of the Atlas* (Weidenfeld and Nicholson, London, 1969); Coon, *Caravan*.

51. F.G. Bailey, *Stratagems and Spoils* (Blackwell, Oxford, 1969). On chiefs as middlemen, see F. Barth, *Nomads of South Persia* (Allen and Unwin, London, 1961). For application of Bailey's and Barth's insights, see my 'Shahsavan of Azarbaijan'; R. Loeffler, 'The representative mediator and the new peasant', *AA*, 73 (1971), pp. 1077-91; G.R. Fazel, 'The encapsulation of nomadic societies in Iran', in C. Nelson (ed.) *The Desert and the Sown* (Institute of International Studies, University of California, Berkeley, 1973); P.C. Salzman, 'Continuity and change in Baluchi tribal leadership', *IJMES*, 4 (1973), pp. 428-39; id., 'Tribal chiefs as middlemen: the politics of encapsulation', *AQ*, 47 (1974), pp. 203-10.

52. On Qajar tribal policies, see A.K.S. Lambton, 'Persian society under the Qajars', *JRCAS*, 48 (1961), pp. 123-39.

53. Gellner, *Saints*; W. Irons, 'Nomadism as a political adaptation', *AE*, 1 (1974), pp. 635-58; D. Bates, 'The role of the state in peasant-nomad mutualism', *AQ*, 44 (1971), pp. 109-31; cf. non-tribal nomads in Iran, such as Sangsari or the Komachi, D. Bradburd, 'Size and success: Komachi adaptation to a changing Iran', in *MIDCC*, pp. 123-37; see also T. Barfield, *The Central Asian Arabs of Afghanistan* (University of Texas Press, Austin, 1981).

54. Cf. E. Gellner, 'Doctor and Saint', in his *Muslim Society*; P.C. Salzman, 'Does complementary opposition exist?', *AA*, 80 (1978), pp. 53-70; id., 'Ideology and change in tribal society', *Man (NS)*, 13 (1978), pp. 618-37; Bailey, *Stratagems*, pp. 15-16. For examples of shifts in tribal political organisation or leadership resulting from transformations of the state, see also chapters 6, 13 and 14 below.

55. Cf. J. Black, 'Tyranny as a strategy for survival: Luri facts versus an anthropological mystique', *Man (NS)*, 7 (1972), pp. 614-34.

56. Bailey, *Stratagems*, chapter 3.

57. On the Kurds see chapter 13 below. In Agha, *Shaikh and State* (PhD thesis, Utrecht, 1978), pp. 288 f., 246, Martin van Bruinessen discusses two confederacies that survived. F. Barth considered detribalisation in Kurdistan to be irreversible, *Principles of Social Organization in Southern Kurdistan* (Jørgensen, Oslo, 1953), p. 135; just as A.S. Ahmed holds that the movement from *nang* to *qalang* forms of Pathan society is unidirectional, *Millenium and Charisma among Pathans* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1976), p. 81. On the Shahsevan, see chapter 14 below, and the Appendix to my 'The tribes ...'. Cf. the fate of the Qizilbash confederacies such as Shamlu and Afshar in seventeenth and eighteenth-century Iran, and of the Ghilzai in Afghanistan after their defeat by the Durrani in the eighteenth century.

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58. Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddima*, tr. F. Rosenthal (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1967). The literature on Ibn Khaldun is vast, see A. al-Azmeh, *Ibn Khaldun in Modern Scholarship: a Study in Orientalism* (Third World Centre, London, 1981); for applications to Iranian history, see e.g. C. Issawi, *The Economic History of Iran 1800-1914* (University of Chicago Press, 1971), p. 4 f.; B. Spooner, 'Politics, kinship and ecology'; Tapper, 'The Shahsavan of Azarbaijan'.

59. For example in Fars, where tribes of the Khamseh and Qashqai confederacies have lived for some centuries, the former are known as 'Arab' and the latter as 'Turk', even though they are both of highly varied languages and origins. The Pathans too are regarded as ethnically one, though every tribe includes elements of disparate origins, sometimes Persian- or Turkish-speaking. The same is true of the Shahsevan and many other tribal groups. In contrast, various groups more recently transplanted to Khurasan and the vicinity of Tehran by Nadir Shah or the early Qajars, have remained for the most part ethnically and politically distinct.

60. On the territorial basis of Middle Eastern descent groups, see F. Barth, 'Descent and marriage reconsidered', in J. Goody (ed.), *The Character of Kinship* (Cambridge University Press, 1973); for local communities and corporate groups, see my 'The organization of nomadic communities among pastoral societies of the Middle East', in *PPS*, pp. 43-65.

61. Commentators on recent events in Iran, such as Halliday, *Iran*, and Helfgott, 'Structural foundations', distinguish Azarbayjanis, Kurds, Baluches, Arabs and Turkmens as 'national minorities' with aspirations for autonomy, from 'tribal' groups such as Bakhtiari, Qashqai and others.

62. E.R. Leach, *Political Systems of Highland Burma* (Athlone, London, 1954).

63. J. Friedman, 'Tribes, states and transformations', in M. Bloch (ed.), *Marxist Analyses and Social Anthropology* (London, Malaby, 1975), pp. 161, 186; in a supplementary note to a new reprint of *Political Systems*, Leach accuses Friedman, with some justice, of 'ignoring the facts on the ground altogether'.

64. V. Pareto, *The Mind and Society*, ed. A. Livingston (Dover, New York, 1963); Montagne, *The Berbers: Gellner, Saints*; cf. O. Lattimore, *Inner Asian Frontiers of China* (American Geographical Society, New York, 1940).

65. See, for example, C. Geertz, H. Geertz, and L. Rosen, *Meaning and Order in Moroccan Society* (Cambridge University Press, 1979), pp. 106, 264, 377; M. Meeker, *Literature and Violence in North Arabia* (Cambridge University Press, 1979), pp. 11 f., 220; Eickelman, *The Middle East*, esp. p. 104; E. Peters, 'Some structural aspects of the feud among the camel-herding Bedouin of Cyrenaica', *Africa*, 32 (1967), pp. 261-82; for Gellner's response to some of these critics of segmentary theory and its application, see his *Muslim Society*, and also

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chapter 15 below.

66. The classic documentary film *Grass*, by M. Cooper and E. Schoedsack (1924), depicting the struggle of Bakhtiari nomads against the elements, apparently had a cult following in recent years among dissident Iranian youth, see H. Naficy, 'Non-fiction documentaries on Iran', *IS*, 12 (1979), p. 223; similarly, the reputation of the North West Frontier Pathans for resistance to the British has been an inspiration for all those fighting for the withdrawal of the Soviet invaders of Afghanistan.

Chapter 2

STATE, TRIBE AND EMPIRE IN AFGHAN INTER-POLITY RELATIONS

Rob Hager

A Model of State, Tribe and Empire as Types of Legal Order

For at least a millenium, the Pashto-speaking people have preserved their independence and flourished through a tribal political organisation in their homeland straddling the present Afghanistan-Pakistan international border. The tribal organisation of these people - more commonly called Afghans to the west, Pathans to the east, and Pushtuns/Pakhtuns on both sides of this border - today provides them not merely with a distinct cultural or ethnic identity, but, especially for those in the central homeland nearest the border, with a form of polity alternative to that of the state. Tribal institutions and norms, just as those of a state, can and do perform the political tasks of interest mediation, dispute resolution, and military organisation. In a changing political environment the Pashtun tribes have preserved their own forms of organisation and even today remain independent, more or less, of the states within whose boundaries they now reside. Their political independence is expressed through the autonomous enforcement of the tribal legal order - the Pashtunwali. Inter-polity relations between these tribes and neighbouring governments have been structurally characterised by their fundamentally different kinds of legal orders, based respectively on the Pashtunwali and central state institutions and ideologies.

The distinction between tribe, based on descent, and state, based on control of territory, associated with the thought of Morgan and Maine,¹ is not merely descriptive but has a conceptual grounding in the fundamentally different bases for exercising legal jurisdiction in these two ideal-type polities. Hans

Kelsen analyses the jurisdictional bases of legal norms in his statement of the principles of international law, which relies upon four 'spheres of validity' of legal norms: the personal, the territorial, the material (i.e. subject matter) and the temporal. These are ontological categories.² Human behaviour that can be subjected to norms is identified with a person at a place in time. For Kelsen the determination of the spheres of validity of national legal orders is the essential function of international law, which 'renders it possible for the states to be considered as coexistent side by side as equal subjects'. Kelsen made clear the relationship of the state to his classification of jurisdictional spheres: 'Those normative orders that are designated as states are characterised precisely by the fact that their territorial spheres of validity are limited'.³ This understanding is basic to the international law that provides a normative referent for relations between actors in the modern state system. De Visscher observes that 'historically the territorial home of the state is the foundation of the political and legal order born in the sixteenth century and definitively consecrated in Europe by the Treaties of Westphalia'.⁴

The post-Westphalian system admitted as participants in the new international legal order only those polities which exercised exclusive legal jurisdiction over a fixed territory. The alternative kinds of polities which are conceptually excluded from this paradigm are suggested by two other of Kelsen's ontological categories or legal 'spheres of validity'. These alternative polities exercise legal jurisdiction either over a defined group of persons and are characterised by the fact that their personal spheres of validity are limited, or over only certain kinds of human behaviour and are characterised by the fact that their material spheres of validity are limited.

The tribe or ethnic group exercises its legal jurisdiction on the basis of personality, and therefore corresponds to the first of these alternative polities. A consideration of boundary concepts reveals the radical difference between the ideal-type tribe and the state as defined above. As Fredrik Barth has written, it is 'the ethnic boundary that defines the group', and the ethnic or tribal boundary demarcates a change in normative order, the 'differences in criteria for judgment of value and performance'. Tribal or ethnic boundaries are not drawn on the ground, but rather separate groups of persons

who identify with different 'basic value orientations, the standards of morality and excellence by which performance is judged ... Belonging ... implies a claim to be judged and to judge oneself by those standards that are relevant to that identity'. Pashtun tribes were Barth's specific reference in making these observations, and many others have confirmed the importance of adherence to the Pashtunwali in the group-consciousness of the Pashtuns.⁵

As Kelsen points out, it is the task of international law to delimit the jurisdictional reach of the 'specifically juristic unit' that is the state, so that state units may coexist with independence and equality.⁶ Barth describes the kind of inter-ethnic law that would apply to relations among diverse tribal or ethnic groups. Interaction among such groups 'both requires and generates a congruence of codes and values' and implies a 'structuring of interaction which allows for the persistence of cultural differences'. Barth argues that such relations require a 'systematic set of rules governing inter-ethnic social encounters', which would include 'a set of prescriptions governing situations of contact ... and a set of proscriptions on social situations preventing inter-ethnic interaction in other sectors, and thus insulating parts of the cultures from confrontation and modification'.

According to Barth, then, a tribally-organised ethnic group will generate a normative order to govern its relations with another such group so as to permit them both to coexist with independence and, presumably, equality. However, unlike the normative order that governs relations among states, this 'inter-ethnic' normative order governs primarily social relations among persons. The objective of this normative order is to permit interaction through 'agreement on codes and values ... relevant to the social situations in which they interact',⁷ while permitting members of the diverse groups to preserve their self-identifying adherence to their own distinct values and norms, such as are expressed in the Pashtunwali. Inter-polity relations among tribally-organised peoples are made through personal and individual accommodations between diverse normative orders at the ethnic boundary, rather than between the formal and specialised institutions of the state. The state, which is defined by its capacity to enforce its domestic normative order through monopolising the exercise of force within its borders, must also monopolise conduct of relations outside its borders. By contrast, the external relat-

ions of a tribally-organised polity, which is defined by the adherence of its members to the tribal normative order, are - like that personal adherence to the internal order - personal relations which challenge and reinforce the distinctiveness and unity of the normatively-defined tribal group.

So, the ideal-type bribe and state polities not only rest their internal normative orders on ontologically diverse jurisdictional bases - personal and territorial - but the different boundary concepts resulting therefrom give rise to radically different styles for the normative conduct of external relations: that expressed through international law on the one hand, and a kind of inter-tribal law on the other. 'Law' is a generic term to describe a normative order in dialectical relation to power. Each of these normative orders, state and tribe, internal and external, satisfies Hoebel's conventional cross-disciplinary definition of law: 'A social norm is legal if its neglect or infraction is regularly met, in threat or in fact, by the application of physical force by an individual or group possessing the socially recognised privilege of so acting'. This definition is more fully satisfactory if 'physical force' is taken to include various kinds of deprivations, and 'regularly' is given a liberal interpretation to include weak legal orders. Law is characterised not only by the use of force justified through appeal to a rule, but also by the stylised form of argumentation employed in determining and applying the rule. A common vocabulary of argument is the dominant feature of a horizontal legal order such as international law.⁸

The structure for normative relations between the ideal-type tribe and state is thus determined by these discongruities between their legal orders. First, power in the state is monopolised by a central government, while in tribes such as the Pashtuns it may typically remain distributed among persons who adhere to the tribal law or may occasionally be consolidated within various levels of latent tribal hierarchy. Among Pashtuns, hierarchical organisation seldom surpasses the minimal lineage grouping of the extended family. Second, the state legal order articulates vertically and exclusively over a fixed territory while the tribal legal order provides the framework for horizontal relations and consolidation of power among persons for whom the legal order provides a shared identity.⁹ Third, the style of legal argument in the state is authoritative, ultimately linked to a legitimated hierarchical source

such as legislative enactments, administrative regulations, appellate court decisions, judicial and administrative rulings, while in the tribe the style of argument is never far removed from the individual's own social power and ability to communicate and personify tribal norms. Structure is also normative.¹⁰ Because of their structural uniformity states share a common normative basis for a reciprocal international law. The fundamental principles of this law may be thus reciprocally expressed by states: you respect my sovereignty (exclusive jurisdiction over claimed territory) and I will recognise yours; I will defend that which is subject to my jurisdiction by force and in return I will be responsible for any infringements on yours by that which is under my power.¹¹ Such reciprocal statements, however, are not available where the underlying normative diversity inherent in interpolity relations is further compounded by structural incongruities as in relations between state and tribe. The structure of the tribe violates the constitutive or structural state norm 'consecrated' at Westphalia, just as the structure of the state leaves little room for the personal commitments that constitute the tribe. Accommodation across this normative gap defining the boundary between tribe and state involves structural change and unstable attachment to normative referents.

The third alternative form of polity derived from Kelsen's ontological classification describes one form this accommodation might take. The delimitation of the material 'sphere of validity', or the articulation of legal jurisdiction on the basis of the subject matter of norms, but without regard to territorial or personal limitations, describes a universal legal and political order that may be identified with the jurisdictional assertions of historical empires. Although tribes have provided the dominant class in historical empires such as those of Islam, the Mongols or the Afghan Durranis, the basis of jurisdiction for imperial norms is not, as it is in the ideal-type tribe, personality. Similarly, though states have provided the dominant metropolitan base for empires such as the Roman, the overseas European empires, and the imperialism of the modern superpowers, empires are not characterised, as is the ideal-type state, by the enforcement of exclusive jurisdiction over territory. The empire does not enforce its own comprehensive normative order over defined persons or territory to the exclusion of all other normative orders; it is

rather characterised by an exercise of dominance over subordinate polities which preserve their own diverse and partially autonomous normative orders based on either territorial (state) or personal (tribe) jurisdictions.

Imperialism, in the sense of the relationship between a ruling power and the peoples under its control, 'is not complete without an imperial creed held by its governing class'. It is such a creed that legitimates the infringement by the empire of the sovereignty of lesser political bodies. This infringement is 'of the essence' of imperialism, and takes the form of appropriation of power or influence over the jurisdiction to tax, conscript, enact public policy, keep the peace, enforce the criminal law, enforce civil arrangements, settle civil disputes or dominate any other function of the internal or external legal order, generally with the minimal objectives of controlling the exercise of military force and the flow of commerce. As with tribal or state legal orders, the maintenance of the imperial order involves a dialectic between norm and power, or as Lichtheim calls it, 'of being and consciousness'.¹² Niebuhr has written: 'Since authority in nation and empire is always compounded of prestige and force, and since prestige always depends upon an ideological framework, it is inevitable that a dominant community should acquire for its prestige whatever ideological framework is most serviceable for its pretensions'.¹³ The empire conserves and legitimates its power to exercise jurisdiction over certain sovereign matters of subordinate political entities by means of its imperial idea or system of ideas: its ideology. The more heterogeneous the empire the more abstract and universal must be the imperial ideology. Unlimited by territorial or personal boundaries, the boundary of empire is the line that divides the reach of its jurisdiction over subordinate polities from the partially autonomous internal normative orders of those polities.

Unlike the territorial boundary of the state and the 'ethnic' or personal boundary of the tribe, which can be determined by relatively fixed and determinable rules, the ideological boundary of the ideal-type empire is a standard describing a changeable and elusive jurisdiction for the empire.¹⁴ The imperial idea on the one hand may be little more than a prestigious symbol legitimising some exercise by the imperial regime of military, fiscal and monetary powers sufficient to keep the peace and facilitate commerce among its subordinate polities. For

example, it has been written that at the end of the eighteenth century 'a policy calling itself imperial could still evoke the image of an internationalism, albeit hierarchical, which served to maintain peace among nations'.¹⁵ At the other end of the spectrum, as the imperial idea is elaborated into a detailed and comprehensive normative order, the empire may approach the exclusive territorial sovereignty of the ideal-type state. What the empire seeks to universalise, the state particularises. The ideal-type empire is accordingly not defined within a single fixed category, but is rather a range of political accommodations from the near-state to a nearly 'horizontal' international system. The locus of any empire on this spectrum depends upon whether the power emerging from its dialectic of 'being and consciousness' is turned outward to aggregate new groups to the empire, or inward to pulverise the old groups under a more comprehensive normative order.

For the ideal-type empire, unlike the state and tribe, there is no discontinuity between the internal and external legal order. The external relations of the tribe and state are conducted in accordance with a discrete set of norms designed to preserve the independence and autonomy of the diverse legal orders of each tribe or state entity. Imperial relations involve an extension abroad of the same ideology which underlies the power of the ruling elite or metropolitan centre of the empire. The fortunes of the imperial ideology at the periphery of the empire react back upon and affect its integrating strength at the centre.

No ideology is inherently 'imperial'. The same ideology that legitimates imperial assertions of jurisdiction can also form part of the legitimising concepts of a state. In the nation-state however, these ideas will also combine with more particular 'nationalistic' ideas derived from the dominant national culture. The basic concept of a normative unity within the national culture justifies the exclusive jurisdiction of the state over the 'nation' in the manner of a tribe, while imperial-type ideas justify the extension of the state's jurisdiction to other groups that are not part of the dominant national group. What distinguishes the state, particularly the heterogeneous state, from the empire, is a fundamentally different normative approach to the border, or external relations. While the state accepts a horizontal external order which isolates various and diverse legal orders within discrete territorial units, the empire seeks to apply its own

internal normative order in its external relations. While the international law of the state system provides a procedural framework for defining the jurisdiction or 'sphere of validity' of the state's internal normative order, the normative contents of the empire's external relations are substantive values which it seeks to impose over a part of the jurisdiction of diverse subordinate polities.

In the context of the contemporary state system, 'the object of imperialist policies is control of other states in forms which leave their statehood and formal independence more or less intact, but which in fact add their territories and resources to those of the imperialist Power'.¹⁶ The contemporary empires are also states, whose imperial character is revealed in their boundary concepts. The United States' imperial ideology is well revealed in the writings of the leading American international legal scholar, Myers McDougal, who has greatly influenced post-World War Two thinking on international law from his teaching post at Yale. McDougal frankly states his view that 'It has long been demonstrated that "territorial" notions of jurisdiction are largely outmoded'. In place of these 'notions' which constitute the basis of the state system, McDougal advocates an 'integrative universalism'. As he states, 'Our overriding aim is to clarify and aid in the implementation of a universal order of human dignity'. That this new kind of international law involves substantive policies, and not just a framework for horizontal relations among states, is clear:

By an international law of human dignity I mean the processes of authoritative decision of a world public order in which values are shaped and shared more by persuasion than coercion, and which seeks to promote the greatest production and widest possible sharing without discriminations irrelevant to merit, of all values among all human beings.

McDougal defines 'values' as security, wealth, respect, enlightenment, well-being, rectitude and affection.¹⁷

This crucial though not entirely precise definition of the chief American school of international law does make clear that its objective is not to preserve the internal legal orders of territorial states, but rather to promote the 'greatest production' of values, according to some unarticulated

order of priorities, and their 'widest possible sharing' according to some unarticulated order of merit. McDougal's 'international law of human dignity' may be seen as an attempt to erect a respectable intellectual edifice for the American imperial idea of the 'free world' formulated in the context of the post-war rivalry between the superpowers; but it provides the vaguest of standards for applying substantive values in international relations and has been criticised as subjective and as unusable 'by any one lower than the angels'.¹⁸ Whatever the quality of his intellectual achievement, McDougal presents a theory of international law that is clearly imperial and in express conflict with existing international law of the horizontal state system.

The leading Soviet exponent of international law similarly, although in a less sweeping manner, rejects the basic structure of the existing state system. The authoritative treatise by Tunkin, who has served as legal adviser to the Soviet government, states:

The social consequences of the operation of socialist international legal principles differ completely from the consequences of the operation of norms of general international law ... They aim at strengthening and developing relations of the fraternal commonwealth of socialist countries, at ensuring the construction of socialism and communism, and at protecting the gains of socialism from the infringement of forces hostile to socialism.

The standard applied here is socialism. The chief ambiguity in the 'international legal principles which comprise the unified system of principles of socialist internationalism' is the definition of socialism. This is important both for determining membership in the 'fraternal commonwealth' and for applying duties to 'strengthen friendship' and to 'render assistance', as were performed by the USSR in Hungary in 1956, Czechoslovakia in 1968, and now in Afghanistan in 1979-80. Tunkin's statement makes it quite clear that within the socialist 'commonwealth' at least, the purpose of the legal order is not to preserve the autonomy of the legal orders of the various component states but rather to promote the substantive aims of constructing and preserving the gains of socialism.¹⁹

It would be futile to jump into a political thicket by attempting to discuss whether McDougal's 'human dignity' or Tunkin's 'socialist internationalism' provides the more precise and manageable concept for governing relations between a dominant power and subordinate political entities. The point is that both of these theories of 'international law' are examples of imperial ideas which articulate and legitimate assertions of jurisdiction on the basis of subject matter - here concerning 'human dignity' or 'socialism' - rather than on the basis of territory or personality. Substantive, albeit vague, concepts are foremost; protection of the borders of independent polities, within which to work out internal legal orders through self-determination, is secondary in these imperial ideologies. McDougal illustrates the kind of partial self-determination contemplated by these imperial orders when he states that his 'International law of human dignity' would 'balance self-determination with capacity for, and acceptance of, responsibility and seek an organisation of government in territorial units large enough to discharge responsibility'.²⁰ While McDougal would hold all countries responsible to a vaguely defined standard of 'human dignity', Tunkin would hold only those countries within the 'fraternal commonwealth' responsible to a standard of socialism. In either case, the imperial border is defined by a mutable concept which serves to delimit the material jurisdiction of subordinate polities and accordingly conforms to the ideal-type empire by asserting jurisdiction on the basis of subject matter rather than either territory or personality.

Because empires do not recognise territorial or personality boundaries to their power and ideology, relations between them are inherently competitive. The essential character of the ideal-type empire being unilateral encroachment on the jurisdiction of other polities in a relationship of inequality and domination, means that empires do not have available a common normative order for maintenance of stable boundaries between them on the basis of equality and independence, as do states and tribes. Empires of the 'international' type compete for the allegiance of polities outside their spheres of influence, or through the subversion of polities within the competitor's sphere. As the threat of subversion requires deepening of jurisdiction toward the state pattern, and as empires become geographically proximate, they may resort to state-type territorial boundaries to divide their respective

spheres. For example, boundaries drawn by the British and Russian empires in the second half of the nineteenth century delimited the territory of the state of Afghanistan.

Tribal and Imperial Orders in Afghanistan

Afghanistan's geographical position at the crossroads between India, Iran and Central Asia has provided it with a long history of imperial competition and conquest, from Achaemenid, Bactrian, Kushan, Sasanid, Umayyad and Abbasid, to Ghaznavid, Mongol, Timurid, Safavid and Mughal. Some of these empires brought their religions, and in Afghanistan Zoroastrian met Buddhist and Hindu met Moslem. Caught between competing empires, Pashtuns commonly fought or intrigued with both sides, even when the opponent was a Pashtun regime. Pashtun tribesmen fought with Timur against the Pashtun-supported Delhi Sultanate, they fought with Babur when the Mughals overthrew the Lodi Afghan rulers of Delhi, they fought with Nadir Shar Afshar when he defeated the Ghilzai Afghan rulers of Isfahan and Kandahar in the early eighteenth century, and were caught up in the Safavid-Mughal competition for Kandahar in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The environment in which the tribes developed their own political institutions was thus dominated by empires and imperial competition of various colours long before the classic nineteenth-century confrontation between the Russian and British empires in the 'Great Game' - for which Afghanistan and the Pashtun tribes were the main arena.

The relations between Pashtun tribes and various empires that attempted to extend influence over them reveal some of the patterns of relations between those two different types of polities. Two patterns which stand out are, first, imperial alliances with factions or particular tribes used to control other factions or tribes, and second, the recruitment of tribesmen into imperial armies. The second pattern was not only a way to divert the fighting strength of the tribes and secure some loyalty to the imperial standard, but was also a means of transferring wealth to the tribal area through soldiers' remittances. Direct subsidies to tribal leaders or factions was another common tool of imperial diplomacy, used for example by the Mughals, particularly with the tribes that guarded the passes into India.

One way in which the imperial ideology may be introduced is through an epochal change like the conversion of the Pashtuns to Islam. Pashtuns now identify their own tribal law with Islam, and would acknowledge no difference between the two, though it may still be questioned how far Islam has displaced Pashtunwali in the internal legal order of the tribes.²¹ Islam rather provides symbols through which the Pashtuns may express their own unity in transcendental terms as well as a framework for relating to non-tribal and non-Pashtun peoples and governments. The use of Islam by a strong government, to legitimate the encroachment of the imperial boundary more deeply into the internal Pashtun legal order, has always remained more potential than real with the tribes in the easily defended terrain north-west of the Suleyman Range.

Not every empire arrives flying the banner of religious conversion. The expansion of Islam, with its theologically accessible and politically egalitarian content, brought a unique experience to the peoples it touched, not easily comparable to other imperial ideologies. The more common means by which empires impose their ideology upon the normative orders of subordinate tribes, is by co-opting tribal leaders into representing imperial interests and promoting that ideology. Imperial order is an inherently hierarchical order. The empire seeks to impose such an order upon its subordinate tribes and to conduct relations through this familiar structure. The Pashtun tribal institutions provide a consensual decision-making structure for representation of progressively more inclusive groupings of lineage and faction. Implicit in this structure is potential for communicating command as well as consensus. However, attempts to turn institutions like the malik and jirga from democratic uses to imperial purposes of hierarchical control have not always been successful.²² These institutions do not seem to afford means for acquiring power of hierarchical command, but rather provide a context through which personal power consolidated through other means may be exercised.

Among Pashtuns, as for other Central Asian tribal groups, power of leadership is acquired through the process of becoming a khan,²³ which is a non-institutional status or descriptive title for those who achieve positions of influence in tribal politics. Anderson shows how this status is achieved through distribution of patronage, turning economic surplus into political capital, and broker-

age among tribesmen and more especially between the tribe and the metropolitan society and government with which it has relations. The khan performs for the tribe the public service of representing and mediating between groups so as to build more inclusive unities within the tribe. Representation and mediation with the metropolitan society serve to maintain tribal unity in the face of an intrusive external polity. In the person of the khan, the imperial quest for hierarchy articulates with the tribal need for unity when faced with an encroaching empire.²⁴

The empire is also able to supply resources essential to the making of a khan - wealth for patronage and connections for brokerage. The khan's role of broker with the empire can be adorned with imperial titles and honours which add to his prestige and charisma within the tribe; at the same time he becomes adept in manipulating the metropolitan culture.²⁵ While the khan who mediates relations with the empire from a subordinate, subsidised position adopts and integrates in his person some part of the imperial ideology as a necessary vesture of his office, he cannot be seen to be a creature of the empire without losing legitimacy within his tribal constituency. The dilemma inherent in the mediator's role becomes more tolerable to the extent that the empire and its ideology can be domesticated and legitimated within the tribal normative order. In return for the resources needed to perform his role as patron and broker, the khan places his charisma and his mastery of metaphor and meaning within the tribe in the service of the imperial ideology. It is perhaps no coincidence that the greatest Pashtun poet, Khushhal Khan Khatak, was also chief of the tribe most closely allied with the Mughals. Similarly Ahmad Khan Abdali (later Durrani), scion of the closest Afghan allies of the Iranians and himself Nadir Shah Afshar's principal Afghan commander and, according to tradition, designated successor, was also a poet.²⁶ The khan's ability to integrate the personal qualities of a tribal leader with fluency in the imperial ideology, defines his position at the boundary between tribe and empire, a highly fluid articulation between distinct normative orders and political structures. Factional divisions along the fault lines of tribal lineage and alliance may result from the khan's failure to retain both tribal legitimacy and imperial favour. While such factions undermine the tribal unity required to face the external threat

at full strength, and provide an opening for the empire to impose its jurisdictional boundary more intrusively upon tribal institutions, for example by assuming the task of dispute settlement between factions,²⁷ they also deny hierarchical order. Relations between tribe and empire are thus built on paradox. The empire requires tribal unity through the mechanism of tribal leadership in order to create the hierarchy required for indirect rule and to promote its legitimating ideology; yet it also exploits tribal fission as a means of maintaining its control over the tribe. The tribe, bound up in the same paradox, needs unity to oppose an encroaching empire effectively; however, the process of building up unity may involve legitimation of the empire and 'ultimately precludes action' by the tribe.²⁸

Tribe and empire are structurally complementary, just as the state and tribe are structurally incongruous. The career of empire is aggregation of tribal and state units to its imperial order and ideology, while the tribe obtains from empire the means to build up its own internal order and unity against the centrifugal forces that lineage and faction bring to a polity based on personal jurisdiction. Where, as has commonly been the case with Pashtuns, an equivalence of power subsists between the tribe and empire, the complementarity of their relations may be worked out within a framework of normative argument. While the empire may be excluded from the language of kinship, and tribesmen from the circle of meaning defining the imperial elite, both the imperial ideology and a tribal normative order like Pashtunwali provide fields where argument may be joined. Success in forging a common language for relations from these separate normative materials will depend upon the universality and adaptability of the imperial ideology as well as the quality and resilience of the tribal order. The tribesmen become fluent in the imperial ideology as the empire learns to turn the tribal order to its own ends.

For the Pashtun tribes Islam has long provided an additional resource for relations with the Muslim empires they have confronted. Undoubtedly Islam has facilitated the stability of relations between tribe and empire throughout this region. Even in the absence of Islam, however, the dialectic between imperial ideology and tribal order provided a normative basis for relations, for example, with the British in India. This process can be illustrated

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by the comments of a British officer who worked with the Mahsuds in the 1920s. He writes that the typical Pashtun is

no less difficult to deal with on planes other than that of force than he is to conquer in the field. First, there are the same qualities which make him formidable as a fighter - his ingenuity and his persistence, backed by amazing plausibility in argument, such as would excite the envy of an Athenian demagogue.

This compliment, which echoes those of others who have studied or experienced Afghan diplomatic skills from the fifteenth-century Suri Sultanate of Delhi down to the present, evidences the ability of the tribesmen to adapt their normative referent to that of their adversary. At the same time, Howell himself illustrates the attitude arising from successful imperial accommodation to the tribesmen, when he confesses, with the appropriate measure of ambiguity, that he is 'not at all sure that with reservations I do not subscribe to their plea' of superiority for the tribal normative order, which he states as follows: 'A civilization has no other end than to produce a fine type of man. Judged by this standard the social system in which the Mahsud has been evolved must be allowed to surpass all others'.²⁹

Systems of Inter-Polity Relations

By this mutual accommodation between their separate spheres of jurisdiction, the ideal-type tribe and empire are able to construct an ad hoc normative order for their bilateral relations that can be contrasted with the international legal order between states. The fundamental distinction between the two kinds of inter-polity normative orders is that the imperial order is unequal, hierarchical or vertical, while the inter-state order is theoretically horizontal, based on the equality of its subject states, and reciprocal. The ideal-type empire maintains a balance of force among its subordinate polities sufficient to overpower any one of them if necessary to enforce its rule. The tribe maintains its autonomy within this unequal order by making it expensive for the empire to enforce its rule against the opposition of the tribe, but has no

reciprocal right or capacity, short of conquest, to impose its norm over the empire. By contrast, in the inter-state order every principle that may justify the exercise of force by one state may be reciprocally enforced against that state on an equal basis by every other state. The accommodation between the normative orders of empire and tribe contrasts with reciprocal respect for the normative autonomy of states within territorial spheres whose boundaries are defined by accommodation. The egalitarian, fissile, and consensual order of the tribe seems to require a hierarchical external order for its completion and unity. The state by contrast requires a hierarchical, unified, and exclusive internal order to maintain its identity as an equal participant in a horizontal state system of international legal order.³⁰

These two contrasting structures of ideal-type international legal orders provide models for the dominant systems of inter-polity relations in historical times. The empire-tribe structure corresponds to systems most prevalent before the seventeenth-century Westphalian beginnings of the now universal state system. Nevertheless, it still retains relevance as a model, alternative to the contemporary state system, for the normative conduct of international relations, such as in proposals for the 'globalization of natural resources from state to humanity as a whole', which reduce the importance of territory for the state in favour of a personality-based form of polity.³¹ In both the empire-tribe and inter-state structures of relations, boundaries are prior to the normative order. In the absence of a constitutional settlement defining the respective material spheres of tribal and imperial norms or allocation of territory among states, failure of the inter-polity normative order is linked to change of structure: the empire metamorphosing to the state form by pushing back autonomous tribal jurisdiction - substituting direct for indirect rule - and the state behaving as empire by abandoning reciprocal respect for the exclusive territorial jurisdiction of states in favour of the unilateral imposition of a substantive ideology in its foreign relations.

This model of ideal-type polities, and of typical structures of relations among them, begins from the premise that any independent polity of whatever form exists by virtue of its effectiveness in ordering the lives of those subject to its norms. Lacking a single universal and exclusive normative order, a polity may subject human behaviour to norms only

within the territorial, personal and material 'spheres of validity' to which its jurisdiction reaches. Jurisdiction may reach to whatever the polity is able to coerce by force, or it may be delimited by principle or norm, thus permitting a stable and consensual division of its jurisdiction from that of other polities. Force and norm are not simply opposite means for determining jurisdiction. As Michel Foucault has written, using 'knowledge' in a normative sense, 'Power is not caught in the alternative: force or ideology. In fact every point in the exercise of power is at the same time a site where knowledge is formed. And conversely every established piece of knowledge permits and assures the exercise of power.'³² Force and ideology are dialectically related as much in the definition of the jurisdiction of norms as in the enforcement of the norms themselves. The normative definition of jurisdiction on personal, territorial or material bases forms part of the legitimating ideology of the polity, while it also constitutes the structure of relations with other polities. Since the alternative bases of jurisdiction are ontological elements of behaviour, they provide an enduring model for typing any normative order and for identifying structural characteristics of relations between types.

From the perspective of legal science, the selection from among the three jurisdictional bases for enforcement of norms may be considered arbitrary. Through whatever structure, in the end norm is applied to behaviour. From the perspective of the polity, however, 'Hobbesian abhorrence'³³ of tribal society by 'civilised' metropolitan society is reciprocated in the disdain the tribe expresses for the transactional relations of the metropolis, compared to the personal and kinship relations of the tribe. These normative judgments reflect divergent attitudes towards dealing at different levels of political integration with values such as hierarchy, equality, order and freedom. In addition to identifying these normative qualities, it is also possible tentatively to postulate some adaptive material qualities of these three jurisdictional bases of norms. The state may correspond to a political economy where intensive utilisation of land or natural resources is the key factor in the production of wealth or military power. In the tribal form of polity, people, rather than territorial resources, may be the crucial factor for production and war. Empires perhaps flourish where

exchange (i.e. commerce and transaction of goods and knowledge), rather than either people or resources, becomes the principal determinant for the acquisition of wealth, which alone or combined with some factor of military technology permits consolidation of a decisive balance of power over subordinate territorial or person-based polities.

The political types and structures which have been outlined here are conceptual models that neither conform to nor necessarily even appear in reality. Real characteristics typical of these political and juristic models may identify a political unit with one of the three conceptual types, although every polity will have elements of more than one type. For example, the Pashtun normative order, which is discussed here as an example of the tribal type, also has distinctive territorial features bound up with its tribal norms at both the individual and the group levels.³⁴ Robert Lowie clarified this relationship of territory to the tribe in his discussion of Henry Maine's view that 'sharply separated two principles of uniting individuals for governmental purposes - the blood tie and the territorial tie'. After comparing several tribal societies, Lowie concludes 'that the blood tie is frequently the overshadowing element in the governmental activities of primitive peoples. Yet, though it often dwarfs the territorial factor, it never succeeds in eliminating it'.³⁵ Ideology, territory and personal factors conjoin to formulate the legitimacy of any polity. By isolating the dominant factor, one may identify types such as the tribe or state. In some polities no single factor dominates, but rather various permutations of these factors yield hybrid types and ambiguous boundaries. The closer that interrelating polities approximate to the stable and coherent boundaries of a discrete type, the more predictably and unambiguously may their external relations be conducted within the normative order of a compatible inter-polity structure.

Multiple Polities and Structural Change in Afghanistan

Imperial Rivalries in Afghanistan since 1800. Empires, tribes and the state have all been important actors in the politics of Afghanistan during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. As much as any area in the world, Afghanistan has been characterised by conflicts and tensions among all three types of polity.

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The model of ideal types outlined above may be employed to sort out the separate factors and to understand the dynamics of their interaction both in the historical era beginning around 1800 as well as in the contemporary period of intense change.

Since the breakdown of the tribally-based Sadozai empire in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, and the gradual consolidation by Dost Muhammad of the central Pashtun areas and Turkistan within a Muhammadzai emirate, Afghanistan has been the scene of nearly continuous imperial rivalry. The emirate was a minimal khanly state uniting city and tribe, where according to one Amir, 'every official and every chief has his own laws'. The rivalry between the Russian and British Empires in the 'Great Game' determined the environment in which the Muhammadzai emirate acquired fixed territorial boundaries within which it began to assert a more comprehensive state-type jurisdiction, 'putting it into the form of a kingdom'.³⁶ Both empires realised that 'advance through Afghanistan means hard fighting with Afghans by whomever it is undertaken'.³⁷ On their side, the Afghans realised that they were not equal to preserving complete independence from both European empires by force. This mutual recognition of the power balance set the stage for establishing normatively-based relations, turning on the Afghans' desire for autonomy and subsidies on the one hand, and the ideologies and interests of their neighbouring empires on the other.

The imperial ideologies of the two European empires were qualified by their ambiguous character as states subject to the rule of international law in Europe while sustaining imperial expansion abroad. Britain partially avoided this paradox in India by inheriting its acquisitions from an English Company which had consolidated power as one contestant in the political free-for-all of the late Mughal Empire. By the time the myth of Mughal legitimacy gave way to a concept of the British Empire, with Victoria as Empress of India, the problem could be presented in the state-like terms of finding the proper 'frontier' for India. Turning between state and imperial approaches to boundaries, this issue became 'an obsession of British diplomacy and public opinion'.³⁸ The first approach accepted a limitation of jurisdiction within a fixed border, originally assayed at the Indus, within which would be pursued state-like objectives such as 'to reconcile the people of India to the ruler of the day, to give them the best Government in our power, to improve the conditions

of the country which need immense development, rather than pursue a policy which, reckless of the consequence, was all and all for advance'.³⁹ This policy became dominant after the disastrous First Anglo-Afghan War, when it acquired the label 'Masterly Inactivity'.

'Forward Policy' was the term applied to various more expansive and intrusive approaches to India's western borders.⁴⁰ Although it went through several formulations in different contexts, the Forward Policy, in an era of geopoliticians, generally crystallised around the concept of a 'Scientific Frontier', that is, the most defensible boundary for India. The Scientific Frontier theory involved securing control of passes such as the Khyber and Bolan, as well as a capacity to defend the northern approaches to the Hindu Kush as a first line of defence. The British public and the Indian Treasury would not long support military campaigns in pursuit of these strategic goals, particularly when carried out against what was perceived as an independent state, Afghanistan, which had proved its capacity for resistance. Realities of tribal resistance on the one hand, and political compromise between imperial and state boundary conceptions on the other, gave rise to a complex boundary policy, sometimes known as the 'Threefold Frontier'.⁴¹ The first frontier was the state or 'administrative border' within which the laws of British India were enforced. Beyond this to the 'political border' was the North West Frontier, encompassing the important mountain passes and occupied by tribes who were self-governing in their internal affairs but over whom British India exercised a fluctuating and uncertain degree of influence. Adjoining the political boundary was the 'protectorate' of Afghanistan, bound to British India by treaties and serving as a buffer with the neighbouring Russian Empire north of the approaches to the Hindu Kush. As one British official described this relationship:

Afghanistan occupies the almost unique position of being an absolutely independent kingdom and at the same time a protected state... Afghan independence is so far absolute that we have no British European resident at the Court of Kabul, and it is only by grace of a very special favour that any European visitor is permitted access to the capital at all.⁴²

The compromise contained sufficient ambiguity to

reflect a territorial view of boundaries while at the same time leaving more space than could be digested for imperial adventure by those who might advocate such unabashedly imperial sentiments as these: 'In the interests ... of peace ... of commerce ... of moral and material improvement ... interference in Afghanistan has now become a duty'.⁴³ Such vague and romantic imperial ideas were never entirely excluded from the debate over the Afghanistan question, but they were rarely politically palatable, except perhaps in the Disraeli years, 1874-80.

Makers of Russian frontier policy, by comparison, did not need to satisfy a divided public opinion. Nor were they in need of a policy that was basically defensive in design. In the latter half of the nineteenth century the Russian Empire was actively moving its imperial boundary through Asia towards Afghanistan. The British saw behind Russia's advance two geopolitical objectives: first, realisation of Peter the Great's wish for a Russian port on the southern seas, and second, control of the overland 'gateway to India' through Afghanistan, in furtherance of the Napoleonic strategy of an overland attack on Britain's rich Asian possession. At that time there was no oil industry, though Turkistan north and south of the navigable Amu Darya was (and long had been) a populous and wealthy producer of agricultural commodities and handicrafts. Whatever its geopolitical objectives, the Russian Empire was able, in a way which the British Empire probably was not, clearly and frankly to express the idea which informed and justified its expansion.

In 1864 Prince Gorchakov, the Russian Imperial Chancellor, explained the imperial idea intended to justify Russia's expansion into Central Asia, in an official memorandum circulated to its European embassies. The Gorchakov memorandum relies on a state-like perception of relations between 'civilised states' and 'wandering tribes possessing no fixed social organisation', stating that 'the interests of security on the frontier, and of commercial relations, compel the more civilised state to exercise a certain ascendancy over neighbours whose turbulence and nomad instincts render them difficult to live with'. Gorchakov likens the Russian 'dilemma' to that of other state-empires, the United States, France, Britain and Holland, observing that either 'it must allow an anarchy to become chronic which paralyses all security and all progress ... or on the other hand it must enter on a career of con-

quest and annexation such as gave England her Indian Empire'. Favouring neither of these alternatives, Gorchakov presents the boundary concept that would justify the further expansion of empire in Central Asia while appearing to accord the respect to state boundaries upon which the European system rested. Gorchakov's concept distinguishes 'nomad tribes' who make 'the worst neighbours possible' from the 'agricultural and commercial populations, wedded to the soil, [who] given a more highly developed social organisation, afford for us a basis for friendly relations which may become all that can be wished. Our frontier line then should include the first, and stop at the boundaries of the second.' The Russian Empire would therefore absorb areas and peoples lacking 'a social organisation and a government which directs and represents it', but not those who, possessing some semblance of these attributes of a state polity, accept 'that peaceful and commercial relations with her are more profitable than disorder, pillage, reprisals and chronic warfare.'

Accordingly the imperial boundary would extend to wherever it might meet a government able to impose order on a population 'wedded to the soil' and also willing to maintain commercial relations with the Russians. The Gorchakov memorandum expressly states the premise lying behind this test, the idea of 'civilisation': 'The progress of civilisation has no more efficacious ally than commercial relations. These require in all countries order and stability as conditions essential to their growth.' The Russian imperial border was not one dividing two cultures but one which articulated the jurisdiction of the empire with another polity sharing the common 'ally' of commercial relations and, implicitly, the power to make further Russian expansion expensive. Concepts such as 'order' and 'civilisation' are highly subjective, and Gorchakov forewarned the Central Asian emirates, who were the momentary beneficiaries of his analysis, that 'in spite of their low civilisation and nebulous political development, we hope that regular relations may one day in our common interest replace the chronic disorders which have hitherto hampered their progress'.⁴⁴ The traditional emirates, which were once vigorous centres of much different civilisations, would not in time meet the standards of the European commercial empire then entering upon the early stages of the industrial revolution. In 1865 Tashkent was taken, in 1868 Samarkand was absorbed, while Bokhara became a 'subsidiary ally', and in 1869 negotiations

were opened in St Petersburg with the civilised, ordered, and commercial state with which the Russian Empire would ultimately define the limits of their Central Asian territory: Great Britain. By 1873, the Russians and British Empires, without the knowledge of the Afghans, reached a territorial understanding that Afghanistan, south of the Amu Darya, would remain outside the Russian sphere of influence. At this stage there began a contest, not for territorial conquest, but for diplomatic influence within the new state whose boundaries were taking shape. After this contest gave rise to the Second Anglo-Afghan War (1878-80), it was resolved by the understanding that Afghanistan would conduct its foreign relations only through the British, while the Afghans proceeded to deny both empires influence or even access to its internal affairs.

The subsidies acquired as an outcome of this rivalry between imperial powers assisted Afghan rulers, especially Abd al-Rahman (1880-1901) and his son Habibullah (1901-19), to achieve the central power required for unity within the country. This pattern of relations survived in the Soviet-American rivalry for influence in Afghanistan which began in the 1940s.⁴⁵ The new rivalry was a continuation of the old by other means. Subsidies were received from both sides this time, which meant the preservation of autonomy in foreign relations. But the new and substantial subsidies - over \$1.5 billion by the 1970s - were accompanied by numerous advisers and other foreigners, which compromised the internal autonomy and even isolation that the earlier arrangement had deliberately safeguarded.

Tribalism and the Durrani State. It was under Abd al-Rahman that the state boundaries of Afghanistan were finally drawn and, with an assured annual subsidy from the British of £120,000 (later raised to £180,000), some significant steps were taken towards creating a state polity, by building up the military power of the central government, extending control over internal minorities, co-opting the powers of the clergy, and keeping the peace. These developments manifested themselves in greater central control over and expanded reach of the legal system.⁴⁶ The fragility of Abd al-Rahman's creation, and its dependence on retaining military superiority over the tribes, was revealed when his grandson Amanullah (1919-29), having lost the British subsidy upon independence and weakened his army, was overthrown as a result of tribal rebellions. The next

Durrani King, Nadir Shah, was the nominee of the tribesmen who put him in power. Amanullah had represented a growing new class of government employees, intellectuals and other urban elements which would expand greatly under Nadir Shah's nephew, Prime Minister Daud (1953-63), when foreign subsidies - under the rubric of development and - were stepped up markedly. With Soviet assistance, Daud was able to built up an army, about double the size maintained by Abd al-Rahman, which was equipped with tanks, jets, and other modern material. This growth of the economic and military power of the central government and of the urban classes provided the state institutions with an expanded power base and a new level of influence over regional and tribal elements.

In the period of Zahir Shah's direct rule (1963-73), under his liberal constitution regional and tribal elements were given a new vehicle for opposing the central government through their control of the elected parliament. During this period, when Zahir attempted to preserve his rule more by political than military means, there were no more than minor challenges from tribal elements. The state's finances remained primarily dependent upon foreign subsidies and foreign trade taxes.⁴⁷ The principal form of exactions from the countryside were, as ever, not direct taxes but rather official corruption,⁴⁸ which had the effect of making government employees as responsive to the wishes of local leaders as to the directives of the state. Corruption also affected the legal system, which was dominated by the religious elite who retained a good measure of the autonomy recovered after the fall of Amanullah. In some areas tribal autonomy left the state-appointed qazi courts largely idle. Even where courts were utilised, the overwhelming bulk of the law applicable to life outside the cities was not state-made but rather the uncodified principles of the sharia which gave the religious elites an open field for interpretation of the law and performance of their time-honoured function of mediation between tribe and state. It was little more than a year before the end of Muhammadzai rule that comprehensive civil and criminal codes were enacted.

Not only was the state's jurisdiction poised against regional and tribal autonomy, but the state was itself dependent on the tribes for its own legitimacy. The Afghan tribes had provided the basis of power for government ever since the Sadozai empire of Ahmad Shah. Hajji Jamal Khan of the Muhammadzai branch of the Barakzai Durrani, the

most powerful of the tribal leaders, had been instrumental in electing Ahmad Shah Sadozai to be first king of the Afghans in 1747.⁴⁹ His grandson Fatih Khan was powerful wazir and king-maker to the last Sadozais, while Fatih Khan's youngest brother Dost Muhammad established the Muhammadzai dynasty and Muhammadzai legitimacy, by ejecting the Sadozais and defeating the last pretender (and British protégé) Shah Shuja, as well as by consolidating the central provinces of the much reduced former empire and successfully defending them against the British in the First Anglo-Afghan War (1839-43). When Amanullah exhausted this legitimacy nearly a century later, he was replaced by a descendant of another brother of Fatih Khan - that is, another Muhammadzai. This Muhammadzai legitimacy, which stretched with remarkable continuity from the eighteenth century down to the socialist coup of 1978, reflected a tribal settlement of national leadership. Legitimacy did not follow any rule of primogeniture but rather, in accordance with Pashtun custom, fell on the most able and acceptable member of the chiefly lineage. Daud, who established the Republic in 1973, was the last Muhammadzai ruler and the last beneficiary of this tribal legitimacy.

Over the half-century since Nadir Shah was placed on the throne, with the gradual growth of government and the urban classes, and with the penetration into rural areas of modernising technology, from roads and radios to tractors, tribes and tribal organisation have undoubtedly weakened.⁵⁰ The urban and intellectual classes meanwhile have supplemented the legitimacy of a tribally-based government with the idea of constitutional government, whether of the monarchical or the republican variety. These ideas had a considerable pedigree, with the first constitution coming in 1923, followed by Nadir's constitution in 1931, and the most democratic constitution of Zahir in 1964. Constitutionalism has remained an important symbol of legitimacy for the republican governments. Daud enacted a constitution in 1977; Hafizullah Amin, immediately upon coming to power, appointed a constitutional drafting committee which included legal officials who had served under Daud and Zahir Shah; Babrak Karmal stated at his first press conference that he would be adopting a constitution, and by April 1980 he had a set of 'Basic Principles' (usul-i asasi, i.e. 'constitution') ratified by the Revolutionary Council.⁵¹

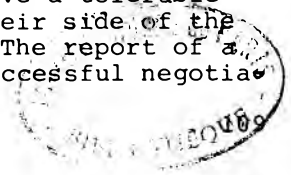
Tribalism facing Soviet Empire. State legality, through the formal enactment, repeal and amendment of written laws, as a corollary of constitutionalism, has also provided a remarkable continuity to the state's statute book. Those who took power after the 'Saur Revolution' of 27 April 1978, while maintaining the symbols of state legitimacy through constitution-making and formal legislation, cut the knot of tribal legitimacy that Daud had preserved as the leading Muhammadzai. Not only were the coup leaders Taraki and Amin by origin Ghilzai, the tribal group that had been traditional rivals of the historically dominant Durrani tribes represented by the Muhammadzais, but they were also ideologically and, perhaps most important, personally alienated from tribalism as such. The Parcham and Khalq parties had a nearly exclusively urban base and an ideology which rejected tribal organisation as backward or 'feudal'. Their alienation from tribal values is perhaps best symbolised in Babrak Karmal's formal disinheritation by his father. Since communism is considered by Afghans to be inconsistent with Islam, attempts were made, especially by Taraki, to avoid the word 'communism' and instead to speak in terms of socialism. However, Khalq and Parcham (united in 1977 as the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan, PDPA) were perceived as pro-Soviet communist parties, a perception given plausibility in both word and deed by their leaders. Amin, for example, gave speeches laden with references to Lenin that read like Marxist-Leninist tracts, and broadcast comments such as that the 'hammer and sickle have got together in making a proletarian dictatorship ... in Afghanistan'.⁵² This perceived hostility to Islam, aggravated by active and nearly unanimous opposition to the regime by religious leaders such as the Mujadadis and the Geylanis, severs the second traditional thread for relations between the tribes and the central government.

The PDPA government is sensitive to these two causes of disaffection by the tribes. Consequently, especially under Taraki and now under Babrak Karmal, it has paid lip-service to both Islam and tribal values. This has recently been elevated to party doctrine in the 'Thesis of the PDPA Central Committee for the Second Anniversary' announced on 17 April 1980.⁵³ Paragraph 11 of this Thesis explains the PDPA government's central policy of limiting land ownership as 'just and right from the point of view of social justice and the sacred

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religion of Islam'. It goes on to declare in paragraph 14 the 'full freedom and rights of Moslems', and to attack 'imperialism ... under the name of Islam'. At no time had the PDPA been content to abandon Islam to the rebels, and Taraki had even gone so far as to declare jihad against the rebels just as they had against him. Paragraph 13 of the Thesis is directed at the Pashtun tribes in recognition of their 'special role in defence'. It states that the Party and government both 'deeply respect their customs, traditions and way of life' and calls for a 'revitalisation' of the tribes and for the 'democratic observance' of their customs and traditions. Statements of this kind indicate that the PDPA is acutely aware of the problem of its own legitimacy with the tribes, though they must ring hollow when announced by a government that has called to its support against the tribes almost twice as many foreign troops as Shah Shuja brought with him during the First Anglo-Afghan War, and has wrought unprecedented destruction in the tribal areas.⁵⁴

Soviet troops in Afghanistan, at the time of writing, apparently far outnumber those of the PDPA itself, which, according to reports, are being depleted by defections and desertions, besides the attrition of war. The PDPA government is increasingly dependent on these foreign troops for its survival. Moreover, Soviet advisers also exercise control over civilian ministries. Although there may still be room for cavil, there is every appearance that those tribes who are fighting against the Karmal/PDPA government are in direct conflict not only with an imperial ideology but also with the prodigious military force of the empire that stands behind that ideology. Short of genocide, this empire will need eventually either to withdraw or to reach some settlement with the tribes. The failure of its PDPA allies to substitute a new tribal legitimacy for the historic settlement by which the Muhammadzais held power, and the problem of perceived hostility to Islam, do not of themselves preclude an accommodation between tribe and empire. The British were no more Muslim or Pashtun than the Soviets are, but they were able, by a combination of the occasional show of force in punitive expeditions, subsidies, and tribal politics conducted through political agents, to preserve a tolerable modus vivendi with the tribes on their side of the Durand line for nearly a century. The report of a Pravda correspondent concerning 'successful negotia-



tions with representatives of some tribes' may indicate that initial steps towards political accommodation with the tribes are being taken.⁵⁵

No new settlement could be reached, however, without some test of forces in the pattern typical of the periodic 'oscillations of power between the tribes and the central government'. The PDPA at the time of the coup had at most about 10,000 members, roughly comparable to a smaller border tribe such as the Shinwari, and it is estimated that no more than 3,000 troops were actually engaged in fighting on both sides during the two-day coup. The PDPA forces were soon complemented by 3,000 Soviet military advisers and perhaps as many civilian advisers, but the level of organisational and military power displayed in the coup was not proof that the PDPA would be able to govern the country.⁵⁶ A tribal rebellion started in Nuristan, one of the least accessible regions of Afghanistan, and soon spread to neighbouring Pashtun tribes and other parts of the country, eventually forcing the PDPA to call in substantial reinforcements of Soviet troops. Having virtually defeated the PDPA troops, the tribes began in the winter and spring of 1980 to measure swords directly with the augmented forces of empire.

The opposition to the PDPA was not restricted to the tribes. The March 1979 uprising in Herat, and the June demonstration in Kabul, showed that there was also opposition among urban classes. The numerous Islamic organisations in opposition, some active since the time of Daud, also indicate a base for organisation alternative to, but not necessarily separate from that of the tribes. After the introduction of Soviet reinforcements tipped the balance between indigenous and foreign support for the PDPA, the spread of popular urban opposition in Kabul and Kandahar recalled the Kabul uprisings against the British during the First and Second Anglo-Afghan Wars. The techniques - shouting Allahu Akbar from the rooftops as a political rallying cry, strikes in the bazaar, and mass demonstrations - were more akin to those that had been used to bring down the Shah in Iran. While such political action in the cities may demoralise elements of the PDPA government's armed forces, as it did the Shah's, so long as Soviet forces remain stationed in the cities this kind of opposition will not alone succeed in overthrowing the PDPA regime. The military conflict will remain a protracted war of evasion in the countryside until the balance of military power itself shifts, if ever, or an accommodation is made

between tribe and empire.

The ease with which both Zahir and Daud were overthrown demonstrated the exhaustion of the remarkably tenacious Muhammadzai legitimacy, thus marking a new epoch in Afghanistan. The tribal power that had traditionally underpinned central government in Afghanistan needed to accommodate a politicised military that, since the time when Amanullah's armed forces rapidly disintegrated in the face of tribal revolt, had become aligned with the modernising urban classes. It was perhaps inevitable in this context that a new political settlement, integrating both what remained of tribal power and the new urban classes, would involve some test of military strength. That the forces of the PDPA government have been able to maintain any integrity at all, after two years of fighting the tribes, is a further demonstration of the weakening of tribal ties and the increased strength of the urban classes who are contesting tribal influence in the state.

Even before the Soviet Union introduced forces as strong as any that have operated in Afghanistan in recent times, the state trod a tenuous path between the tribes on the one hand and empires on the other. Its finances were overwhelmingly dependent on foreign relations, both commercial and political. Its legal system was in the hands of quasi-autonomous religious elites who mediated between central and regional power, just as its bureaucracy was typified by middlemen serving the highest bidder. The army did not have a monopoly of force, but was adequate for suppressing limited revolts confined by political means to isolated localities and tribes. The Afghan state had many attributes of the tribal khan, maintaining peace among autonomous groups through its role as patron and broker.

The challenge to the tribes posed by the collapse of the tribal-based 'khanly' state is, on the most immediate level, military. A new state apparatus might defeat and break up the tribes, imposing state-made laws, taxes and an efficient bureaucracy throughout the country, while establishing for the first time a thoroughly state-like jurisdiction based on the non-tribal urban classes. So long as this strategy is backed by the comparatively unlimited military strength of the Soviet Union, the challenge is serious indeed. Before concluding that the challenge is insuperable, it is necessary to assess some of the strategic assets of the tribes

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such as were described as follows by a British officer who fought them just 100 years ago:

Attacking the Afghan tribes is like making sword thrusts into water. You meet with no resistance but you also do no injury ... Each separate tribe is, as it were an independent centre of life, which requires a separate and special operation for its extinction ... The only way in which we could hope to enforce our authority throughout Afghanistan would be by a simultaneous occupation of the entire country.⁵⁷

Conventional wisdom about occupying a country with the size and rugged terrain of Afghanistan suggests that as many as one million troops would be needed to suppress mobile, well-equipped, and determined guerrilla resistance. The Pashtuns were known by the British as 'perhaps the best skirmishers and the best natural shots in the world' and 'the country they inhabit [as] the most difficult on the face of the globe'. The British respect for the Pashtun guerrilla fighter continued as long as they were in India. A 1946 memorandum summarised the British experience, concluding that the Pashtun tribesman is 'on his own ground probably the finest minor tactician in the world', and estimating that on the Indian side of the Durand line the 'tribes could probably muster nearly 500,000 rifles'.⁵⁸

It is impossible to translate these assessments by the British into predictions about the current struggle by the tribes against a Soviet army equipped with a new generation of counter-insurgent technology. However, the imponderables of the new technology, its effectiveness in terrain like Afghanistan, and the effectiveness of defensive weapons and tactics in neutralising the advantage it affords to material wealth over people, are perhaps all best resolved in Mao's dictum: 'Weapons are an important factor in war but not the decisive one; it is man and not material that counts'. As much as Afghanistan may be a testing ground for weaponry, the struggle between tribe and empire is also a test of the now rusty machinery of tribal military organisation. Mao also said 'unorganised guerrilla warfare cannot contribute to victory'. The capacity of the tribal political order to organise the tribes will be an important factor in the struggle. The crucial importance of the sanctuaries in tribal areas on the Pakistan side of the Durand

line, and the participation of tribes living there in the Afghan jihad, will eventually challenge the Pashtuns to co-operate as a whole nation.⁵⁹

The tribes, and perhaps even the Pashtuns, no longer have the same dominance in Afghanistan that they once had. The political integration required for organising the resistance to empire now goes beyond the tribes to non-tribal and non-Pashtun groups, such as Badakhshani, Nuristani, Hazara, who have organised primarily under the banner of Islam. Here Islam performs its traditional role of transcending the tribal order, and in this sense the continuing capacity of Islam for political integration is being tested along with the tribal institutions. Faced with outside opposition, Islam could provide the ideology for a new legitimacy in Afghanistan, as it has in Iran. The reaction of Afghanistan's Islamic neighbours and other Islamic nations to its struggle suggests potential for a new unity in the Islamic world that would move modern Islam another step beyond ideology towards broader political relations. As the Islamic Conference becomes a forum for political action and a conduit of military assistance to the Afghans, the imperial potential of Islam begins a tentative revival after lying dormant for centuries. Khumeyni, the man who perhaps best symbolises that revival, has said 'today Islam is confronting the super-powers', and Bani-Sadr has referred to the Russians' 'worry over the Islamic revolution in Iran and fear of its effect on the Islamic republics inside the Soviet Union itself'.⁶⁰ The credibility of an Islamic threat to the superpowers is being tested in Afghanistan, where the Pashtun tribes are again, as so often in their history, the focus of conflict between empires.

In the present conflict, factors typical of the tribe-empire structure of relations are likely to be important. Because the Soviet Union clearly has significant military advantage over the tribes, the tribal strategy must be two-fold: first to make it prohibitively expensive for the empire to maintain the level of force required to rule the tribes, and second to seek alliance with other groups within the empire. For the latter strategy, Islam provides a convenient bond. As for finances, increased smuggling across the unsettled frontiers and the decline of western development aid have cut into the state's regular sources. The most important exploitable resource, natural gas piped directly from the northern fields into the Soviet Union, is

vulnerable to sabotage. The expensive technology of counter-insurgency - helicopters, tanks and jets - are vulnerable imports not to be foraged from the countryside. By comparison, Afghans are not only free of dependence on a capital-intensive standard of living and fighting, but positively value the rugged mobile existence shared by guerrillas and nomads. As tribal resistance empties the imperial war chest, the Soviet Union may discover the economies the British introduced by paying subsidies to the tribes. Abd al-Rahman settled for an annual subsidy from the British which amounted to about one-tenth the cost of keeping Shah Shuja on the throne during the First War, and less than one per cent of the total cost of the Second War.

As a matter of economy, the empire may need to learn about tribal politics,⁶¹ as the British did with measurable skill. The particular ruthlessness with which the Soviet military is wielding its power against civilians seemed aimed at rapid pacification, but could rebound badly in a protracted conflict with tribesmen, for whom the blood feud is a cultural imperative. On the other hand, the tribes may need to put forward leaders fluent in the imperial ideology and capable of forging a Bani-Sadr style of progressive, democratic and non-aligned or revolutionary Islam, that would co-opt the ideology of the pro-Soviet left, and establish a normative basis for relations in a language familiar to the empire, while preserving the autonomy of which the tribes are proverbially jealous. This would be an extraordinary achievement in a culture as traditional as the Afghan. But as a perceptive observer, Muhammad Iqbal, wrote: 'The Afghan conservatism is a miracle; it is adamant yet fully sensitive to and assimilative of new cultural forces'.⁶² Their recent admission to the 'socialist commonwealth' may confront the Afghans with the greatest challenge to their capacity for assimilation since their conversion to Islam.

NOTES

1. See M. Godelier, *Perspectives in Marxist Anthropology* (Cambridge University Press, 1977), pp. 72-4; R. Lowie, *The Origin of the State* (Russell and Russell, New York, 1962), p. 51.

2. Cf. H. Post, 'Classification of the rules of international law according to spheres of validity', *Netherlands Yearbook of International Law*, 7 (1976), pp. 157-95.

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3. H. Kelsen, *Principles of International Law* (Holt, Rinehart, Winston, New York, 2nd ed., 1966), pp. 306-7.
4. C. de Visscher, *Theory and Reality in International Law*, tr. P. Corbett (Princeton University Press, 1968), p. 204; see also J. Brierly, *The Law of Nations* (Clarendon, Oxford, 6th ed., 1963), p. 162.
5. F. Barth, 'Introduction', in *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* (Allen and Unwin, London, 1969), pp. 14-15; cf. Ahmed, chapter 5 below.
6. Kelsen, *Principles*, p. 183.
7. Barth, 'Introduction', p. 16.
8. E. Hoebel, *The Law of Primitive Man* (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1954), p. 28; A. D'Amato, *The Concept of Custom in International Law* (Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1971), p. 266.
9. For the vertical-horizontal metaphor, see R. Falk, 'International jurisdiction: horizontal and vertical conceptions of legal order', *Temple Law Quarterly*, 32 (1959), pp. 295-320.
10. E.g., J. Blondel, *Thinking Politically* (Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1976) p. 59.
11. Cf. G. Schwarzenberger, 'The fundamental principles of international law', *Recueil des Cours*, 87, 1 (1956), pp. 195-385.
12. G. Lichtheim, *Imperialism* (Penguin, London, 1971), pp. 10, 12, 15, 31.
13. R. Niebuhr, *The Structure of Nations and Empires* (Scribners, New York, 1959), p. 242.
14. For discussion of the rule-standard distinction, see D. Kennedy, 'Form and substance in private law adjudication', *Harvard Law Review*, 89 (1976), pp. 1685-1778.
15. G. Arrighi, *Geometry of Imperialism: The Limits of Hobson's Paradigm*, tr. P. Camiller (New Left Books, London, 1978), p. 39.
16. G. Schwarzenberger, *Power Politics: A Study of World Society* (Stevens and Jones, London, 3rd ed., 1964), p. 110.
17. M. McDougal, *Studies in World Public Order* (Yale University Press, New Haven, 1960), pp. 969, 990, 16, 987, 32-6.
18. O. Schachter, Book Review, *American Journal of International Law*, 72 (1978), p. 161. P. Allott, 'Language, method and the nature of international law', *British Yearbook of International Law*, 45 (1971), pp. 79-135.
19. G. Tunkin, *Theory of International Law*, tr. W. Butler (Allen & Unwin, London, 1974), pp. 435-40.
20. McDougal, *Studies*, p. 1010.
21. E.g., J. Spain, *The Pathan Borderland* (Mouton, The Hague, 1963), p. 72.
22. E.g., E. Howell, *Mizh: a Monograph on Government's Relations with the Mahsud Tribe* (Government of India Press,

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Simla, 1931), IOL: R/12/199, pp. 6, 50.

23. See e.g. M.N. Shahrani, *The Kirghiz and Wakhi of Afghanistan: Adaptation to Closed Frontiers* (University of Washington Press, Seattle, 1979), pp. 164-6.

24. See chapter 3 below.

25. See L. Lockhart, *The Fall of the Safavi Dynasty and the Afghan Occupation of Persia* (Cambridge University Press, 1958), pp. 85-7, 95-6, for Abdali and Ghilzai leaders under the Safavids.

26. G. Singh, *Ahmad Shah Durrani, Father of Modern Afghanistan* (Asia Publ. House, Bombay, 1959), p. 19.

27. See chapter 4 below.

28. See chapter 3 below.

29. Howell, *Mizh*, p. 48 and Preface; cf. A. Pandey, *The First Afghan Empire in India, 1451-1526 A.D.* (Bookland, Calcutta, 1956), pp. 87-9; R. Newell, 'Foreign Relations', in L. Dupree and L. Albert (eds.), *Afghanistan in the 1970s* (Praeger, New York, 1974), p. 76.

30. The comparison between these two kinds of orders is made explicit in M. Barkun, *Law without Sanctions: Order in Primitive Societies and the World Community* (Yale University Press, New Haven), 1968.

31. D. Ronen, *Quest for Self-Determination* (Yale University Press, New Haven, 1979), p. 119; cf. J. Herz, 'The rise and demise of the territorial state', *World Politics*, 9 (1957), pp. 473-93; de Visscher, *Theory*, p. 405.

32. M. Foucault, *Power, Truth and Strategy*, ed. M. Morris and P. Patton (Feral, Sydney, 1979), p. 59.

33. A term borrowed from R. Tapper, 'Nomadism in modern Afghanistan: asset or anachronism?' in Dupree and Albert, *Afghanistan*, p. 136.

34. One writer states, 'The Pathan's very "citizenship" in the tribe rests on his right to a *daftar* or share in the land', Spain, p. 81; another observed, 'Hill Pathans organize themselves within segmentary lineage groups corresponding to known territorial boundaries', A.S. Ahmed, *Millenium and Charisma among Pathans* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1976), p. 74. The Mangals and Jajis long and hotly contested a territorial boundary dispute, and Barth, *Ethnic groups*, p. 126, remarks on the 'exclusive territorialism' of the Pathans.

35. Lowie, *Origin*, pp. 51, 73.

36. Abdur Rahman, *The Life of Abdur Rahman, Amir of Afghanistan*, ed. S.M. Khan (Murray, London, 1900), vol. 2, pp. 200, 176-7.

37. G. Curzon, *Persia and the Persian Question* (Longmans, Green, London, 1892), vol. 1, p. 236.

38. Schwarzenberger, *Power Politics*, p. 48.

39. J. Lawrence, quoted in M. Khan, *Anglo-Afghan Relations 1798-1898: a Chapter in the Great Game in Central Asia* (Universal Book Agency, Peshawar, c. 1963), p. 239.

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41. G. Curzon, *Frontiers* (Clarendon, Oxford, 1907), p. 4; also A. Embree, 'Frontiers into Boundaries: from the traditional to the modern state', in R. Fox (ed.), *Realm and Region in Traditional India* (Vikas, New Delhi, 1977), pp. 255-80.
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43. H. Rawlinson, quoted in A. Bilgrami, *Afghanistan and British India 1793-1907: a Study in Foreign Relations* (Sterling, New Delhi, 1972), p. 138.
44. W. Fraser-Tytler, *Afghanistan* (Oxford University Press, 3rd ed., 1967), pp. 333-6.
45. See generally, N. Kamrany, *Peaceful Competition in Afghanistan* (Communication Service Corp., Washington, 1969).
46. See S.M. Khan, *Constitution and Laws of Afghanistan* (Murray, London, 1900) who, p. 118, calls Abd al-Rahman the 'Justinian of Afghanistan'.
47. M. Fry, *The Afghan Economy: Money, Finance, and the Critical Constraints to Economic Development* (Brill, Leiden, 1974), pp. 214, 186.
48. M.H. Kakar, 'The fall of the Afghan Monarchy in 1973', *IJMES*, 9 (1978), pp. 205-6.
49. Singh, *Ahmad Shah*, p. 26.
50. See e.g. J. Anderson, 'There are no Khans any more', *MEJ*, 32 (1978), pp. 167-83.
51. *Kabul Times*, 2 Oct. 1979; *Summary of World Broadcasts (SWB)* (BBC, Reading), FE/6312/C3; *SWB*, FE/6401/C2/1-6.
52. *SWB*, FE/6295/C/2, 12 Dec. 1979; see e.g. H. Amin, 'Text of speech', *Afghanistan Quarterly*, 32, 1 (1979), pp. 1-35.
53. *SWB*, FE/6403/C/1-7.
54. E.g. *Christian Science Monitor*, Internat. Ed., 7 Apr. 1980.
55. *SWB*, SU/6368/C/4; cf. accusation of Russians buying tribal support, *International Herald Tribune*, 31 Dec. 1979; F. Boyd & G. Gretton (eds.), *Report on World Affairs*, 1 Oct. - 31 Dec. 1979.
56. L. Poullada, *Reform and Rebellion in Afghanistan, 1919-1929* (Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1973), pp. 33, 160; F. Halliday, 'Revolution in Afghanistan', *New Left Review*, 112 (1979), p. 40; L. Dupree, 'Red Flag over the Hindu Kush, Part II: the accidental coup, or Taraki in blunderland', *AUFS Reports* (S. Asia series), 1979, no. 45, p. 13.
57. J. Dacosta, *A Scientific Frontier, or the Danger of a Russian Invasion of India* (W.H. Allen, London, 1891), p. 125.
58. Liddell Hart, 'Foreword', p. xiv, in Mao Tse Tung and Che Guevara, *Guerrilla Warfare* (Cassell, London, 1962); C. Callwell, *Small Wars: their Principles and Practice* (War Office, London, 3rd ed., 1906), p. 320; N. Mansergh (ed.),

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The Transfer of Power, 1942-1947 (HMSO, London, 1977), vol. 7, p. 31.

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61. See D. Chaffetz, 'Afghanistan in turmoil', *International Affairs*, 56 (1980), p. 33, alleging a present 'Soviet myopia'.

62. M. Iqbal, 'Foreword', p. viii, in L. Ahmad and M. Aziz, *Afghanistan: A Brief Survey* (Kabul, 1934).

Chapter 3

KHAN AND KHEL: DIALECTICS OF PAKHTUN TRIBALISM

Jon W. Anderson

Introduction¹

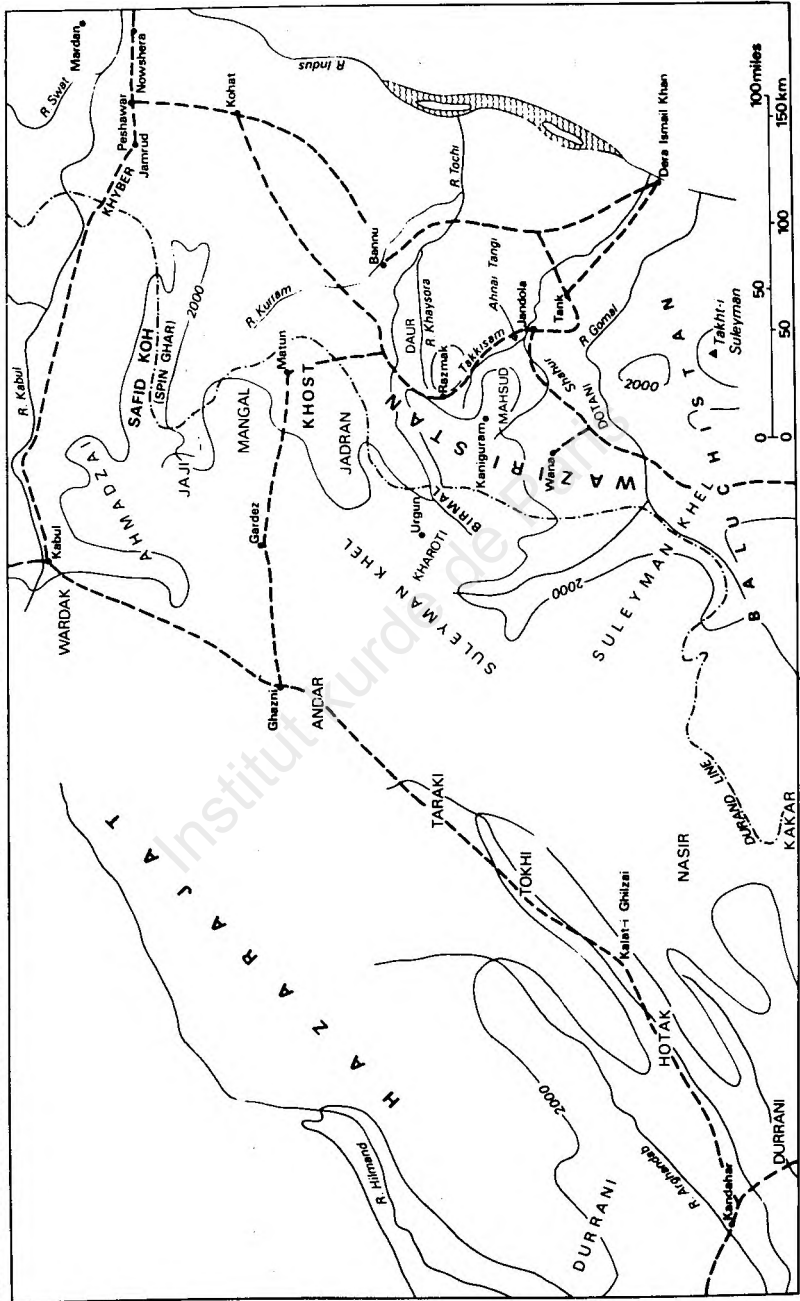
Understanding the relation of tribe and state in Afghanistan depends on first grasping the dynamics of tribe. This is not to suggest that tribe is historically or logically prior to the state: by all available evidence, Pakhtun tribes share with other similar formations throughout the Near East a history of development in settings where metropolitan states figure prominently, and the present configuration of Pakhtun tribes emerges from their contribution to the collapse of the Safavid and Moghul empires in the eighteenth century. Nor does it mean that tribe explains state, as a continuation of tribalism by other means, as has been claimed in the case of Afghanistan.² But the two are organically connected in some subtle ways beyond their particular institutional junctures. To expose this connection, which is the actual empirical context of tribe-state relations, I will outline the nature of Pakhtun tribalism with particular reference to nontribal - even, in a sense to be explained, anti-tribal - formations.

The Problem of Pakhtun Tribalism

In the standard histories by Caroe and Gregorian, as well as in derivative interpretations by Frazer-Tytler and Dupree³ 'tribes' enter as abstractions refracted through the prism of state-oriented political analyses, and then often negatively with respect to other subjects, most particularly 'national' development. Perceiving the political 'state' to be weak by comparison with western counterparts,

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MAP 2: Sketch-map of Ghilzai country and Waziristan, to show places mentioned in chapters 3, 4 and 5



such approaches conceive of 'the tribes' monolithically as constituting a separate, competing political system, out of which, paradoxically, emerged the monarchy which lasted for over two hundred years up to 1973 as a kind of tribal empire. Alternatively, and especially from south and east of the Durand Line, 'the tribes' are understood in terms of independence from and rebellion against government. Each reading is valid, although in too limited a sense to exclude or include the other. Each proceeds from a partial description, to which is fitted extra information about 'tribe' and 'state' that is rooted in the imperial settings of the previous century. It is in the shadow of the Frontier that 'the tribal problem' takes shape, including what is conceived to be problematic about tribes generally and for these states in particular.⁴ In that context, political analyses of limiting factors produce the paradox of states created by tribes and tribes created (or at least sanctioned) by states, which is as artificial, and as enduring, as the line separating them and, like that line, the creature of imposed frames of reference.

Historically, of course, these views are two of many perspectives of a kaleidoscope of encounters, collapsed into schematisations from which no factoring analysis will extract a description of anything other than its own terms, and the adequacy of which depends on matching the terms of the case. The actual terms of the case can be found only in Pakhtun views of their relations with 'the state', including what they stipulate 'the state' to be. A methodology appropriate to all (and only) the facts must take account of the prime fact that Pakhtuns do not oppose 'tribe' and 'state' typologically as sui generis or autonomous institutions. They do not see them as equivalent in that respect, as competitors in contest for the same ground. Indeed as far as they are concerned, it is 'state' and not 'tribe' which occupies the periphery of things, and it is to the state that all the characteristics of the peripheral attach, most especially dissipation.

Pakhtun tribesmen look out upon a world where the order of 'tribe', emerging out of that of the family, is seen to dissipate or unravel into congeries of social, political, economic and other relations which to them typify contingency. There, as congeries, the 'state' is found as a thing of parts on a field of parts having no necessary relations to each other. That field, where others

are encountered in activity-defined roles rather than as whole persons, is not a different order of reality or merely another context. Tribesmen move easily through non-tribal settings, some quite close to home, without adopting different techniques or personalities; hence, the puzzling continuities of family and politics, in states resembling family businesses, and in families displaying all the characteristics of conspiracies except the choice whether to join. Rather, that field is something more akin to the swirling void, or the wild primeval state, out of which 'tribe' is realised as a kind of domestication. The 'state' as such is not opposed to 'tribe', but is a manifestation of the realm of contingent relations into which 'tribe' itself threatens to collapse, quite literally to turn feral, in failure not so much of effort as of the will to keep its synthesis intact. Both absolutely in time and space and relatively in all social relations, 'tribe' emerges from the maelstrom only to dissolve back into it at some point of organisational failure that is a symptom of its own problematic, inconclusive, ambivalent character.

The terms of this understanding which are near to Pakhtun experience are sufficiently far from anthropological terms to seem metaphysical. Indeed, they are virtually eschatological to Pakhtuns, some of whom see 'tribe' as the this-worldly counterpart of creation itself. But that should not stand in the way of recognising several crucial facts about their terms. The first and most immediate is that those terms are the everyday coin of their dealings with life, including the various apparatus and other manifestations of 'the state'. In that coin, the processes out of which 'tribe' emerges are reversed or undone in the realm of 'state', which, put most comprehensively, is an inversion of that of 'tribe'. That is, as objects (immediate) 'tribe' and 'state' are comprehended within the same frame of reference, as moments of a dialectic articulating the universe of Pakhtun experience. In that dialectic, 'tribe' for Pakhtuns is at once a prime datum and an expression, both a definer and something to be defined, made definitive or actualised in social formations.

It is from activities in respect to these efforts at definition that we gain access to what is actually (in action) going on, both in motives for action and in meanings of events. Similarities between the Pakhtun view just sketched and those formulated from the viewpoint of the state (such as

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Caroe's and Dupree's, not to mention Ibn Khaldun's) are striking and evocative of the elusiveness which observers seem to find characteristic of Pakhtuns. Tribes seem to be there and not to be there, and tribesmen seem at once just out of reach and too close for comfort. As elsewhere in the Near East, tribes disappear only to reappear unpredictably. To speak of dormant or reserved tribalism⁶ only re-states the mystery, for there is something here more significant than an alternative, complementary viewpoint on the same thing. Tribal formations have the dual significance of being at once given and made, a collapsing of the normative into the experiential from which their own (propositional) terms can be retrieved; and the point of access is the organisation of those terms, for that organisation is what is phenomenally present.

My purpose here is, first, to set Pakhtun tribalism in the context of the meanings it has for Ghilzai Pakhtuns in eastern Afghanistan and, second, to do so in a fashion that indicates how that tribalism is set in relation to other contexts. To that end, I begin with an analysis of Ghilzai social epistemology and present the terms in which they conceive of social formations, then examine their application in the interplay between leadership (khans) and lineage (khel) processes. It is in this interplay that the embodiment - or, more properly speaking, the enactment - of 'tribe' continually emerges from a dialectic which links the interplay of khan and khel to larger dialectics in the society and, because of the range of formations those dialectics connect, makes that interplay an exemplary 'text' for Pakhtun understanding of those dialectics. This is not to claim that one social form is prior to, the model for, or the context of the other, but only that the realm of tribe and the realm of state are understood within the same frame, and that tribalism is, for Pakhtun, a key text of the problem or subject articulating that frame.

The Terms of Pakhtun Tribalism in Ghilzai Country

The terms in which Pakhtuns explain tribalism have to be understood as propositions making concrete an otherwise inchoate understanding of the world. Pakhtuns expend considerable effort on just such exegesis of events and situations, not as idle philosophising, although many otherwise idle hours are so spent, but as a serious enterprise in which

they are constantly engaged, in the recognition that tribe, for them, does not exist in isolation. It has beginnings and ends which they seek to grasp, maintain, and manoeuvre both with and within. For these activities, Ghilzai understand what 'tribe' is, by contrast to what it is not, primarily through three cognate distinctions - goum : gund, atrap : shahr, yaghistan : hukumat. These terms are a portion of a larger set, and articulate particular domains of reference in which they take shape in characteristic - and characteristically fugitive - ways. They are not ideal types and do not describe types of Pakhtun society, but rather frame tendencies inherent in all Pakhtun social formations. As propositions, they articulate a thematic tension which is the motif of Pakhtuns social organisation by predicating a range of objective relations which is both open-ended and logically closed. These are not all the terms that Pakhtuns use, and not all Pakhtuns do use these particular terms, which are current in the northern portion of Ghilzai country where they articulate one sample of Pakhtun experience.

Ghilzai are a group of patrilineally related, territorially contiguous, named tribes, whose homeland (wtan) is that portion of the total Pakhtun country lying south of the Kabul River, between the Spin Ghar and Takht-i Suleyman ranges on the east and the Hazarajat on the west down to the vicinity of Kandahar. Ghilzai rose to prominence in the eighteenth century when they overthrew the Safavid empire, but were subsequently eclipsed by Durrani Pashtuns from the Irano-Baluch borderlands who established the Afghan kingdom. Pakhtuns, or Pashtuns, call themselves Afghan and are so called by others, although the name has been appropriated by the state of Afghanistan for its citizens. In that context, Ghilzai were suppressed by Durrani monarchs and diverted into conquering their non-Pakhtun neighbours in their capacities as Pakhtuns and as ghazis ('warriors for Islam') against the heretics (Shii Hazara) in the Hazarajat and the kafirs (unbelievers) north of the Kabul River in what is now Nuristan. That the term 'Ghilzai' has mostly historical significance today, is testimony to Durrani success in diverting the consciousness of these tribesmen to greater (ethnic) and lesser (local) identities. They know they are Ghilzai in contrast with the Durrani to the south and with numerous small tribes in the mountains to the east; and they know that this identity is genealogical, although few concern themselves with its details.

But the identity is defunct, since the largest designations which are normally named unprompted are the seven major Ghilzai tribes. From south to north, these are Hotak, Tokhi, Nasir, Taraki, Kharoti, Andar (including Sohak), and Suleyman Khel plus its numerous offshoots, including Ahmadzai who are accounted a separate tribe.⁷ Each tribe is continuously segmented in localised patrilineages (khel), identified by forefathers whose patrilineal descendants constitute a qoum. This latter term applies to any level of inclusion above the household (kor) and collapses kinship and ethnicity into a single category of common patrilineal descent in contrast to all other relations.

Ghilzai do not see 'tribe' in relation to 'state' but locate each as aspects of opposed, dialectically related realms which take temporal and transient shape in a continuous play of integration and disintegration. What they put in opposition are the activity and seats of government (hukumat, where governing takes place) to the lands of freedom or unrestraint (yaghistan), as points on a plane. Yaghistan is where no man is above another, in contrast to hukumat where there are governors and governed. In Ghilzai usage, these terms make substantial a basic contrast between on the one hand the encompassment of one person by another in a particular relationship, as the ruled by a ruler in hukumat, and on the other their equality by virtue of shared identity, maximally by reference to a common ancestor. The distinction is basic and has wide ramifications: it opposes the specific nature of place, time, action and inequality in situated relationships, to the general and infinite nature of equality as identity in reference to an absent (past) third term in which the two equals were once joined. These various features are, so to speak, taken apart and variously recombined in cognate distinctions, between identity with another and differentiation from another, through which Ghilzai play out their social organisation.

In terms of location and occupation, the distinction is recapitulated in a more common one between atrap and shahr. Atrap is the 'countryside', from the Arabic for 'directions' (atraf). It conveys in Pakhto a notion of room in all directions, lack of differentiation, or continuity, in contrast to the dimensionality, confinement, and partial identities of the 'city' (shahr), where the whole man comes apart into specifically located, component roles. Atrap is the tribal domain in contrast to

the domain of the city, where equality in the Pakhtun sense of 'no difference' dissolves in the face of diversely originated persons engaged in diverse, and all partial, ways. Atrapi, literally 'country people', is the common objective designation for 'tribesmen' in general (qoumi is the inclusive 'fellow-tribesman') and frequently is used figuratively to evoke the straightforward or ingenuous 'whole man' in contrast to clever (chalak, 'dissimulative', 'tricky'), anonymous, urban (shahri) ways and people. 'City' stands as the antithesis of 'tribe', as the provenance of social relations proceeding on the basis of what differentiates, as opposed to those proceeding on the basis of mutuality. Tribalism, as the engagement of the whole man, gives way in such contexts to situationally defined encounters with others of diverse origin, mostly over divisions of labour (or exchange) which are necessarily unequal and antagonistic for want of any prior shared identity short of the universe of humanity. The city is the place of strange persons in familiar roles. Moreover, it is located in time and space, while atrap is timeless space. The city is a conjunction of diversities in contrast to a uniform field, contingency in contrast to necessity, and randomised individuality in contrast to the part which replicates the whole.

The replication of the whole in every part is the key abstract feature of qoum, which refers to any, all, and only categories of common patrilineal descent. The term (borrowed from Arabic) in Pakhto usage predicates homogeneous unity, virtually common substance, continuously subdivided through time into replicas of itself. By contrast, gund ('faction') is a composite whole of diversely originated and complementary parts of persons playing these parts or roles. Qoum stipulates an original unity or primordial integrity in the image of a common father; it wholly encompasses one's very being in the world, while gund are articulated situationally out of temporary differences. Qoum represents a total identity, the indivisible part of one's inheritance, such as the unity of brothers, and gund a coalition of partial and fleeting engagement with complementary others. Qoum stipulates that there is, in a Pakhto phrase, 'no difference' between persons, while gund proceeds by magnifying differences as the focus of relationship. Thus, tribalism (qoumi, qoumwali) is understood, abstractly and essentially, as the antithesis of factionalism (gundi), each emerging in opposition to the other,

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as wholes equal to any sum of their parts versus wholes both more or less than any part.

These are very nearly the most comprehensive, widely resonating, and morally loaded distinctions that Ghilzai normally make. They make them epistemologically, however, in the form of metaphors for relating the particular to the general, the instant to the principle. Together, they can be understood as contrasts between replicate wholes and complementary wholes or between original homogeneity and initial heterogeneity marked by the presence or absence of a comprehensive encompassment of self and other by a third term not merely including self and other but formally identical to each. The contrasts are dialectical, for the tension which these distinctions express is present in all social formations. It confers on them a dual character and a tendency to resolve in either direction so that the conduct of social relations takes on the character of a contest between making unity the grounds for action and bringing unity out of diversity or specificity in time and space. Put positively, the oppositions state as the fundamental problem, or subject, of Pakhtun social life a tension between acting on unity and turning a situated activity into an enduring unity. When tribesmen approach the bazaar, for example, there is a tendency to try to turn situated and partial engagements of buying and selling into trading partnerships by discounting bargaining in favour of, literally, 'favour' (khidmat, 'grace') which broadens the context of the relationship. At the same time, this makes a deal problematic to the extent that one wishes to narrow the relationship to the deal itself; and dealing with the hukumat in the persons of officials turns this problem into the relationship itself, in the form either of ritualised wagering with real, often mortal, stakes or of extended serious talk about unserious topics. In a sense that would not seem paradoxical to Pakhtuns, unity ultimately precludes action, while action denies unity. To be ruled is to become an extension of the ruler, which can be avoided only by not being ruled at all. Irresolvable in its own terms, this tension is, thus, merely relocated in manipulations which reveal to Pakhtuns the motivation of social relations as proceeding either from an a priori identity, and thus making action problematic, or from a priori disparity, and thus tending to dissipate in the disintegration of the actors themselves.

Put abstractly into ontological terms,⁸ the distinction is hard to grasp, and Pakhtuns normally

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put it metaphorically in more concrete terms as arguments about definition. They metaphorise these terms across various domains that are, in that fashion, linked to an underlying reality as aspects of a subject which is at once given to them and which they seek to fathom in locutions such as atrapi for 'tribesmen'. The particular distinctions Ghilzai make overlap with others such as that between nang ('fighting') and qalang ('taxation'), reified by Ahmed into types of Frontier Pakhtun society, or the parallel distinction noted by Barth between bar ('upper', remote) and kuz ('lower', toward the government centre) in Swat, or Elphinstone's report of hearsay that remoter tribes were more 'republican' than those he encountered directly. They find echoes in observers' distinctions such as Mayne's between Pathan as 'settled' and Pakhtun as 'independent'.⁹ Across all such distinctions, there is a continuous communication in the form of multiple residences, marriage and other exchange networks, including share-cropping and grants of asylum which converge in clientage relations, in alternations between rebellion and quiescence on the part of particular groups, and in daily individual switching between 'rough' (dzgh) and 'polite' (hajah) interaction as well as between 'tribal' and metropolitan settings. These distinctions are objectifications predicating an otherwise unknown subject in order to organise the significance of the particular or fleeting as an instance of the general, essential, or eternal. Adding them together, so to speak, reconstructs that frame of reference from which Pakhtuns proceed and, by reversing the process, reveals the problem of Pakhtun social thinking or consciousness to turn on the relative priority accorded to incorporation or transaction, mutuality or complementarity, equality or hierarchy as the grounds for relationship. Such terms define each other as inversions in an unfolding dialectic for the reading of which the master metaphor or exemplary 'text' is found in tribal formation itself. In the problems of realising the abstract 'tribe' (qoum) for organisational purposes as a specific lineage (khel), and in connecting these to other social formations, Ghilzai quite literally encounter the terms of their own existence.

Dialectics of Khel

Ghilzai are distributed in patrilineages which are

more or less acephalous and segmentary; that is, some segment in institutionalised fashion and feature leadership that amounts to an office, while among others both leadership and groupings depend on personal achievements and largely charismatic qualities. Uniting the specific forms of any particular place, continuously segmenting social fields tend to replicate a single format of localised patrilineages, which join qoum, the encompassing political frame, to kor (household), the only institutionally indivisible group, in a series of nested groupings defined by, or as the descendants of, successively remoter 'fathers'. Any individual household is thus located within widening circles of paternal cousins, from its local component lineage through intermediate groupings to the named tribes and, through parallel relations between tribal ancestors, to all other Pakhtuns through their putative common ancestor, Qays, called Abd al-Rashid by the Prophet, from whom he received Islam. This nominal claim to 'companionship' with the Prophet obliterates any pre-Islamic past for Pakhtuns and makes their existence coterminous with ordered time as well as wholly within the realm of Islam. Segmentation is indeterminate and more potential than actual in terms of the emergence of distinct groups, for larger groupings than the household are not in any organisational sense corporate. By variably projecting the institutional nature of the household onto categorical social fields defined by descent, Ghilzai, and indeed all Pakhtuns/Pashtuns, are ideally and ideologically related through an emergent system of localised, ramifying patrilineages called, variously, khel or *-zai (as in Ghilzai, from ziy 'sons'), which locate qoum in space and time.

The scheme comprehensively maps genealogical and territorial space as aspects of the same thing (wtan, the patrimonial 'homeland') through patrilineal inheritance of land by males only. Daughters' claims on their patrimony are discharged with their marriages. Each local settlement consists of one or more khels, composing the patrilineal descendants of a 'father', five or six generations removed, after whom the whole group and its place are named. In-married wives and contractual clients (hamsaya, 'neighbours', who share another's 'shadow') are nominally identified with the proprietors as residing in and living off the place of the owners, thus 'placed' there by an inclusive relationship. That is, their identities are subsumed under those of their sponsors in one of the archetypes of hierarchy

where one dimension is made to characterise the whole relationship. Such minimal khels in turn group into more inclusive ones, nominally identified by the linking ancestor but not terminologically distinguished as types, which compose the major segments of the tribe. The named tribes are the largest territorial divisions of the total Pakhtun/Pashtun country, which thus as a whole and in each of its parts continuously subdivides down to the parcels of individual holders.

From a Ghilzai point of view, khels represent the division of what was once a unitary proprietorship of the linking ancestor. They speak of all lineages as having 'grown' through time from a founding father, and imagine khel to represent the residual unity of his descendants. In the normal course of events, partition proceeds outwards from more to less intensively utilised space. Brothers normally separate their domestic quarters after marriage or when becoming fathers in their own right. After their father's death, they divide first the production (still sharing the land) and then the land itself, beginning with the nearer and more intensively utilised and proceeding over time to the further and less intensively utilised. The process may be accomplished all at once but more often continues into subsequent generations, as less intensively used lands, or those better exploited jointly, such as those used for intermittent dry farming or for grazing, are maintained as a species of commons. While lineages do 'grow' in this fashion from a single household, cases where the actual histories of khels can be retrieved suggest that they also 'grow' backwards by regrouping relatives in the present in terms of a shared ancestor in the past, particularly in instances of colonisation on new lands.¹⁰ Similarly, when land is sold, and small parcels often are, a first option to purchase lies with the nearest collateral agnates who, Ghilzai say, would otherwise stand to inherit it. The sharia doctrine of hagg-i shaff (the right or interest of the neighbour in one's real estate) is interpreted by Ghilzai to apply first to those who have divided what previously was whole.

Particular segments may decline and merge with adjacent ones, or grow and divide, simply by refocusing on another ancestor, for khels are not at any level corporate with respect to land tenure. Real property is owned by individuals, inheriting from former proprietors, each constituting with his own household an independent economic unit separately

endowed with the same types of resources as any other. Each contains the same package of water, platted fields, dry lands, pasture, and waste. While neighbouring proprietors may jointly exploit resources which cannot easily be divided or whose use is intermittent, they do so severally as individuals laying claim on the basis of partitioned holdings in an ecologically unified package. At inheritance, unitary holdings are divided into new units with all the component resources, replicating the former unity rather than separating its components. Mediating between kor and qoum, rather than as corporate groups, khels are thus frames for association where such rights are exercised as fractions of putative former unities. They maintain a continuous replication of part and whole, upon which rests the volatile or fleeting character of specific formations within an overall stability of format.

Structurally speaking, greater and lesser groupings are analogues of each other, rather like the branches of a tree, which is in fact a metaphor Ghilzai employ to talk about them. They emphasise this continuity by speaking of the tribe as a family writ large and of the family as the kernel or smallest version of a tribe; and they apply to any grouping from minimal to maximal lineage the general term qoum, whose associated territory is a patrimonial homeland or wtan. This likening of tribe and family is, however, partial and conceptual. The continuity marked by khel between kor and qoum is a dialectical one, which resolves the temporal hierarchy of the household, where all members are extensions of the social personality of the father, into the timeless equality of tribal brotherhood by the abstraction of the father into a linking ancestor. Ghilzai are quite clear about this conception, describing larger groupings as faded or abstracted versions of the smaller, such that more distant ancestors, denoting more people, correspondingly connote less (i.e., something abstracted) about their relations. This continuity gives to Pakhtun politics their familiar familial cast and to families an equally familiar political complexion;¹¹ it is, of course, quite ambivalent, even contradictory, resting on a tension of conflicting solidarities - those of hierarchy and equality, or complementarity and mutuality - which only take shape over time and then only to dissolve over unresolved contradictions. Ambivalent intermediate forms, khels simultaneously mark the failure of the vital to endure and the want of vitality in the only thing that does. But as

constructions they mark attempts to anchor the vital in the abstraction of its life-giving property.

Khels are shot through with this ambivalence and, consequently, tend to dissolve as frames for action. No clear evidence exists of tribes actually coalescing into large-scale corporate bodies for joint action, even defensively, even for defence of territory. In fact, there is no thing at stake in khel. Khels are not significant functionally so much as structurally; and that significance is personal in the deepest sense of defining who - indeed, what - one is absolutely, one's very integrity as whole rather than as determined by situated roles.

Put as an organisational problem, the solidarity of all such groupings is indeterminate by reason of the dual character underlying their part-whole continuity, and has to be achieved or argued ad hoc; and when it is achieved, it is by realising approximations of the internal hierarchy of the household on a larger scale. But any such realisation which collapses the duality by breaking the continuity of whole and part, fixing hierarchy in its own terms, marks the dissolution into gund (faction) of what was realised, as brotherhood, in qoum. This can occur at any level, down to and including that of the individual who dissolves into his component roles, just as khels made to play a substantive role either dissolve or, which is the same thing, turn into gund. Without qoum, solidarity can only take the form of a purposive alliance, which is to say a contract. Specific to a particular situation or to particular components of one's identity, such contracted relations cannot engage the whole man, what he is in the world, and thus have no compelling reality apart from personal volition or compulsion (by another) itself. Transitions from smaller, more family-like groupings to larger, more shifting social fields, which is always a relative distinction, turn on the figures who mediate their relations. Smaller and larger social fields intersect as conversions of the resources and potentials of one sphere into those of another; and these conversions are drawn together in complex fashion by khans, who are neither merely 'first among equals' not quite 'feudal lords' but are, in a Ghilzai idiom, both creatures and creators of khel and, for that, equally as transient.

Khan as Patron: the Dual Logic of Leadership

Khan is a protean word. It may be given as part of a personal name, and it attaches almost automatically as a title of address to the names of older men of substance and procreative or political success. Among some Pakhtuns, notably the Durrani around Kandahar, it designates any landowner, however small the holding. Ghilzai reserve the term for more singular individuals; and everywhere it conveys a notion of deploying others in one's own enterprise, or identifying one's enterprise with that of a collectivity. Most narrowly, it signals a man whose authority runs beyond his own household and beyond the general run of householders thereabouts.

In Ghilzai thinking, the prototypical form of command over others is exercised by mashar, or heads of households. The mashar owns the land, commands those who work on and subsist from it, represents them to others as an integral unit that is an extension of his person, and generally derives their identities from his own in a metaphor of 'fatherhood'. Sons, for example, have no independent economic or political identities apart from their father during his lifetime; their wives are acquired as his daughters-in-law and, in a telling Ghilzai idiom, 'become agnates' (qoumi shwi); while, at a further remove, clients (hamsaya) are attached to the fringes of a household as part of its enterprise under the mashar in a fashion similar to sons deriving their identities from the father. Somewhat wishfully and often wistfully, Ghilzai idealise this relationship to speak of the leading figures in larger social fields as mashars, but the likeness evoked is a partial one. No khan has quite the power in a khel that mashars exercise in their smaller realms. A khel is not his creation in an ontogenetic sense. He neither owns the land nor commands its members, and there is no right of succession; but a khan can bind together the members of a khel by standing, like a mashar, at crucial organisational intersections where their residual unity can be put into action.

Not all khans are leaders in the most positive sense, and not all leaders are khans, for khanship represents an on-going achievement rather than a clear-cut or structurally given position. Neither elected nor appointed, khans are defined more by the nature of their following than by their own leadership. The khanly field of endeavour is found between the total tribe and the constituent sovereign households, in the field of medial segmentation where the

smaller can be put together into larger arrangements, and where portions of larger groupings can be detached. In a sense, minimal segments present too small and undifferentiated a social field for khanly leadership, and the maximal segments encompass too much play for a single coherent game. So it is in the intermediate range that khanly leadership finds its arena, where khans endeavour to mediate or connect the more abstract qoum to the more concrete groupings by bringing various of them together. Theirs is a sisyphian task of joining abstract potentials to down-to-earth realities. Constrained on the one hand by the limited scale of effective organisation (essentially that of the kor) and, on the other hand, by the limited corporateness of larger social fields, the actual leadership exercised by khans is as temporal and as ambiguous as the ephemeral realisations of tribal structure that are their actual subjects. Many individuals compete for influence on grounds of wealth, wisdom, piety, political and economic connections, oratorical and other abilities; but Ghilzai assert that khans, properly so called, are distinguished as those who 'feed the people' and 'tie the knot of the tribe'. More than merely means and ends, these phrases point to the actions (feeding, tying) and to the predications (the people, the knot, the tribe) combined in khanly as opposed to other leadership.

'Feeding people' covers all conversions of personal wealth into social relations through hospitality, occasional gifts and favours, providing employment, and other less clear-cut patronage. Construed as 'helping' persons more or less unable, temporarily or permanently, to sustain an autonomous existence, such patronage focuses miscellaneous needs of a recipient upon a benefactor who, through various subsidies from his own possessions, weaves about himself a network of dependency relations. These relations are systematically graded.

The archetypal expression of solidarity among all Pakhtuns, commensality, is made to cover these relations. Sharing a meal is the symbol and expression of equality, and the degree to which one is fed by another is a rough but public measure of alliance to the host. The least pervasive dependence is incurred by guests, whose 'subsidy' is as temporary and small as a meal, although it is morally loaded and hence the basis, potentially, for much more. To have 'eaten another's salt' makes any subsequent transgression against him doubly odious, and to share food (which is always sacrificed and eaten 'in

the name of God') terminates enmity. To be a guest is, among Ghilzai, the most direct and, momentarily, the most complete expression of being 'fed' by another. But it is also as brief as it is perfect, and guests who do not pass on quickly come to find that perfection converted into total incorporation. The guest who stays is the archetype client (hamsaya, 'shade-sharer').

At the other extreme, the most inclusive relationship, short of those within a household, is that of master and servants, who are in effect made marginally part of his household. Servants expand a household's personnel, and their subordination is total as an extension of the master-patron's identity. This relationship lacks the egalitarian gloss of hospitality in that servants are without the independence to reciprocate in kind. Servants are the extreme case of employees who, in return for their entire livelihood, expend their undivided labour and loyalty for their employer as part of his enterprise.

Guests and servants mark the limits of client-age relations, but neither hospitality nor service are by themselves adequate bases for politically significant patronage. The one is too brief and the other too inclusive, and both are too hierarchical and domestic. More commonly political in a purposeful and convertible sense are relations with share-croppers and with companions. Their subsidies take the form of a patron's investment in the client's own enterprise rather than incorporation of a client within the patron's. Such relations lack the total surrender of independence implicit in guests and employees. Characteristically, these relations are discretionary and partial on both sides, and they are intermittent for companions or temporary for share-croppers. In practice, the statuses of companion (malgarey) and of share-cropper (bazgar, but more commonly the neutral Persian term for 'villager', dehqan) tend to merge together, as otherwise independent tribesmen with limited personal holdings enter into varied share-cropping or other arrangements with persons having more lands than they can farm or want to farm themselves. Many 'tenants' are just this sort of small farmers seeking to supplement their own marginal enterprises, just as many owner-operators often put their land in pawn (grou) and end up giving to a creditor the share of production appropriate to the owner of the land in a manner little different from that of landless tenants. Quite complex layered arrangements

can result, as individuals, farming their own land, some or all of which may be pawned, or land obtained through group, seek supplementary share-cropping contracts to make ends meet. All cases of such strategies, separately or together, occur when a man finds that the costs of pursuing the lifestyle of an independent tribesman exceed what he earns from his heritage. Tenant and companion relations are thus in Ghilzai estimations transitional between complete independence and total dependence. Instead of being fed directly, they are financed in their own enterprises by a patron who thereby makes something more of his own.

The important difference between share-cropping and companionship is that the former is an explicitly contractual relationship with fixed, usually annual, terms and conditions, while companions enjoy a more generalised reciprocity of indeterminate term and implied conditions. Companionship is continuously 'negotiated', while tenancy is, essentially, negotiated once for a term; and tenancy is a more partial relationship with fewer dimensions than companionship, which is broader and more inclusive, more nearly involving the whole man. Tenants thus tend to merge with outright employees, as workers for someone else, but companions merge with guests, as the recipients of unreckoned favour, which Ghilzai liken to khidmat ('grace' or 'service' especially to God) and see as fulfilling the duty of Muslims to pay zakat (the obligatory dedication of personal wealth to community purposes). The distinction is more of intent than of content. Patrons may prefer the less ambiguous relations with servants and tenants, emphasising that the enterprise is the patron's own. Or they may prefer the image of 'helping' others to maintain their own enterprises, even to the extent of lending or granting the use of lands, animals, and equipment. The choice comes down to which of two sides of the relationship is sought and can be secured.

Companionship is the type of relation that politically ambitious patrons seek to create and focus on themselves. Transitional between the more specific relations with guests and employees, it is the one which, being voluntary on both sides, is most consistent with the conventional image of khanly status. Companions are usually, but not always, kinsmen distant enough to have no interest in each others' estates but near enough to have an interest in each other. Malgarey accompany a khan and provide the retinue that testifies to his importance. The

more obviously a person is incorporated dependently into another's enterprise, the greater his political disability. Companions are instead fellow-tribesmen and co-proprietors who, although formally equal to their patron, just lack the wherewithal to realise that equality in tangible self-sufficiency. By 'feeding' such persons, literally as dinner-guests but more importantly in the figurative sense of subsidising their enterprises, the khanly patron binds companions to him voluntarily in myriad subtle but crucial ways. Less transient than with guests, and less total than with employees, the relationship is also less truly voluntary and affective than the 'natural' social compact that khans seek to realise. Companionship is a formalised and special case of patronage-based leadership that is consistent, if only partially so, with the autarchic and egalitarian emphases in relationships measured against an idealisation of undifferentiating reciprocity that amounts to giving and getting the same thing. In such a framework, khans emerge as social creditors rather than as lords.

Nearly all Ghilzai participate to some degree at some time in these transactions, as givers as well as receivers. Even the poorest tribesmen can have a guest, so long as he has something of his own to share. Public life takes on the character of competitive jockeying for relative eminence against a background of egalitarianism. Khanly patronage is distinguished in the first instance by combining the entire range of guest, companion, tenant, and servant relations into a coherent whole. Those who would be khan thus surround their households with servants, and their enterprises with tenants and other employees. They variously supplement the enterprises of companions and, as magnets of hospitality, are open to reaching everyone else within their orbits, to feed some people all the time and nearly all people at some time. Ghilzai describe the idealised career of a khan as beginning with attracting many guests through force of character or some special ability. The accumulation of responsibilities requires employment of servants and tenants to support the emerging enterprise; some of the relationships solidify into companionships that provide the core around which free allegiances cluster.

The integration of these piecemeal relations into a coherent whole depends on the outstanding qualities of the man at the centre, but this is not really a whole of a 'tribal' (qoumi, qoumwali) sort until it does not have to be continuously created.

Charisma alone is not enough to make a khan of the patron seeking to make his presence felt publicly beyond his own household. To the extent that a following is but a miscellany of diverse dependants, the patron is not a khan in the fullest sense but merely 'big' (qaland or stur 'massive'), and his following is a mere faction (gund). The 'heavy' (drund) quality which makes a patron incontestably a khan comes from turning patronage to the collective use of a particular constituency that has a sui generis character, and from doing it in terms definitive of that character, such that the 'knot' of the 'tribe' is 'tied'. These predications are important for understanding how khan and khel interact, not simply as chief and lineage or as leader and follower, but in a more complex fashion as mutual contingencies in an emerging dialectic between charisma and legitimacy.

'Tying the Knot of the Tribe'

In a sense that is quite real to Ghilzai, a khan is a self-financed public servant, expending his own wealth for the aggregate good of a community which, if he is to constitute a 'genuine' (rasti, 'correct', or 'right[handed]') khan, is made from a genealogically identifiable portion of the Pakhtun population. The normative quality which makes this more than just a personal following, although it is surely that, transcends mere economics, no matter how subtly made into social relations. To emphasise that a khan is rasti is to invoke the symbolic load of the right hand, which conveys blessed food to the body, in contrast to the left (chap, khin) hand which conveys away waste. Ghilzai say that (mere) man's work is a parody of creation and formless - literally, that it is shit - and explicitly make the point about khans' constructions. It is in turning their knowledge and ability to get things done to the service of a 'natural' or given (even God-given) community of kinsmen, that khans 'tie the knot of the tribe', as a kind of public works.

In this capacity, a khan has no more power to order than he has to tax. Khans do not even actively adjudicate but prefer to leave that vexation to experts in tribal law (narkhi), while confining their own efforts to reconciliation of differences rather than to adjudication. Khans, instead, distinguish themselves from the mass of men by endeavouring to realise an abstracted integrity. They direct their

activities into subsidy rather than command, operating by influence, sounding public opinion, articulating common interests, and persuading on the basis of skills effectively and convincingly deployed. In joining patronage and respect, with all of the ambiguities of service and influence, to a framework of qoum relations, khans actuate the tribe as a public work. The 'knot' of the 'tribe' is comprehensive and exclusive; anything less is mere factionalist pandering to fleeting and partial interests that divide rather than unite men. The crucial 'tying', which for Ghilzai distinguishes genuine (rasti as opposed to sarchapa, 'upside-down' or, literally, 'inverted' from chap, 'left') khans from persons of specialised competence, is not only between tribesmen, but between the tribe and those outside it.

No right of incumbency or of succession institutionalises a khanship, although as a public utility and as an avidly sought prize a particular khanship tends to outlast its incumbent. Some, however, approximate hereditary chieftainships. Two Ghilzai groups are alleged to have such khan khels ('leading lineages'), the Hotak in the Arghandab valley above Kandahar and the Jabar Khel Ahmadzai in the Kabul valley.¹² But that distinction is denied to them by other Ghilzai and seems more plausibly an historical expression of the leading roles played by Hotak against Safavid Persia and the Durrani in the eighteenth century and by the Jabar Khel against British traverse of the Kabul valley in the nineteenth century. A contemporary example of institutionalised khanship is found in the Kharoti Ghilzai,¹³ whose homeland is wedged in the hills between the large and aggressive Suleyman Khel Ghilzai and the Wazir tribes. Kharoti explain their khanship as necessitated by intertribal relations, and it conveys little more authority - in some respects less - than more achieved khanships in other, more flexible settings. Kharoti are relatively few, and this institutionalisation for inter-group dealings has counterparts among the small tribes of the neighbouring Khost valley, just to the north-east of Kharoti, where, in addition, specific endowments of reserved plots (da khano pati), are attached to the office, separate from the private property of the incumbent, to be used for supporting the public expenditures of these tribes.¹⁴ Other Ghilzai reckon these tribes to be more successful in joining the categorical qoum with the institutional character of the kor, although they also suggest that, because these tribes are reacting to larger neighbours, they are on that

account somewhat pathetic.

More significantly, these small Khost tribes are arranged into two composite regional factions, Spingund and Torgund, involving them and small neighbouring groups in the hills around them. This is reminiscent of a tendency in Ghilzai tribes to separate into two major segments around two maximal (loy) khans, and of Barth's account of how Yusufzai Pakhtuns in Swat concentrate their oppositions into two dispersed blocs (dala).¹⁵ People of Khost allege that Spin (white) and TOR (black) alignments are permanent and without genealogical significance, saying that the links are forged 'historically' or that they were insinuated by the British to divide the tribes. In more than a formal sense, these are all versions of the same thing, 'voluntary' associations with respect to agnation commencing beyond the reach of qoumi unity under one 'father'. And it is at this juncture that khans achieve the full significance of their relation to khel as, in Ghilzai parlance, creating each other. Each is, in a sense, the salvation of the other at the point where chaos is reached. Equally, each is the destruction of the other when the match is not achieved.

The structural significance of khans lies in their articulating the constituent family units of tribal society into more or less coherent (replicative) social fields in a fashion that connects those fields to wider spheres of relations with the metropolitan society as well as with other tribes. Village maliks are, by comparison, merely the government's terminus of official communication with the citizenry. It is largely through khans that Pakhtun tribes as such articulate with the government and the metropolitan society. While each tribesman has some connections in the metropolitan commercial and official spheres, khans are disposed to develop special competence to reach the pertinent points bearing on the lives of tribesmen jointly and severally. The 'state', even in its limited manifestation of the national government, is not all of a piece; and the various pieces which would tax, conscript, deliver education and health services, count persons and land, regulate traffic and, most especially, those agencies devoted to 'national' development, all impinge in different ways, at different times, and to different degrees on individual tribesmen. To the extent that khans stand in the way of these piecemeal approaches, or gather them up, they serve to secure 'the tribe' itself on a larger ground. They do this by standing at the intersection of the

tribal and external spheres, controlling or seeking to control or being selected (by both sides) to control the flow from one to the other, by brokering their resources to each other. Khans seek out this brokering role to add to their arsenal of favours, and are sought out in turn by those who find them conveniently sophisticated in both shahri and atrapi ways, indeed more sophisticated than many townsmen and tribesmen themselves.

Thus, to their activities within the tribe, khans add mediation between complementary social fields. No little of a khan's power with respect to his competitors (both other khans and those who would broaden their talents), as well as to his supporters, inheres in what might be summarised as his Kabul Connection; this lends credibility to frequent complaints by the disgruntled against specific khans, that they are 'made' by the government. This had a special plausibility when that government was a regime associated with tribal support and identified itself with the Pakhtun/Pashtun interest, pursued policies of mollification, and appointed local officials often less vigorous than the khans themselves. The histories of many khanships at some point intersect with some form of government sponsorship, usually in the form of royal favour, either from Amanullah for supporting the 1919 war against British India which secured Afghanistan's de jure independence, or from Nadir Shah for supporting the restoration after a Tajik bandit had seized the throne a decade later. But a comparison of the authority and influence of the more blatant creatures of Kabul with those of the more resolutely 'tribal' khans suggests that outside sponsorship is less decisive in creating a khan than in confirming one. Certainly, outside sponsorship alone is not enough; and the system does not, on that account, warrant interpretation as 'feudal', for khans are not the king's men. But it is equally certain that some of the insecurity of khanly position derives from potential outside intervention in local competitions for influence.¹⁶ Being 'made by the government', therefore, refers narrowly to interference in successions and more broadly to any sort of enabling favour from Kabul such as, for example, grants of land or, more recently, favouritism in dispensing development aid.

From Ground to Figure: Qoum into Gund, Atrap into Shahr

Still, relations between tribe and state go beyond mere complementarity into a dialectic on many levels, for two reasons. First, the 'state' is not one thing but many things. Minimally, it is many organs of government that, in bureaucratic fashion, specialise in dealing with limited ranges of matters. So the tribesman confronts a thing of parts, which are often in competition and, in the case of the former monarchy, not all pulling together. While the state, in the form of the national government in the larger context of Afghanistan as a multi-ethnic nation, was largely identified with Pakhtun/Pashtun interests and their expansion,¹⁷ that was not always nor often perceived to be the case in the Ghilzai homelands. Many were forcibly relocated, and most found strangers settled in their midst in a manner hardly to their interests or liking. Even the more positive 'development' projects in Ghilzai country, and the multiplication of subgovernorships (woluswali) which (in the form of parliamentary boroughs) increased Ghilzai representation, were often perceived to have the more insidious design of dividing loyalties, as they did not coincide with local tribal boundaries.

Second, and more important, it is not the government alone which Ghilzai oppose to qoum, but the metropolitan society of which government partakes and which exemplifies primordial heterogeneity in contrast to the encompassing uniformity of qoum, the partial man in contrast to the whole man, situated and fleeting interests jostling each other in contrast to common interests given in eternity and symbolised by the connection of ancestry itself. Ghilzai see the metropolis as inverting the social form of qoum by proceeding from a priori diversity. Shahr is the place of gund at the lowest level, of rulers and ruled, in divisions of labour that are necessarily unequal. It is almost as if tribesmen were paraphrasing Ibn Khaldun, but in reverse, which, in a round-about way, suggests how this frame of reference is unitary and why tribesmen can identify with the state as their agent or as their sponsor, but not with the city.

The transition from kor to qoum - from the hierarchy of the household as an activity system to the equality of the tribe as a state of being - that is effected in khel by the domestication of khans into public servants, is reversed in the transition from qoum as the ground on which social formations

take shape to qoum as a figure on a larger ground. In such a situation, as one of many diversely-originated players with no necessary connection to the others, qoum is self-negating. It is encountered as unique with respect to that which falls outside its purview and, thereby, as a factional (gund) formation. So, as much as hukumat and shahr set the context for tribalism, 'tribes' set the context for organising the extra-tribal as anti-tribal, for locating government and city as factionalising anti-theses of social order as it is conceived by Pakhtuns when they characterise their point of departure as the conjunction of differences.

Such a situation seems to have emerged in Swat, suggesting that it is not the physical 'city' that shahr represents but cosmopolitanism as the anti-thesis of tribalism. Barth described a situation in Swat where Pakhtuns secured by conquest the land that is the ground on which tribal competitions are played out. The autochthonous population was dispossessed, but not displaced, as seems to have happened in parts of Ghilzai country where there is evidence of Pakhtun expansion.¹⁸ Drawing non-Pakhtuns into those competitions as clients - effectively converting the economic dependencies of a jajmani-like system into political capital - conduces to a 'game' of every-man-a-khan. That is, drawing in outsiders of diverse origins degrades the Pakhtun game into a kind of civil war which, with every man's hand against his brother, is the Pakhtun approximation of Hell and the negative side of shahr. Living in less favoured circumstances, Ghilzai immediately recognise the dala (bloc system) of Swat as gundi (factionalism), contrast it to qoumwali (tribalism), and can point to examples of each within their own orbit. It cannot be surprising that an outcome of such situations should be the political emergence of religious figures. For, in a situation of primordial diversity, those speaking for Islam, the largest unity within creation itself, speak over the head of 'tribe' and find an audience when tribalism is mere gundi. Ghilzai point to border villages as the ones with the most, and most obstreperous, mullahs, where akhundzada (descendants of a divine) have plausible claim to precedence within fields of mixed, and often refugee, ancestries.

It is not, however, the mere presence of outsiders that urbanises Pakhtun contexts, but the capacities in which they affect Pakhtuns. Poignantly aware of the threat posed by mullahs and hereditary religious figures, whether quieter sayyids or more

active pirs. Ghilzai often endeavour assiduously to keep them out of tribal affairs for just this reason. Similarly, while some non-Pakhtun tenants, tradesmen and craft specialists are found in Ghilzai country, nowhere outside the bazaar towns do they approach the 80 per cent of the population that Barth reported in Swat.¹⁹ In the Ghilzai atrap, a backwoods compared to Swat and the 'settled districts' along the Indus, such persons are contained either by pressuring fellow-tribesmen into full responsibility for their clients (or into avoiding taking too many), or by making certain indispensable specialists the joint clients of a body of co-proprietors. Mullahs and barbers, who provide essential services that cannot be obtained elsewhere, are thus the only specialists in most Ghilzai communities; and they are supported jointly by its members as their collective clients (hamsaya). Nearly all other specialists are sought on an individual basis in the bazaars of Kabul, Ghazni, Gardez, Kandahar, and in some of the larger, usually non-Pakhtun settlements and government stations, where merchants and craftsmen are brought under official sponsorship as government clients. The shahr comes deep into the countryside in the form of every stranger who overstays his welcome.

Conclusion

To recognise that 'tribe' and 'state' interpenetrate is still only half an analysis, for it is the nature of that interpenetration which is decisive. Tribesmen confront not a monolithic state but a thing of parts on a field of parts, each engaging only part of him. He confronts specific officials who, with diverse other urban-based specialists in trades and services, including religious services, are not interested in the whole tribesman but are charged with or wish to address themselves to - indeed, to define him in terms of - only certain of his capacities. So all such relations are hierarchical and emerge as a contest between the importuning and the recalcitrant, roles which are experienced by both tribesman and official. With each official interested in some roles of all tribesmen but never in all the roles of any tribesman, every tribesman's experience is unique, but all experiences are of a piece as partial. So the 'state', whether in its limited institutional forms or more broadly as an aspect of shahr, takes shape as a confrontation in

the context of a unified scheme which dialectically relates that which distinguishes individuals so that they complement each other and that which unites them as parts of the same thing. And the experience takes shape as various resolutions of an opposition between joined action and joint existence in constructing social relations.

Much as khan and khel mutually realise each other, so do tribe and state, although in an opposite, negative fashion. Each contextualises the other, but such contexts are not fixed, for the process is joined on all levels, from the resolution of fatherhood into brotherhood to the dissolution of brotherhood into hierarchies that are purely situational and without the inner necessity of an encompassing frame. The process is without termination and is manifest in all social relations as a tension between formations predicating diversity and those predicating total continuity of all the parts with the whole, of which tribe (qoum) itself is the primary manifestation. It needs to be emphasised that in this tribalism, and perhaps in others, the 'segmentary organisation' is a phenomenon more profoundly logical, even ontological, than sociological. It is not just an economic or political phenomenon but rather an organiser of these, and better understood as the active subject than as a passive or constituted object. That is to say, the relationship between such a system and what it organises is not necessary but contingent, and has to be established descriptively as a description of predicates for, among the actors themselves, it amounts to a continuous argument whose continuity is literally their own.

The point is important beyond the epistemological status of the subject. There is in the ethnographic literature on the Near East in general, and on South West Asia in particular, a tendency to confound the properties of tribalism with those of pastoral nomadism, to make an equation of tribe with nomad and presume that all nomads are tribally-ordered, which is not the case in Afghanistan,²⁰ or that all tribes are nomadic, which is not even the case in Iran (vide the Kurds). Their frequent coincidence, especially in Iran, leads to a misunderstanding of the tensions between pastoralists and farmers, or those between nomads and administrators, as comprehending those between tribesman and metropolitan. But even this is not the case in Afghanistan. Ghilzai and other Pakhtun tribes are for the most part settled and specialise in wheat farming.

In addition, even nomadic Pakhtun often nomadise from landed bases, and they usually migrate to pastures they own.²¹ A number of specific, substantive confusions result from failing to make clear that tribalism and nomadism are not the same thing, in fact not even the same phenomenon; but all of these turn more generally on a methodological confusion inherent in searches for external causes of tribal formations as adaptations, under the presumption that what they are adaptations to consists in something (else) more stable than tribal formations themselves. This is, again, emphatically not the empirical case with Pakhtuns, where 'the state' or states they confront are no less evanescent than their tribalism, and not only no less emergent but, as argued here, emergent from the same social ontology.

Moreover, there is a continuity between these cultivating tribesmen and their nomadic cousins in all respects save their balances of herding to cultivating; and together they constitute the main body of the citizenry of Afghanistan. That 'state' has taken their ethonym for itself and has its historical roots in their ascendancy over certain of their neighbours, while it is circumscribed by the ascendancy of others of their neighbours over some of them. It is in their interests as much as in anyone's, and more than for most, that the government of Afghanistan exists and functions. This leads to another easy misinterpretation, that the state is a creature of Pakhtun - or rather of Muhammadzai Durrani Pashtun - tribalism. It is partially such a creature, historically and politically, but it is not merely that. While it secures some Pakhtun interests and facilitates some Pakhtun expansion, it hinders others. And from the time of the first Afghan monarch, that state has sought to break up tribes. The state has a life of its own and the 'nation' a constituency of its own; and Afghan nationalists are not necessarily Pakhtun chauvinists or vice versa. There is a body of persons committed to the government by employment, circumstance, and sympathy with its goals. Others would grasp the apparatus of the state for their own, individual ends. Many of these persons are tribesmen as well, especially in the officers' corps and the higher civil service, which have been largely Pakhtun/Pashtun preserves. Much tribalist support for, or acquiescence to, the state rests on the very mundane fact that it provides in these agencies a system of indoor relief for supernumerary tribesmen, and indeed

realisation of this by many non-Pakhtun is one of the more important aspects of this state. But the state becomes an instrument for pressing the interests of Pakhtun/Pashtun or of some of them, only within a context recognised as one of primordial diversity, where the point of departure is fundamentally atomistic. Conceptually opposed to tribalism, the 'state' is in part a tool of tribalism only when that tribalism is itself partial.

Not unexpectedly, considerable confusion and ambiguity obtain on the ground in 'tribe-and-state' relations in Afghanistan. A kind of word-game ensues over identifications with the tribe, with the state, with both and often, especially in the case of non-Pakhtun/Pashtun minorities, with neither. Some persons manage these shifts of reference easily; others, especially the more successful khans who survive the contradictory pulls of tribal and national associations,²² trade on the contradictions and flourish in the ambiguities that allow them to play more than one game at a time, which, to Ghilzai, is the bravura performance. Others manage less easily, finding themselves forced to choose between being nationalists and being tribesmen, between loyalty or rebellion (but to which cause?), between upward or outward mobility. These are not impossible choices: people have to make them all the time. But they are difficult, and making them all the time can be profoundly demoralising. Ethics that become too situational to live by, or too abstract to live with, first become more aesthetic than ethical, and then mere idioms that are both corrupted as forms and bankrupt as morals. It is likely that just such sneaking realisations underlie some of the mixed feelings harboured by many Near Easterners toward both tribe and state in their various manifestations - which one observer has characterised as a paradoxical ethos of insecurity that finds peril in refuge.²³

That, plus the fervour of exclusive enthusiasms as well as the completeness with which they reverse, rests in turn on the subjective, hence definitive, fact that these forms do not function, and cannot be explained, economically or politically, but as profoundly thoroughgoing coimplicates of a logical, even ontological, scheme. It is not as specialists or as outsiders that Ghilzai tribesmen confront 'the state', either specifically as government and its agents or more generally as metropolitan social forms; not do they confront one another as disjunctive systems. That engagement takes place on many

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levels, linked in a fashion which, hidden from our constructions on what 'tribe' and 'state' are, makes their relationship problematic. That problematic (subject-object relationship) is, for Ghilzai, quite different from what it is for others, and for this reason an understanding of its terms and predicates is essential for a comprehension not only of what that relationship is but of what, in fact, is being related.

NOTES

1. This chapter utilises fieldwork conducted in Afghanistan between November 1971 and January 1974 with the support of U.S. National Science Foundation grant no. GS-30275. For comments on earlier drafts of this argument, I am grateful to Fredrik Barth, Andrew Strathern and Malcolm Yapp.

2. L. Dupree, *Afghanistan* (Princeton University Press, 1973).

3. O. Caroe, *The Pathans 550 B.C. - A.D. 1957* (MacMillan, London, 1958); V. Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan* (Stanford University Press, 1969); W.K. Fraser-Tytler, *Afghanistan* (Oxford University Press, 3rd ed., 1967); Dupree, *Afghanistan*.

4. I have in mind not so much the Anglo-Afghan contests of the century prior to 1947 as two contexts which frame our knowledge of them. The first is the intellectual setting of utilitarianism, brilliantly described by E. Stokes, *The English Utilitarians in India* (Oxford University Press, 1959), which feeds subtly into British interpretations of political history. The second, and perhaps the more profound for being more inchoate, is the Scottish background of so many frontier writers, beginning with M. Elphinstone, *An Account of the Kingdom of Caubul, etc.* (London, 1815), whose work was the source of much subsequently and whose intuitive grasp of the ambivalence of tribal leaders may owe much to his eighteenth-century Scottish upbringing.

5. E.g. A. Cohen, *Arab Border-Villages in Israel* (Manchester University Press, 1965); F.I. Khuri, *From Village to Suburb: Order and Change in Greater Beirut* (University of Chicago Press, 1976).

6. E.g. P.C. Salzman, 'Ideology and change in Middle Eastern tribal societies', *Man (NS)*, 13 (1978), pp. 618-37.

7. See J.W. Anderson, 'There are no Khans anymore', *MEJ*, 32 (1978), pp. 167-83.

8. A more extended discussion of the ontologic of this construct in the setting of interpersonal relations is in my 'Social structure and the veil', *Anthropos*, 77 (1982), pp. 397-420.

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9. A.S. Ahmed, *Millenium and Charisma among Pathans* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1976); F. Barth, *Political Leadership among Swat Pathans* (Athlone, London, 1959); Elphinstone, *Account*; P. Mayne, *The Narrow Smile* (Allen and Unwin, London, 1955).
10. J.W. Anderson, 'Tribe and community among Ghilzai Pashtun', *Anthropos*, 70 (1975), pp. 588, 593.
11. Dupree, *Afghanistan*, pp. 181-92 et passim.
12. *Gazetteer of Afghanistan, Part IV, Kabul* (General Staff of India, Simla, 1910), pp. 148, 509.
13. *Gazetteer*, p. 286.
14. Cf. W. Steul, 'Eigentumsprobleme innerhalb Paschtunischen Gemeinschaft', Heidelberg, Südasien-Institut (mimeo); H.J. Wald, *Landnutzung und Siedlung der Paschtunen im Becken von Khost* (Hain, Opladen, 1969); H.C. Wylly, *From the Black Mountain to Waziristan* (MacMillan, London, 1912).
15. Barth, *Leadership*.
16. While H. Kakar, *Afghanistan: a Study in Internal Political Developments 1880-1896* (Punjab Educational Press, Lahore/Kabul, 1971), indicates that this seemed particularly the case in past struggles over national integration, his sources were documents and intelligence collected by British political agents. Contemporary evidence is not so categorical.
17. Cf. K. Ferdinand, 'Nomadic expansion and commerce in central Afghanistan', *Folk*, 4 (1962), pp. 123-59; Kakar, *Afghanistan*; N. Tapper, chapter 7 below; J.W. Anderson and R.F. Strand (eds.), *Ethnic Processes and Intergroup Relations in Contemporary Afghanistan*, Occasional Paper no. 15 of the Afghanistan Council (Asia Society, New York, 1978).
18. Barth, *Leadership*: D. Balland, 'Vieux sédentaires Tadjik et immigrants Pachtoun dans le sillon de Ghazni (Afghanistan oriental)', *Bull. Assoc. de Géographes Français*, 51 (1974), pp. 171-80.
19. Barth, *Leadership*, p. 30.
20. Cf. T. Barfield, 'The impact of Pashtun immigration on nomadic pastoralism in Northeast Afghanistan', in Anderson and Strand, *Ethnic Processes*, pp. 26-34.
21. Ferdinand, 'Nomadic expansion'; id., 'Nomadism in Afghanistan', in L. Foldes (ed.), *Viehwirtschaft und Hirtenkultur* (Akademiai Kiado, Budapest, 1969).
22. Cf. Anderson, 'There are no Khans'.
23. J. Gulick, *The Middle East: An Anthropological Perspective* (Goodyear, Pacific Palisades, 1976).

Chapter 4

TRIBES AND STATES IN THE KHYBER, 1838-42

Malcolm Yapp

Introduction

Commonly, in the historical experience of the last two hundred years, it has not been the model relationship of tribe and state which has been most familiar, but that of a plurality of tribes and states. For that bundle of social, economic and political relationships, to which we give the name 'tribe', has declined (at least in numerical significance) under the pressures of a modernising world and has survived most successfully in those remote and difficult regions which often form the frontiers of states and where international borders and the burgeoning international system have offered possibilities of manoeuvre which have been exploited by tribes in their efforts to resist the encroachments of governments. Such a region provides the setting for this paper.

The Khyber Pass is one of the many passes which facilitate communication through the range of mountains which separate the Indian sub-continent from Afghanistan. Its celebrity is due to the circumstance that it presented the fewest physical obstacles to direct communication between Peshawar and Jalalabad. For merchants employing laden animals this physical superiority was of less consequence than the human difficulties represented by the tribes which controlled the Pass, and such merchants often preferred other, physically more difficult, but more peaceable routes. But for governments, using armies which required wheeled transport, there was no easy alternative to the Khyber and, willy-nilly, they were drawn into a close and uncomfortable relationship with the tribal peoples.

Where the series of passes known as the Khyber begins and ends is and was a matter for dispute.

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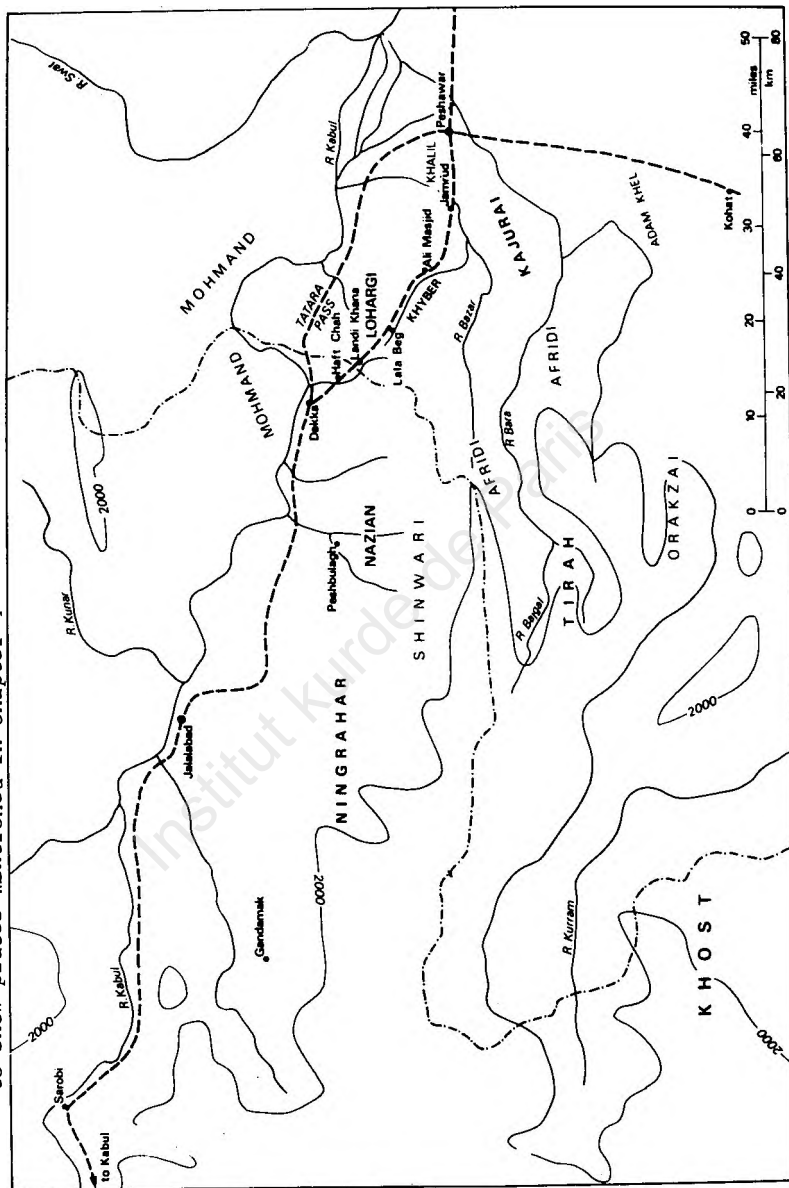
For the purposes of this chapter, I have chosen a narrow definition - from Jamrud to Landi Khana, a distance, depending on the route chosen, of no more than 25 miles.¹ In effect this decision reduces the number of tribal confederations to be considered to three: the Afridi, the Shinwari, and the Orakzai, although as will be seen the matter cannot be simplified so easily, for these confederations were themselves involved in relations with others which, though they had no direct contact with the Khyber, were able to exercise an important indirect influence upon the Pass.²

These confederations belonged to the group of Pashto-speaking tribal peoples known to the British as Pathans, although they used the term 'Afghan' to describe themselves. The main features of their political, social and economic organisation were similar. It will be convenient here to describe the Afridi and reserve an account of the Orakzai and the Shinwari until later.

The Afridi inhabited the spurs which formed the northern and eastern flanks of the Safid Koh range. They were semi-nomadic. Their summer residences were in the high valleys of the Bara, Bajgal and Tirah; in winter most of the men dwelled in earthen caves cut into the hillsides of the lower Bara and Bazar valleys and Khyber itself and in the plains of Bagiara and Kajurai. They, or mainly their women-folk, raised grain crops, especially rice, and they maintained herds of cattle and flocks of sheep and goats. Apart from a few grass ropes and nets they had almost no manufactures and sought these in their principal market, Peshawar, offering rice in exchange. Their commercial links with Peshawar and their presence in winter in Kajurai made them more accessible to state influence than might otherwise have been the case, and also gave importance to the chiefs or Arbabs of the Khalil Pathans, who were settled in the Peshawar valley near the foothills and through whose lands the mountain Pathans passed on their way to market. The Khalil Arbabs became important intermediaries between the state and the Afridi.

Structurally the Afridi were divided into eight tribes: the Kuki, Sipah, Kamar, Kambar, Malikdin, Zakha, Aka and Adam Khels. Of these the Adam Khel, whose lands lay along the Kohat Pass, were of no concern to the British in the period under review, although to the government at Lahore they were of considerable importance, and Lahore government policy towards the Afridi was framed chiefly with the Adam

MAP 3: Sketch-map of the Khyber and surrounding districts, to show places mentioned in chapter 4



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Khel in mind, a circumstance which produced conflict between Lahore and Britain. The Aka Khel may also be disregarded because they controlled no territory in Khyber itself. It was with the first six tribes that British transactions took place; each controlled a short section of Khyber from east to west in the order in which they were listed above. The Afridi were all Sunni Muslims; they were divided into the two factions of Gar (Kuki, Kamar and Adam) and Samal (Sipah, Kamar, Malikdin, Zakha and Aka).

Each of the tribes was divided into a number of clans. It is unnecessary to list these clans in detail, but it will be useful to mention those of the Zakha Khel, as the inter-clan rivalries of that tribe were to play some part in the events which are to be described. Different authorities list varying numbers of Zakha Khel clans, but the account of Bellew, which is usually accepted, gives eight: the Shan, Zaodin (Ziya al-Din), Paendah, Khasrozai (Khasrogi), Mohib, Nasir al-Din, Bari and Pakhey Khels. Of these the Pakhey was the principal clan and included in its subdivisions the two men who were recognised as chiefs of the whole Zakha Khel tribe, Allah Dad and Fayztalab. It will be evident however that their status did not enable the chiefs to command obedience from other clans. Amongst the Afridi, as among other confederations, important decisions were usually made by elders who met in councils, or jirgas. Such jirgas might be held at various levels of organisation. Religious leaders also played some part in the formation of decisions.

This chapter also considers only a limited period, that of the first Anglo-Afghan War, when three states were involved in the area: the restored Sadozai monarchy of Shah Shuja al-Mulk, in whose territories the Khyber was nominally included; the Sikh state of Lahore, wherein lay Peshawar; and the East India Company's government of British India, whose presence was accounted for by the circumstance that it was the principal upholder of the Sadozai monarchy. My main concern is, indeed, with the British part in these affairs, and the central character is Frederick Mackeson (1807-53), the Political Agent at Peshawar, who was in charge of the Khyber from 1839-42. For Britons this was their first close experience of the Pathan tribes and of the North West Frontier region. In the years to come Britons and Pathans were to become deeply involved in each other's affairs and the British concept of tribe was to receive a new and permanent colouring as a result of the experience.

British Images of 'Tribe'

There is neither time nor space to explore here the evolution of the image which the word 'tribe' conjured up in British minds at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Neither in its Biblical nor in its classical usage did the term have the derogatory significance which it subsequently acquired. It was only with the sixteenth-century expansion of Europe into the Americas and Africa that the association of tribes with a more primitive order of mankind began, and only in the Enlightenment of the eighteenth century that this was formalised into that concept of progress which set tribal peoples outside the pale of civil society. It was then supposed that the natural course of human development was a progression to higher levels of social, economic and political organisation, which could be equated with civilisation; and that those peoples who remained grouped in tribes represented an earlier, lower form of life, left behind by the march of history and destined to be redeemed and refashioned by the intervention of superior forces. The epithet most commonly found in association with the word 'tribe' was 'savage'. To this judgement the Evangelical revival of the early nineteenth century added a religious authority.

The early experience of the Britons in India, in their dealings with such tribal peoples as those of Chota Nagpur and the Bhils of Khandesh, did nothing to alter that view. The Bhils, who were incorporated into British territory in 1818, were described as hunters, plunderers and cattle stealers, who lived off the toils of the cultivators of the plains (and in doing so deprived the Company of valuable revenues). They were considered to be of low intelligence and poor physical development and to be given to superstition and alcoholic excess - in short, degraded beings, lacking any sense of right and wrong and altogether reduced to the level of animals.

The mixture of coercion and conciliation which the British employed against the Bhils came to be the accepted policy of British India for dealing with tribal peoples. On the one hand, it involved punitive military operations to impress the tribes with the superiority of British power and the inescapable retribution which would follow breaches of its rules; and, on the other hand, it embraced the offer of pensions and jobs - in particular, employment in the police and in irregular military units. Such units as the Bhil Light Infantry Corps both

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served as cheap, coercive instruments for use against recalcitrant tribesmen, and also functioned as civilising agents, by teaching habits of obedience and discipline, and by inculcating an understanding of a system of authority based on contract and independent of ascriptive tribal authority. At a later stage were added the encouragement of settled agriculture and the provision of schools as further civilising agents, although it was recognised that civil society owed more to the sword than to the plough or the pen. Throughout this programme of moral redemption, an essential feature was seen to be the constant, guiding hand of a British officer, who was to be in close, personal contact with the tribal peoples, winning their respect and trust, and who was not to be trammelled by the burden of regulations thought more suitable for advanced communities.

The success of this policy in converting treacherous savages into worthy citizens was subsequently claimed to be one of the major achievements of British rule in India. In its final form the British view of tribes was stood on its head and there developed the cult of the redeemed savage or laundered tribe, a neo-Rousseauesque view in which the tribesman, purged of those base practices which he had developed in the past, was to be insulated by British officers from contact with the corruption of Indian civil society and kept in a state of perfect childhood innocence.³

From the beginning Britons in the Khyber found it difficult to make this image of tribal peoples and this notion of how to deal with them fit into what they observed. True, the Pathans were believed to possess many of the characteristics attributed to other tribal peoples: they were perceived to be thieves and murderers, to be treacherous and unprincipled, having, as Bellew put it, sunk to the lowest grade of civilisation, bordering upon the savage.⁴ And yet there were features of their life which did not fit the accepted picture: their physical appearance was striking and their independent way of life strongly impressed Britons who found distasteful the submissiveness to authority which seemingly characterised the people of Bengal. So Elphinstone made the point that, whereas to the Briton who came to the Pathan country from Europe the tribes appeared as savages, given over to anarchy, to the Briton who came from India they possessed more admirable qualities.⁵ And, of course, the Pathans possessed one other attribute which distinguished them from other tribal peoples: they had firearms and could use them

efficiently. In the Khyber the technological gap that prevailed elsewhere was almost closed.

The Khyber between Afghan and Sikh States

Before considering British management of the Khyber during the First Anglo-Afghan War, it will be useful to consider the relations of the Kabul and Lahore governments with the area. To the Sadozai monarchy in Afghanistan (1747-1818) the Khyber was not a border territory but a line of internal communications. The richest part of the Durrani Empire lay east of the Khyber, and year after year the Afghan armies marched through the Khyber to concentrate at Peshawar for a new campaign. To obtain regular, easy passage through the Pass, the Durrani paid allowances to the tribes but also employed other devices to ensure their support. The Sadozai could appeal to a common religion, they could offer employment on lucrative campaigns, they could provide rent-free lands in areas in which the Pathans were subject to closer scrutiny, and they could form marriage alliances with the tribes. Indeed, for the Sadozai the Khyber provided a refuge in time of need, and they were not excluded from Tirah itself. The situation changed when the Durrani monarchy became engulfed in civil war and eventually collapsed in 1818. After that date the Sadozai ruled in Herat alone, the Durrani lands east of the Indus were lost, and the remaining territories were divided among various Barakzai rulers. The Khyber ceased to be an important route for government communications and merchants found other routes. The Pass then became a boundary between the possessions of the Barakzai of Jalalabad and Kabul on the one side and those of the Barakzai of Peshawar on the other. Allowances for transit were no longer paid to the tribes. Nevertheless, the Barakzai retained, in their situation as border managers, some of the advantages previously enjoyed by the Sadozai rulers, notably in their ability to manipulate religious and tribal links, as it were, from the inside; for example, the Barakzai not infrequently passed their summers in Tirah.⁶

The situation was considerably altered by the advent of the state of Lahore under the rule of Ranjit Singh. From 1818 onwards there were repeated Sikh interventions in the area west of the Indus. From 1823 the Barakzai of Peshawar paid tribute to the Sikhs. In consequence the Barakzai ability to manipulate religious appeals was diminished, and

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from 1827 until 1831 opposition to the Sikhs in the Pathan lands was led by the puritanical religious leader Sayyid Ahmad of Bareilly, whose followers came from India but who also attracted considerable tribal support. Sayyid Ahmad included in his attacks the Barakzai of Peshawar, whom he accused of sacrificing Islam by serving the Sikhs. But in the end his activities caused resentment among his Yusufzai followers, who deserted his cause, and in 1831 he was killed in battle against the Sikhs.⁷ Thereafter a change took place in Sikh policy in the regions west of the Indus; tributary rulers were increasingly replaced by direct rule from Lahore. In 1834 it was the turn of Peshawar: Sultan Muhammad Khan, the Barakzai ruler was replaced by a Sikh governor, Hari Singh Nalwa, who began to pursue an aggressive policy against the tribes, even threatening an advance on Jalalabad or Kabul.⁸

With the elimination of the Barakzai of Peshawar, the Khyber became a frontier area interposed between the territories of the Barakzai ruler of Kabul, Dost Muhammad, and those of the Sikhs. Whether Dost Muhammad's concern was to protect his territories against a possible Sikh invasion, or whether he hoped to gain control of Peshawar, or whether, as seems most likely, he was merely responding to the importunities of the many Afghan refugees from Peshawar who crowded into Kabul and to whom he was obliged to pay pensions, is uncertain. At all events, he made three attempts which could be interpreted as efforts to alter the situation in Peshawar. In 1835 dissension among the Barakzai forced him to retire from the Khyber before any engagement took place; in 1836 his army was again assembled for no result; and in 1837 a clash with Sikh forces took place at Jamrud, at the eastern end of the Khyber, in which Hari Singh was killed. Probably Dost Muhammad had not intended that any battle should take place - indeed one story has it that the Afghan commander was obliged to fight in consequence of an Afridi threat that if he did not do so they would go over to the Sikhs.⁹

In the result Dost Muhammad acquired new entanglements. He built a new fort at Ali Masjid in the narrowest part of the Khyber and placed a permanent garrison in it, and he was forced to pay allowances to the Khyber tribes, who at first resented the presence of his troops but subsequently acquiesced in the situation. The allowances were not generous and even after Jamrud amounted to no more than £2,000 a year. But with his troops, these

modest payments, and his ability to use tribal and religious appeals and to present himself as the protector of the Khyberis against the Sikhs, Dost Muhammad was able, for ordinary purposes, to acquire a satisfactory degree of influence in the area.

Following the battle of Jamrud there was also a change in Sikh policy: the belligerent methods of Hari Singh were abandoned, at least for the time being, and the policy of Lahore assumed a more defensive aspect. A mixture of threats and conciliatory gestures were offered to Dost Muhammad to try to induce him to abandon his greater pretensions and to make peace, and orders were issued to win over the Khyber tribes. Under the new arrangements a more generous role was accorded to the Peshawar Barakzai, who had continued to live on the rent-free lands, but who were now employed more extensively as managers of the frontier under the Sikhs, or, to be more precise, under the so-called Jammu faction which had great influence in the Lahore government and which possessed extensive lands in the area. The Sikhs also employed as intermediaries the Khalil Arbabs mentioned above.

The British in Kabul: Mackeson Appointed to the Khyber

It was at this point that, for reasons which do not concern us, the East India Company resolved to replace the Barakzai rulers of Kabul and Kandahar with the Sadozai Shah Shuja al-Mulk and to extend a species of protectorate over Afghanistan.¹⁰ The legal instrument of this adventure was a Tripartite Treaty between the Company, Shah Shuja and the Sikhs, which was in turn founded upon an earlier agreement made between Shah Shuja and the Sikhs. By the treaty the Sikhs apparently secured recognition of their claims in the frontier areas, although these subsequently became a matter of dispute between Britain and Lahore, and there eventually developed a strong movement among British officers who were concerned with the restored Sadozai monarchy to exclude the Sikhs from the regions west of the Indus and to attach these regions to Afghanistan.

At the risk of confusing the issues by moving ahead too rapidly, it may be worth pointing out here that an important aspect of the differences that arose between the two states of Britain and Lahore concerned their attitudes to the tribes. To the British the Khyber tribes appeared as subjects of

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Afghanistan and as groups to be conciliated because of the need for the use of their territory for communications between India and Afghanistan. To the Sikhs the tribes appeared as a border problem, either to be propitiated through the agency of their Barakzai or Khalil subjects, or to be coerced by various devices employed by the ruthless Italian Governor of Peshawar, General Avitabile. Avitabile asserted that the Peshawar valley was his business and that Britain's concern was with the Pass alone. But the Afridi themselves were not to be divided in this manner; they had economic links with Peshawar and some of the Kuki Khel even lived outside the Pass in the Peshawar plain. Accordingly, when Avitabile harassed them with demands for revenue and introduced one of those reverse blockades which were to become so characteristic a feature of British frontier management, the Afridi threatened to close the Pass to Britain unless Avitabile desisted; and the British were obliged to put pressure on the Lahore government to comply with their demands. In the process Mackeson enunciated the extraordinary doctrine that Avitabile had no right to take any measures against Shah Shuja's subjects, but that Shuja was not responsible for crimes committed by his own subjects, on the grounds that they paid no revenue and gave little allegiance.¹¹ For the Afridi, agreement not to commit crimes within the Pass was matched by Mackeson's agreement not to interfere with their conduct elsewhere. The British also strongly objected to the activities of the Peshawar Barakzai, who operated within a tribal framework and were consequently accused of giving refuge and aid to the enemies of the Shah. British and Sikhs commonly found themselves supporting rival factions within tribes.

In the relationship between tribe and state it is a common experience that the state finds democratic forms an inconvenience and wishes to create a more authoritarian form of tribal government which will enable it to fix responsibility for the behaviour of the tribe upon some individual. But this observation should not be generalised into a law governing the relations between tribe and state. It is true that the British in their operations in the Khyber between 1839 and 1842 sought hierarchical structures, but it is not the case that the Afghan and Sikh states desired to promote similar developments. Whether a state seeks to control a tribe by creating a more authoritarian structure, or whether it prefers to proceed by fostering disintegration or

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co-operation, or whether it prefers to work through fine manipulation, depends upon its purposes (defensive or aggressive), its power and resources, and, it will be argued later, its self-image.

As part of the operations to set Shuja on his throne, a diversionary movement in the Khyber was planned in 1838. The main British forces were to march via the Bolan Pass and Kandahar, a route chosen in order to minimise the role of the Sikhs in the business, it being thought that their presence would be damaging to the reputation of Shuja in the eyes of Afghans.¹² To prepare the diversionary movement, Shuja's eldest son, Muhammad Timur, was sent to Peshawar with instructions to conciliate the Khyber tribes. A British agent, Dr. P.B. Lord, was also sent there with £5,000 to distribute in bribes and many proclamations. 'I'm sick of seeing them', he wrote,

You'd laugh if you heard my man directing a party of Khyberees gathering in an old Masjeed to read the Proclamation. They spent two days over it discussing every paragraph and the end was that they could not decide whether the Firingees were about to give the country to Shah Sooja or Runjeet Singh.¹³

What the Khyber tribes thought of Lord would be equally interesting. His largesse acquired many supporters for Shuja but, according to another British observer, they were all men without influence.¹⁴ They did not include the most powerful man in the Khyber, Khan Bahadur Khan, malik (chief) of the Malikdin Khel Afridi.

When Lord's superior, Claude Wade, arrived to take charge he decided to test the worth of Lord's bought men by asking them to take the fort of Ali Masjid. They refused and he discharged most of them.¹⁵ Wade, who for many years had been the leading British agent on the frontier, had hoped for the leading role in the Afghan expedition, and was very disappointed to be placed in charge of a diversionary operation. He constantly pressed for the Khyber operations to be given greater importance but was refused by his government.¹⁶ It was important to him, therefore, to achieve some notable success in the Khyber, and he was decidedly aggrieved when, despite all the payments made, despite the successes of British arms elsewhere, and despite all the promises given by the Khyberis, the Malikdin Khel and the Kuki Khel under their chief Abd al-Rahman opposed

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the British advance with arms. In July 1839 Wade and his forces, supported by the Sikhs, were obliged to force their way through the Pass.¹⁷

The military success and the retreat of Dost Muhammad's forces brought some improvement in the situation. The maliks of the Zakha Khel and some of the Shinwari accepted payment for protecting the Pass. But Wade was still obliged to place troops under British command in Ali Masjid, and other Afridi remained unreconciled and soon began to harass convoys passing through the Khyber. Wade blamed everyone for his misfortunes - the Sikhs for failing to co-operate, Shuja for not exerting himself to win the support of the Afridi and Shinwari maliks whom Wade took to Kabul to meet their new ruler, and, by implication, his own government for not supporting him adequately. But most of all he blamed the Khyber maliks, and on his return through the Khyber he made no effort to meet them. Instead he advocated a tough policy. No payments should be made, the existing chiefs should be overthrown and replaced by Shuja's own supporters, and the tribes taught a severe lesson by British military power. The Pass should be guarded by troops under British control; there could be no reliance on the Khyberis to keep it open.¹⁸

Britain, however, had no intention of embarking upon so drastic and expensive a policy as Wade recommended. Wade was blamed for having missed the opportunity to conciliate the Khyber tribes, and a new man was put in charge of relations with them. This was Wade's former assistant, Frederick Mackeson, who had already been involved in the abortive negotiations which preceded Wade's advance in July 1839.

Mackeson was thirty-two when he was appointed to the charge of the Khyber, a former Bengal Native Infantry Officer who had transferred to political duties some five years previously and had served since then mainly on the Indus. After 1849 he was to acquire a significant reputation for his frontier wisdom when he became Commissioner for Peshawar; he learned his trade between 1839 and 1842.¹⁹

Mackeson was appointed to take charge of the Khyber in October 1839 by William Macnaghten, the British Envoy with Shah Shuja. Mackeson and Macnaghten held discussions at Kabul before his instructions were issued.²⁰ Mackeson was advised to adopt the method tried successfully (it was said) in India and the Bolan, of 'conciliating and enlisting the wild tribes whose occupation was formerly plunder'. He was to disband the inefficient levies

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recruited by Wade at Peshawar and replace them by a new corps of Khyber levies recruited from the tribes of the Pass. It was thought that members of the Kuki Khel, who had already been enlisted, would make an excellent nucleus, but other Afridi Khels should also be employed, as well as Shinwari and Orakzai. The new corps should have the duty of guarding the Pass and should have uniforms, traditional weapons and elementary drill and discipline when possible. Its European officers would be drawn from those presently in Wade's levies. In short, Mackeson was to apply the Bhil formula to the Pathans.

Before Mackeson could make a start on these longer-term projects, he had to reach some agreement with the Khyber tribes, who had now burst into violent action against the British. In late October a series of incidents took place. The Malikdin Khel attacked Ali Masjid on the 24th, and on the 27th they over-ran a post garrisoned by Muslim auxiliaries employed by the Sikhs, killed 400 of them, and closed the Pass. Although Sikh forces re-opened the Pass on 30 October there were continued attacks on supply columns. On 10 November a body of troops which had escorted supplies to Ali Masjid was attacked while returning through the Pass, and Mackeson lost all his personal baggage, an unfortunate introduction to his new empire. The Malikdin Khel were the most active in these attacks, but other tribes also contributed, and when the commandant of Ali Masjid, Captain J. Ferris, called on the supposedly friendly Zakha Khel for help, he received none.²¹

Mackeson was forced to buy peace expensively. It has been mentioned that Dost Muhammad's payments after Jamrud rose to about £2,000 per annum. Wade had offered £4,000 but the maliks had refused this offer. Now, after lengthy negotiation, Mackeson was forced to pay £8,000. The maliks of the Malikdin and Kuki Khels were now given the same sum (approximately £1,600) as the Zakha Khel maliks and those Shinwari who immediately bordered the Pass. A further £1,600 was allotted to all other tribes. Khan Bahadur Khan also received a personal allowance of £200.²² Still the tribes were not satisfied, and the whole history of the next three years may be written in terms of a constant effort by the Khyberis to increase their allowances. At the beginning of January 1840 a further sum of £800 was added to the allowances of Khan Bahadur Khan and Abd al-Rahman Khan of the Kuki Khel. Mackeson proposed to take it out of the shares of the others, but Macnaghten told him to pay it as an extra sum.²³ But there were

still others to be satisfied, as we shall see when we consider the role of the Orakzai and the Shinwari.

At this stage, however, it may be convenient to describe the general organisation and duties of Mackeson's office.²⁴ In general Mackeson acted as intermediary between the British, Sikh and Afghan governments and the Khyber tribes. His poor official relations with the Sikh Government in Peshawar have already been mentioned; Mackeson was one of the strongest advocates of the exclusion of the Sikhs from the region. In his relations with the Government which he nominally served, that of Shah Shuja, he was assisted by an agent sent by the Shah, Abd al-Rahim Khan Malazai, and he was also able to call upon the services of a similar agent who worked with the Political Agent in Jalalabad. He made frequent use of these agents in negotiations with the Khyber tribes. Mackeson also used the Khalil Arbabs, although he says little about them in his despatches and he may have been uncertain about their allegiance because of their close connection with the Sikhs. Mackeson also employed other individuals with the tribes. It is, however, impossible to determine what influence these various agents had upon British policy and it seems likely that Mackeson made his own decisions based upon information received from several local sources.

Mackeson himself described his duties as follows. First, to issue passports to travellers between India and Afghanistan. Second, to be the medium for dealings between the Afghan tribes and the Sikh authorities in Peshawar, and to collect information about Sikh activities west of the Indus. Third, and this is the part which principally concerns this chapter, to superintend the Khyber, Orakzai, Afridi, Mohmand, Shinwari and Bajauri tribes and possibly others, and to look after the Khyber Pass. In effect this meant maintaining relations with all the tribes living in an area sixty miles square. Mackeson was also responsible for the collection of tolls in the Khyber and the maintenance of posts there (at Ali Masjid, Jamrud, Haft Chah and Landi Khana) and for the construction of roads and wells. Road construction had been begun by workers recruited by Wade and this work was continued under Mackeson. In direct charge of the work was Mackeson's cousin, Philip Mackeson, and it was the civilian Philip, and not Frederick, who was responsible for what came to be known as Mackeson's road, which provided a shorter gun road of seven miles from the eastern mouth of the Pass to Ali Masjid,

avoiding the length route which followed the bed of the stream as it swung southwards.

Mackeson had an officiating assistant, Lieutenant Caulfield, who went to Kabul on sick leave in July 1840, leaving his duties to be assumed by the surgeon, Dr Reid. In December Mackeson got a replacement in the person of the well-known Captain Colin Mackenzie, but Mackenzie too went off to Kabul on sick leave and was caught up in the rising there in November 1841. Reid again took over as assistant, and a new surgeon, Dr Richie, was appointed. In December 1841 Mackeson received another eminent assistant in the person of Henry Lawrence. The strain on Mackeson himself, however, was very great, and his health suffered badly. He repeatedly asked for a transfer to a colder climate and hoped to get the post of Political Agent in the Kohistan of Kabul, but Macnaghten would not release him, believing him to be indispensable at Peshawar.²⁵

Mackeson's Policies for Controlling the Tribes

In pursuance of his instructions, Mackeson formed two military units, the Jezailchi Regiment and the Khyber Rangers. The former, commanded by Captain Joseph Ferris and with its headquarters first at Dakka and subsequently at Peshbulaq, supplied garrisons for Ali Masjid and other posts in the Pass and bodies of troops for escort duties through the Pass.²⁶ Its strength was nominally 1,000, it was armed in traditional fashion, and military law was not introduced, disputes being settled by councils of Pathan officers. Ferris commented that the Pathan officers were not very good. It was not recruited from the Afridi and Shinwari who inhabited the Pass, but from other Pathan tribes: Laghmani, Bajauri and, especially, Yusufzai.

Afridi were recruited into the other military unit, the Khyber Rangers, which, despite its name, did not operate in the Khyber proper but was stationed further west at Gandamak and was used for escort and guard duties along the stretch of territory around Jalalabad.²⁷ The size and organisation of the Khyber Rangers was similar to that of the Jezailchis although the number of NCOs was much higher. It was recruited from Orakzai, Wazir, Mohmand and Shinwari, but mainly from Afridi, who supplied well over half of the recruits. The Malikdin and Kambar Khels provided the greatest number of these. The greatest problem was to keep

recruits, since most deserted or took their discharge after only a few months.²⁸ The commander, Captain H.P. Burn, was disgusted with his command. He concluded one report with the words 'Such are the men, without exaggeration, I have the satisfaction to command. I have no confidence in them and shall have none as long as they continue the most disheartening system of quitting the regiment after a few months' service.'²⁹ Neither he nor his adjutant, Lieut. Hillersden, spoke Pashto and they could communicate with their men only through interpreters. Macnaghten, however, was not disheartened by this dismal catalogue: the Rangers, he argued, were quite useful for local duties and their poor service record was better than that of the Bhils at a similar stage. He even took comfort from the high turnover in men because it meant, he thought, the wider dissemination of notions of British power, justice and liberality.³⁰

Macnaghten's thinking, however, was evidently on a time scale which was not to be realised. When the major uprising against British power in Afghanistan broke out in the autumn of 1841, many of the Rangers deserted to the enemy and the British commander in the area, General Robert Sale, abandoned the remainder of the force because he thought it too unreliable. The Afridi made their way back to the Khyber region where they were numbered among those most hostile to British influence. The Jezailchis held together rather better, mainly because of the hostility on the part of the Shinwari and Afridi towards the Yusufzai, which prevented the latter deserting.

In the context of British policy towards tribes, however, the most interesting feature concerns the ethnic composition and areas of service of the two corps. It is evident that the notion of using tribesmen against their fellow-tribesmen was thought to be altogether too risky; Pathans would be enlisted but they would be used in other areas - in this way there was a marked departure from the Bhil formula.

From the beginning Mackeson had to deal with a series of robberies in and around the Pass. The theory of the allowance system had been that if property was stolen in the Pass the maliks would recover it, or its value would be deducted from their allowances. What he discovered was that the maliks had little power over their tribesmen and that the tribesmen received little or no benefit from the allowances paid to their chiefs. In January 1840 a British soldier was murdered and the property he was

guarding was stolen by some Zakha Khel. The maliks did their best to help and some of the property was recovered, but Mackeson was dissatisfied and felt that the murder should be marked by some punishment. He did not demand the surrender of the plunderers but he urged the chiefs to punish them, using other clans of the Zakha Khel against the offending Nasir al-Din Khel. But the Zakha Khel maliks protested that they had no power over the Nasir al-Din Khel, and the latter complained that they received nothing from the Zakha Khel maliks.³¹ Mackeson thought the situation most unsatisfactory, as it struck at the basic assumption of the allowance system, viz. that the maliks should restrain their tribesmen. 'So convinced am I of the necessity of an example in the present instance that nothing but a sense of the difficulty of success would induce me to refrain from coercive measures, should the maliks unfortunately fail in obtaining redress for us.'³² British progress in reclaiming the Afridi would be very slow, he argued, if they did not feel that we had the power to punish them. It is clear from this passage that the frustrations of his position were already pushing Mackeson into the desire for coercion to which Wade had so quickly succumbed. It says much for Mackeson's patience and sense of realism that he kept this desire under control.

Mackeson wanted some other device to supplement the allowance system. One possibility was to collect hostages from the Pathans and to keep them at Peshawar. There was no question of executing them as Avitabile would have done, but Mackeson thought that the chance that they might be sent to India would restrain their relatives and fellow-tribesmen. But at this time Mackeson did not feel strong enough to demand hostages; the Afridi might refuse and he would be unable to do anything about it.

Another possibility was a variant of coercion. Britain should take control of the Pass and of the approaches to the Bara valley (in which dwelled many of the Afridi) and also occupy Bazar. He thought this would put Britain in a position to demand the restoration of property and the delivery of hostages, threatening the destruction of crops and houses and the ending of allowances.³³

Yet another possibility was to exploit inter-tribal divisions. There was here a contradiction in Mackeson's policy. Local factions sought to involve him in feuds but he invariably refused, saying these were no concern of his providing the Pass did not become the scene of inter-tribal fighting. But it

would become very difficult for him to maintain this position if he fostered feuds; there was no way in which he could ensure that fighting was confined to Tirah.

A partial solution was found with the help of the Shah's agents. It was to construct a tribal league (the Maymana League) to coerce the offending Nasir al-Din Khel. This was a difficult process, for Khan Bahadur Khan of the Malikdin Khel was not anxious to take action against the Nasir al-Din Khel because he was in the habit of employing them in the prosecution of his feuds with the Kuki Khel. The Zakha Khel maliks also presented some problems because of the enmity that existed between them. But eventually the League was put together, and the Nasir al-Din were surrounded and their escape routes cut off. They agreed to surrender two men (Mackeson said they were probably just slaves and he would soon release them).³⁴ The episode proved expensive, as Mackeson was obliged to pay secret bribes worth £300 to the maliks. The Maymana League was kept in being for the future. Mackeson arranged to transfer £360 of the allowances hitherto paid to the Zakha Khel maliks to the Nasir al-Din and Shan Khels and to make the League the agency of the payment. Mackeson shortly called upon the League again when the Zakha Khel continued plundering. Khan Bahadur Khan then proposed to send '54 aged and principal persons' drawn from various khels to be quartered on the offending clan until they disgorged.³⁵ The Zakha Khel agreed but the maliks now asked if they could assume responsibility for the Nasir al-Din and Shan Khels and if the allowances could be paid through them. Mackeson therefore had had some success in his objectives of creating a form of collective organisation to reinforce the power of the maliks and also of inducing the maliks to assume greater responsibility and hence help to develop the chain of authority which the British thought necessary.

Petty thefts in the Khyber continued and in the winter of 1840-1 became more frequent. Mackeson still urged that the value of the stolen property should be deducted from the stipends paid to the maliks. This proceeding led to some dissatisfaction on the part of the maliks who complained that in many cases they were not informed of the robberies until it was too late to take any action to recover the property. So Mackeson tried a new device. He appointed an agent to reside at Ali Masjid and invited the maliks each to send a representative to

reside there. In this way, robberies could be reported and investigated immediately and there was a better chance of recovering the property. The new system began operating in early February 1841 and had some success; in May and June 1841 seventy robberies were reported and in most cases all the property was restored. The cases in which robbery was not recovered were mainly night robberies and to this problem Mackeson next turned his attention. The Afridi maliks denied responsibility for robberies that took place in the Pass at night or for those which took place at a distance from the high road at any time. They also tried to disown responsibility for 'single thefts', claiming that these were the work of the caravan men (mainly Shinwari) and not of the Afridi. On some of these points compromises were arranged: the Afridi were relieved of responsibility for night robberies but not for 'single thefts'.³⁶

By patience and by the use of several devices in combination Mackeson had some success in improving the conditions of ordinary travel through the Pass. But he was not satisfied with this situation. He recognised that such arrangements, although useful, were no answer to the needs of Britain. The British position in Afghanistan demanded that the Pass be available for use at all times and not subject to closure or interruption by the Afridi. Mackeson explored other ways of controlling the Afridi. His main effort was a sustained attempt to enlist the Orakzai as a controlling group.

Orakzai and Afridi

The Orakzai are a Pashto-speaking group which claims to be Pathan but which is not included in the Pathan genealogies. Living north-west of Kohat, they had no territory which directly abutted the Khyber but they shared with the Afridi the same upland valleys, including Tirah. Their economy was similar to that of the Afridi. Ninety per cent were Sunni and ten per cent Shii, and they were roughly equally divided between Gar and Samal. The Orakzai confederation was divided into four main tribes: Daulatzai, Ismailzai, Lashkarzai and Hamsaya. The names of the tribes suggest the arbitrary nature of these divisions. The tribes were each divided into clans. From the British records it is not easy to identify which tribes and clans were involved in the events of the period. Those clans which are mentioned

belong to the Lashkarzai and Hamsaya but the British also pensioned Shii religious figures suggesting that they sought influence among the Daulatzai clans. One would suggest tentatively that the British were more uncertain about the distribution of power among the Orakzai than in other Pathan groups, and that they tended to over-rate the power of chiefs and other leaders to command obedience.

As early as the end of 1839 Mackeson had begun to contemplate using the Orakzai to control the Afridi.³⁷ The Orakzai themselves were anxious to obtain a share of the allowances paid to the Afridi for guarding the Khyber. The Afridi malik, Khan Bahadur Khan, refused this Orakzai request, arguing that the Afridi had sole control of the Khyber and that Alam Khan, the Orakzai chief, had failed to aid the Afridi in resisting the British in July 1839. In January 1840 Khan Bahadur Khan suggested that if the Orakzai were willing to join the Afridi in opposition to the British the two confederations could recover Ali Masjid. Just as Mackeson hoped to exploit the divisions between the two confederations, so Khan Bahadur Khan hoped to heal them in order to present a united front against the British that would greatly increase the bargaining strength of the Pathans and enable them to extract a much higher price for the use of the Khyber.³⁸ When Mackeson met Alam Khan in March 1840 at the mouth of the Khyber to try to strike a bargain with him, the Afridi became alarmed and proposed to pay the Orakzai chief something themselves. But Mackeson had the greater financial resources and agreed to pay the Orakzai £1,200 a year.³⁹

Mackeson realised that the Orakzai themselves could not keep order in the Pass, because their lands were separated from it. But he believed they could bring the Afridi under control by attacking them in Tirah and by winning over a party among the Afridi and by taking Afridi hostages. Mackeson did not see this as an immediate course of action; rather he wished to have the Orakzai card held in reserve for use in negotiations with the Afridi or to be used in an emergency.⁴⁰ He continued to cultivate the Orakzai in the months that followed. In May 1840 he entertained Alam Khan and other chiefs and three hundred of their followers in Peshawar.⁴¹

Mackeson was not able to control the course of events that he had set in train. When Alam returned to Orakzai country he met certain of the Orakzai jirgas. The jirgas demanded that he should lead them in war against the Afridi.⁴² Mackeson certainly

did not want a war at this time and he used his influence with Alam's son, Muhammad Zaman Khan, who was the principal direct beneficiary of the financial arrangements made between Britain and the Orakzai, to persuade his father to oppose war.⁴³ Alam informed Mackeson that he had kept the peace at the price of alienating some of the Orakzai divisions and that he had been forced to pay out money in bribes, which he asked Mackeson to refund through an increase in his allowances to the £1,500 that had been promised to him. The episode suggests that Mackeson may have been the victim of a plot by Alam to improve his own allowances. Mackeson had however been seriously worried and had forbidden the Afridi to go to Tirah until the Orakzai were pacified. In their turn the Afridi were extremely suspicious of Mackeson's role in these affairs and it was rumoured among them that, far from striving for peace, Mackeson had actually paid Alam £200 to incite trouble, Khan Bahadur Khan again began to hint at an Afridi-Orakzai alliance and wrote to Mackeson a touching, if unconvincing, letter about the loyalty of the Afridi and the untrustworthiness of the Orakzai.

Mackeson was learning quickly, and he observed with interest the tactics employed by the two confederacies. Instead of building up their own strength in preparation for the likely clash between them, they concentrated on reducing the strength of their opponents by exploiting factional divisions. In each of the Afridi khels there were powerful rivals to the existing maliks and these men were possible allies of the Orakzai; similarly, there were Orakzai divisions which could be exploited by the Afridi. Numbers, Mackeson observed later, counted for little in tribal warfare, because no numerical superiority could take a fort. The strongly built little forts that dotted the Pathan country were impregnable against attack with the weapons possessed by tribesmen, although artillery would tumble them like ninepins. The essential ingredient of tribal warfare, remarked Mackeson, was money. Money, he wrote, enabled a tribe to buy the support of one section of the enemy and to force the others to submit to terms.

It is a pity that Mackeson did not elaborate his remarks on this subject. Plainly he was not saying that money enabled a tribe to buy support in numbers since he had already argued that numbers had no military significance. He must have been implying that disunity within a tribe was the major cause of weakness. But why should disunity affect a man

shut up in his own fort with a good supply of food and ammunition? The answer must lie in the nature of intra-tribal relationships, the power of the jirga, and the premium placed upon unanimity. Mackeson does not allow us to penetrate his thinking on these matters, but his emphasis upon money was characteristic. He came to think that money was the answer to everything in dealings with the Pathans, who, he thought, were motivated principally by cupidity. This view was subsequently echoed frequently by Britons who dealt with Pathans, and was expressed in many comments on their character, including the common observation that they would gladly and cheaply sell their wives (if their wives did not sell themselves first). The shortcomings of this characterisation are obvious, if understandable in the officials of a wealthy state which dealt with the tribes principally by means of bribes and stipends.

The Orakzai card was beginning to resemble the nuclear deterrent in our own day: in reserve it was an invaluable way of putting pressure on the Afridi, but if it had to be played the game was lost, Mackeson thought, because an Afridi-Orakzai war would mean the closure of the Pass, higher allowances all round, and might even result in an Afridi-Orakzai alliance against Britain. It might indeed have seemed better to discard the card altogether, but Mackeson continued to defend it on the grounds that he had nothing better and that Britain had so little power in the Khyber that there was not much to lose. 'The little control we ever obtained in the pass was obtained by force,' he wrote in August 1840. 'Our control is now merely nominal and the Afreedees watch our measures to increase it with the greatest jealousy.'⁴⁴

In the summer of 1841 the Afridi-Orakzai problem surfaced again. On 6 July, Mackeson reported that the Afridi proposed to make another effort to heal their internal divisions and to make a united approach to the Orakzai with the object of getting rid of Alam Khan Orakzai and forming an alliance with the Orakzai to demand more pay from the British.⁴⁵ If they failed to win over the Orakzai they would try to neutralise them by causing civil war in the Orakzai confederation. There was at this time considerable discontent with Alam Khan among the Orakzai because of his failure to share his allowances with his tribesmen. The disaffected Orakzai approached Khan Bahadur Khan, but the Malikdin malik refused to deal with any but the whole of the Orakzai confederation, clearly hoping

to thrust upon them the onus of solving their internal problems and wishing to avoid becoming involved in a civil war which could be exploited by the British.⁴⁶

Khan Bahadur Khan had been the outstanding Afridi leader throughout this period and had steadily outmanoeuvred Mackeson, working always towards the construction of a united Afridi front and of an Afridi-Orakzai alliance. Just at this point, however, he was taken ill and retired to his summer residence where he died in October 1841. Mackeson's comment is interesting. 'This old man's influence kept the Afridis united together. They will hereafter be less formidable as enemies but as friends, in the absence of any directing head to whom the different maliks look up, it will be much more difficult to keep on terms with them.'⁴⁷ In short it suited the British better to have a strong leader to deal with, even if he were hostile, than to have to deal with the traditional, decentralised tribal structure.

Just before his death Khan Bahadur Khan's policy was temporarily successful. It was carried out by his eldest son, Allah Dad Khan, who was sent by him with other Afridi maliks to meet the Orakzai in Tirah. At first matters went badly and in August 1841 clashes took place.⁴⁸ The Orakzai launched simultaneous attacks on various Afridi khels but had no real success. The total losses were about thirty killed and wounded. The Afridi immediately countered by buying off the Mashti Khel, a Hamsaya Orakzai clan which belonged to the Samal group and therefore were usually inclined to favour the Afridi. This move broke up the Orakzai unity.⁴⁹ Alam Khan prepared to punish the Mashti Khel, but the Afridi quickly produced peace overtures through the ulama in Tirah, and the Orakzai forced Alam to agree. The two confederations drew up a petition to Shah Shuja asking for allowances for the Orakzai, 'for without doubt on the pay that has already been granted and received it is impossible that the tribes of the Orakzais and the Afridis should subsist'.⁵⁰ The petition also contained an admission of the Orakzai claim to half the stipends of Khyber. Since the Afridi had no intention of accepting any reduction in their own allowances, this virtually amounted to a demand that the British should double the amount they paid for passage through the Khyber.

Mackeson's policy had rebounded on him and what he had feared had come to pass: a possible 30,000 fighting men were united in demanding money from

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Britain. But he would not pay more, and still hoped to break up the alliance, especially since its main architect, Khan Bahadur Khan, was dead. Mackeson still hoped to use Alam as the weak point of the alliance. A condition of the Afridi-Orakzai agreement was that Alam would break his connection with the British, but Mackeson was sure he would not sacrifice his own allowances. Mackeson proposed to force Alam to choose by demanding that he should send his son, Zaman, to Peshawar, being confident that the Afridi would withdraw from the agreement when Alam agreed. Alam did agree, but before the matter could develop further it was engulfed in the consequences of the Afghan uprising of November 1841.

The Shinwari

At the western end of the Khyber were the Shinwari, a Pathan confederation divided into four tribes: the Ali Sher Khel, the Sipay, the Manduzai and the Sangu Khel. The Ali Sher Khel, who inhabited the valley of Lohargi, controlled the section of the pass between Lala Beg and Haft Chah (and therefore going beyond Landi Khana) and allowances for them were fixed in 1839.⁵¹ The Ali Sher Khel might have been easy to control, because they were the principal carriers of goods between Peshawar and other markets on the route to Kabul, and they came down to the Peshawar valley in great numbers at all seasons. But, of course, the application of economic sanctions against them was in the hands of the Lahore state through its governor of Peshawar, and not in those of Mackeson, so this weapon, which was employed effectively in subsequent years, was not available to the British in 1838-42. The Manduzai were the weakest of the Shinwari tribes and actually paid revenue to the government, an almost unheard-of phenomenon in the Pathan area. The Sipay lived further west, beyond the Pass, in Ningrahar, and they received allowances, though they were not content with what they received. But the most powerful of the Shinwari tribes, the Sangu Khel, which inhabited the valleys of Saroli and Nazian on the northern slopes of the Safid Koh beyond Peshbulaq (which lay south of the Khyber) received very little.

The Sangu Khel had five clans. Of these the Tsalur Plar and the Taus lived in Saroli, the Gadu and Korma lived in Nazian, and the small Ghani Khel lived at Peshbulaq itself. It was the Ghani Khel maliks who were recognised as nominal chiefs of the

whole of the Sangu Khel, and the British and Shuja each gave small pensions to Muhammad Gul Khan and his sons, Mir Afghan and Sayyid Gul. But the Ghani Khel maliks were intermediaries between the state (in its various forms) and the Sangu Khel, rather than chiefs in any commonly accepted sense. They had no power to give any command to the Sangu Khel clans and, because of their easily accessible position at Peshbulaq, were unable to resist the demands of the state. Under Brakzai rule in Afghanistan the Ghani Khel maliks had functioned as negotiators; for the Sangu they were a window on an outside world which was disliked but indispensable; for the governors of Jalalabad they were a point of contact with a group of intractable tribal subjects. The British failed to appreciate their position at first and apparently believed that by pensioning the Ghani maliks they were restraining the Sangu Khel. They were rapidly disillusioned when the Sangu Khel began attacking caravans.

Mackeson first decided that the Sangu action reflected a general Shinwari discontent with the allowances they received, and he suggested that the Sangu attacks might have been instigated by the Ningrahar Shinwari in the hope of gaining allowances equal to those of the Afridi. The Ningrahar maliks claimed that half of the Khyber belonged to them; they were clearly advocates of the largest definition of the Pass.⁵² Mackeson's answer was to fine the Lohargi Shinwari, who agreed to bring in the maliks of the Sangu Khel and to persuade them to surrender hostages. This, Mackeson pointed out, would be of little use, for it was now clear to him that the Sangu maliks had no power at all over their own tribe. The Sangu Khel made their own comment on the proposal by attacking the Shinwari posts in Khyber, killing a number of Shinwari of the Ningrahar and Lohargi clans.

The Ningrahar and Lohargi Shinwari now admitted that they could not keep open the Pass without the co-operation of the Sangu Khel and they offered part of their own allowances. The Sangu Khel maliks offered to receive nothing for themselves but to pay all their allowances to their tribesmen.⁵³ Still the Sangu refused, and Mackeson was persuaded to agree to a further increase in allowances. He also tried the Maymana League. The maliks agreed to seek redress from the Sangu Khel or, if this failed, to aid Britain in coercive action.⁵⁴ The Lohargi maliks also offered to help. Mackeson was now able to come to an agreement with the Sangu Khel. On 22 June 1840

a deputation of 200 of the Sangu came in, bearing with them twelve hostages. They agreed to become responsible for guarding the Khyber between Landi Khana and Haft Chah in return for £600 p.a. The Lohargi Shinwari continued to receive their allowances of £840 p.a.⁵⁵

Mackeson was now ready to take a hard line with the Ningrahar Shinwari and stop their allowances. Without the support of the Sangu Khel they were powerless to hurt Britain, and as their villages were in the plain and close to the road they could be coerced by Britain if necessary. He ignored their claim to half the Khyber stipends, and in August 1840 the Ningrahar Shinwari gave up their opposition and came into Peshawar and asked that their allowances should be restored, to which Mackeson agreed.⁵⁶ On 20 June 1840, at the conclusion of the arrangements with the Shinwari and the Orakzai, Mackeson reported that the arrangements for the security of the Pass by paying all parties who had claims were completed. In all, Mackeson was paying out rather more than £10,000 a year in allowances.

Trouble with the Sangu Khel recurred at the end of 1840 when they attacked some nomadic Ghilzai of the Tagar tribe. The full circumstances of this episode did not emerge for some time. At first Mackeson believed that the Sangu Khel had attacked the Ghilzai on Mohmand land out of a desire for plunder and a wish to prosecute a feud with the Mohmand.⁵⁷ Later it appeared that the land was disputed, that the Sangu claim was at least as good as that of the Mohmand, and that in the past the Ghilzai had paid rent to the Sangu Khel for grazing. It eventually began to seem possible that the Ghilzai had seen the opportunity for free grazing and that the Mohmand had hoped to embroil the Sangu Khel with the British. If this were their intention, they were eminently successful.

When the Ghilzai complained to Shuja's officials, Afghan troops were sent and quartered on the accessible Sangu lands. The Sangu protested to the British that they had kept their word not to molest travellers on the high road, but claimed the right to prosecute their feuds elsewhere. Seven of their hostages with Mackeson in Peshawar escaped, leaving the nominal chiefs, who had little power. Mackeson stopped the Sangu allowances but continued to pay the Shinwari guards who remained at their posts in the Pass. His approach was conciliatory but his superior, Macnaghten, was anxious that an example should be made of the Sangu Khel.⁵⁸ Macnaghten

wrongly believed that they were weak in fighting strength, had no allies, were readily accessible to military force and could easily be coerced by a tribal force. They were plunderers, he declared, and should be made an example of; talk of feuds was irrelevant.

Mackeson attempted to deflect Macnaghten. Coercion was not the answer, he argued; the Sangu Khel, he conceded (wrongly), were dependent on plunder but

I rather look to a gradual improvement in the state of society arising from a better as well as a more vigorous government than to the effect of any sudden exercise of severity. The rude state of these men cannot be understood until it has been witnessed, they are little raised above the savage and their motives of action are to us unaccountable.⁵⁹

Besides, he pointed out, Britain lacked the means of coercion. The Sangu had twice the fighting strength that Macnaghten believed them to have and their principal stronghold, the Nazian valley, was not easily accessible. Any expedition against them would have to include European troops and artillery.

Mackeson first tried a pacific approach to the Sangu Khel through their nominal malik, Mir Afghan, asking for the return of the hostages and the plunder. While waiting for an answer he conducted a personal reconnaissance of the area, finding a position from which he could peer into the Nazian valley itself. He decided it was inaccessible to artillery and he laid plans to block exits from the valley.⁶⁰

On 15 February 1841 the Sangu replied, offering to return the hostages but not the plunder, which they argued was rightfully theirs, as in 1840 Mackeson had agreed that he would not interfere in feuds with other tribes and the Ghilzai had been using their pastures without payment. Mackeson countered by reasserting that this was not a feud and that the Ghilzai had been on Mohmand, not Sangu lands. He then went on to put forward a radical proposal which, if accepted, would have changed the whole concept of crime and retribution that existed among the tribes. He asked the Sangu to send a jirga to meet representatives of the Mohmand and Ghilzai, and to agree to stop feuds and to recognise a breach of the peace as a crime against the state, deserving of punishment. But he was now warming towards the idea of an expedition. He dismissed the argument that the Sangu Khel were dependent on

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plunder. 'They will find the means of subsistence without plunder when they have been coerced and made an example of', he wrote.⁶¹ His radical project failed. The Mohmands accepted his proposal for settling feuds but the Sangu rejected it; they would send no jirga and their feuds were their own business.⁶²

Mackeson now accepted the need for coercion and prepared for the expedition. As it happened the troops were at hand: a relief brigade on its way to Kabul was then at Jalalabad. Indeed the existence of the means of coercion, ready to hand for the first time since the end of 1839, must have influenced the decision to attack the Sangu. Ever since 1839 there had been talk among British officers of making an example of some tribe or other in the area, and there is strong suspicion that the quarrel with the Sangu at this time provided the excuse that was needed. Certainly this helps to explain Macnaghten's precipitate recommendation of violent retribution; as Envoy to Shah Shuja he felt the need to uphold the authority of the Shah, and the action against the Sangu served an Afghan purpose more than it did a British need, for there had been no disruption of communications. The presence of the troops was also the factor which brought Mackeson to support coercion.

A substantial force commanded by Brigadier Shelton was quickly assembled. It included a European infantry regiment, two regiments of sepoy infantry and one of the Shah's, and artillery.⁶³ It left Jalalabad on 21 February and arrived at Peshbulaq on the 23rd. Shortly after dawn the following day, the troops entered the pass leading to the Nazian valley, and by 1.00 p.m. Shelton was in control of most of the valley. On the days that followed, the troops completed the conquest of the valley and penetrated the valleys that ran off it.⁶⁴ Mackeson had hoped that peace could be arranged once the troops had penetrated the valley, and indeed the Sangu sent in a jirga composed of the most influential men in the tribe. But while negotiations were in progress, fighting continued, and a British officer, Captain Douglas, was killed. After that, Mackeson commented, there was no hope of peace because the British troops wanted revenge. The revenge was comprehensive. Casualties were not great; the Sangu lost 30-40 killed and 30 prisoners were taken, but the majority of the tribe escaped into the hills, Mackeson not having been able to complete his arrangements to block the exit routes. But the

forts, houses and cultivation in the valleys were destroyed. Shelton blew up no less than 140 forts.

Both Mackeson and Shelton were surprised at the extent and richness of the cultivation, and the size of the population that it supported. Such surprise was to be a feature of British dealings with the Pathans. The British could never quite rid themselves of an image of hungry mountaineers drawn irresistibly towards the wealth of the cultivated plains. Such a description might have fitted many Scottish Highland clans, and perhaps fitted the Wazir, but it did not fit the tribes in the Khyber region, and the British surprise at the sight of Sangu wealth was to be duplicated many years later when they penetrated the Swat valley and Tirah. But they did their best to destroy the wealth of the Sangu; what the troops did not destroy was stolen by irregular tribal auxiliaries and camp followers who accompanied the force.

Mackeson's verdict was that the tribes had been taught a lesson. Experience of tribal warfare had led the Pathans to believe their forts were impregnable, and as the British troops marched into the Nazian valley men stood on top of the forts shouting opposition and firing their matchlocks in perfect confidence, Mackeson thought, that they could not be successfully assailed. They were quite paralysed, he commented, by disciplined, rapid fire. The affair would have a powerful effect upon all neighbouring tribes. 'I am much surprised if hereafter in this part of the country we find any of the tribes keeping to their forts against us.'⁶⁵

Mackeson made various military dispositions to control the area, and began negotiations with the Sangu maliks, who were still available to act as intermediaries. Agreement was eventually reached by which the Sangu paid the Ghilzai £600 compensation for the stolen sheep and delivered ten hostages. In addition Mackeson agreed to entertain two influential Sangu leaders, Khan Mir and Khan Gul. He offered to pay the Sangu allowances (which he now agreed to resume) through these men, but, interestingly, the Sangu said they would prefer to receive these through the nominal malik, Mir Afghan of the Ghani Khel branch of the Sangu, as before. The Sangu seemingly maintained a distinction between their real leaders and those whom they preferred to act as intermediaries with the state. The Sangu renewed their engagements with Shuja and once more manned their posts in Khyber.⁶⁶

By this time Mackeson had come to believe that

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the Sangu's original complaints about Mohmand and Ghilzai encroachment on their lands had much justice, and he warned the Mohmand and Ghilzai chiefs against such practices in the future. The Mohmand complained that no boundaries had ever been drawn. They agreed to abide by the arbitration of Mackeson, who thereupon drew a line on a map bisecting the disputed area. Both parties then agreed to live in peace. After all, Mackeson had succeeded in advancing the position of the state against that of the tribes, and had apparently passed from the role of enforcer to that of arbitrator.

The British Lose Control of the Khyber

Mackeson's laboriously constructed Khyber system collapsed rapidly in November 1841. In October disturbances took place amongst the Ghilzai tribes between Kabul and Jalalabad. Communications between the two cities were severed. At the beginning of November an uprising took place in Kabul which eventually led to the evacuation of the British garrison on 6 January 1842 and its complete destruction during the next few days. The first repercussions of these events were felt in the Khyber on 13 November when Ferris's headquarters at Peshbulaq were attacked. Ferris withdrew the garrisons of the posts at Landi Khana and Haft Chah, and on 16 November evacuated Peshbulaq and returned to Peshawar via the Tatar Pass, losing all his baggage and the government treasure. When Ferris withdrew his posts the trouble spread to the Khyber, and from the Shinwari to the Afridi. On 16 November Zakha Khel tribesmen, acting without the agreement of their chiefs, attacked the fort of Ali Masjid, which was defended by Philip Mackeson and 150 poorly armed Yusufzai. The Zakha Khel were soon joined by other Afridi.⁶⁷

Confronted by this situation Mackeson tried desperately to keep some control over the Pass, passage through which would be required either for the retreat of the British forces in Afghanistan or for the march of relieving forces from India. His problems were not with the maliks, who continued to assure Mackeson of their loyalty and who agreed, in return for substantial bribes, to allow him to send supplies to Ali Masjid (although no troops) and to turn a blind eye to his use of the Tatar and Abkhana roads to send supplies, money and even troops to Jalalabad. The problem was presented by the tribesmen, over whom the maliks had no control.

'Their mullahs are preaching against us and the popular feeling is too strong for the maliks to oppose or restrain', Mackeson wrote on 28 November.⁶⁸ The maliks, he wrote, cared nothing for religion, or Kabul, or anything but money, but with the tribesmen the matter was different.

In late December, when news of the reverses suffered by the Kabul garrison began to reach the Khyber, there was fresh excitement. From 22 December the maliks held almost daily jirgas at which the question of whether to go to war with the British was discussed. The maliks, influenced by further bribes from Mackeson, succeeded in preventing any decision for war, but the jirgas continued, and at the beginning of January the Afridi were joined in council by the Orakzai.⁶⁹ On 9 January Mackeson reported that the tribes were still undecided and were choosing new maliks. But the news from Kabul had plainly tipped the balance against the British. On January 10 the maliks warned Philip Mackeson to look to his own safety, and from 10 to 15 January Ali Masjid was repeatedly attacked. The Yusufzai garrison was becoming disaffected and it was plain that it could not hold out much longer. Agreement had now been reached with the Sikhs to support the British advance from Peshawar which took place on the night of 15-16 January. The Afridi refused a free passage to the troops, saying that it would be against their religion; Mackeson commented that they could not have gone against the religious feeling in their tribes.⁷⁰

The British advance was botched: the troops got through to Ali Masjid but lost nearly all the supplies they were carrying up and found themselves freezing in the open on half rations. The situation became serious when another relieving force from Peshawar was repulsed at the mouth of the Pass on the night of 18-19 January, after the Sikh force which was to have accompanied it had mutinied. Mackeson was now desperate: he offered Alam Khan Orakzai £2,000 to create a diversion in Tirah and take over the Khyber, and he instructed his deputy, Henry Lawrence, to support rivals of the Afridi maliks now in power.⁷¹ It was to no avail and on 24-25 January Mackeson was obliged to evacuate Ali Masjid and return to Peshawar. The British had now completely lost control of the Khyber.⁷²

During the next ten weeks Mackeson sought to recover some influence by negotiation, while the Afridi negotiated both with the British and with representatives of the Barakzai leader of the Kabul

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rising, Muhammad Akbar. From the British the Afridi sought to discover whether they intended merely to relieve Jalalabad and retire, or whether they intended to try to recover their position in Afghanistan. From Akbar they demanded money and refused for a long time to admit his troops to the Pass or to sell them fodder. Curiously enough, throughout this period the Afridi continued to deal with the Sikhs on the familiar basis, despite Mackeson's efforts to induce the Sikhs to treat the Afridi as enemies. Mackeson continued to try and create a rival party among the Afridi maliks which would be favourable to the British, and paid a large sum to Alam Khan to create a diversion. But the Orakzai came to an agreement with the Afridi and the rival party among the latter asked for £30,000 to provide a passage for British troops. Mackeson agreed to pay £5,000 and in the meantime advanced £400 in expenses to enable the pro-British chiefs to purchase support. He also entertained 1,000 Afridi at Peshawar and Jamrud and collected many hostages. The Afridi responded with criticisms of the chiefs who had declared themselves to be British supporters, and a split took place in the Kuki Khel between Abd al-Rahman, who was pro-British, and a rival, Nasir Khan, who had formerly been an officer in Ferris's Jezailchis and who was connected by marriage with Allah Dad Khan of the Malikdin Khel.⁷³

Thus the continuation of tribal rivalries prevented the Afridi assuming a united front, despite the call of religion. But at the end of March their divisions were largely healed through outside intervention. Muhammad Akbar sent down from his camp outside Jalalabad a body of some 200 horse and 500 foot with two small guns to co-operate with the Khyberis in resisting the advance of any British force. This body provided the nucleus of the strong resistance which the Afridi mounted on 5 April 1842, when the British finally decided to force the Pass. Almost to the last Mackeson continued to negotiate with his so-called supporters and he advanced £2,500 of the promised payment. But on the day before the British set off, the pro-British Afridi confessed that they were unable to fulfil their part of the bargain, claiming that the advent of Akbar's force had turned the scales against them.⁷⁴

The British force overcame the resistance of an estimated 10,000 tribesmen, broke into the Pass, and retook Ali Masjid on 6 April. They were supported by a Sikh advance to Ali Masjid by another route. Thereafter the British commander, General Pollock,

moved forward cautiously because of the necessity of securing his communications. The pro-British chiefs now returned to the fold, including Alam Khan Orakzai, Allah Dad Khan Zakha Khel and Abd al-Rahman Khan Kuki Khel. Unfortunately, two sons of influential supporters of Allah Dad were accidentally killed by sepoys. Mackeson paid compensation and endeavoured to hush the incident up, but Allah Dad's influence in his own khel was seriously weakened.⁷⁵ Some Shinwari maliks also came in to make their peace with the British.

Mackeson hoped that the pro-British chiefs would be able to take on responsibility for keeping the Pass open, but he was disappointed. Pollock reported that 'Fanaticism and contempt for us [are] so great that chiefs, though willing to come to terms, cannot get tribes to agree.'⁷⁶ Eventually Mackeson made some arrangements with the chiefs, but he had no confidence in them and most of the Pass was garrisoned by Sikh troops (east of Ali Masjid) and by British-controlled forces at Ali Masjid and other positions west of it.⁷⁷ From June 1842 onwards the Pass was subject to attacks by hostile Afridi, but the arrangements sufficed until the British forces had completed their work and were finally withdrawn from Afghanistan through the Khyber in early November. It need hardly be said that the rearguard suffered attacks and losses in the Pass, but the British had done with the Khyber, and in the same month the various irregular forces that had held the Pass were finally disbanded.

Conclusion

The three states involved in the Khyber during the period studied looked on the tribes in different ways. To the Afghan government the Khyberis were subjects in a peculiar but not unfamiliar category: they paid no revenue to the government and the government paid no attention to them and accepted no responsibility for their behaviour.

To the British the Khyberis bore a dual aspect. On the one hand they were subjects of a government which was visibly supported by Britain and which therefore had to behave, to some extent, in a manner approved by Britain; in short it must accept some responsibility for its subjects and demand some standards of behaviour from them - hence Macnaghten's insistence upon upholding the authority of Shuja's government in the case of the Sangu Khel, a position

which readily led to exploitation both by subordinate officials of Shuja's government and by other tribes.

On the other hand the British saw the Khyberis as people who had the capacity to obstruct a vital line of communication. The obvious solution to this problem was to sweep the Khyberis out of the way and establish British control of the Khyber through overwhelming force. But this mode of action was too expensive and would have involved a long-term commitment which was no part of British policy.

Accordingly Britain settled for a more modest approach to the problem: to try and get what she wanted by tribal management. This policy had some limited success but it failed conspicuously to provide the degree of control required. It failed for two reasons. First, the British suffered from serious disadvantages in the management of the tribes: they did not sufficiently understand the social, economic and political structure of the tribes, and certain resources that were open to an Afghan government were closed to them - the use of marriage ties and of religion, and the ability to use hostages in the manner in which they were meant to be used, or abused. The greater financial resources at the disposal of the British did not compensate for these deficiencies; their Pathan military units failed to achieve their purpose; and the word of a British officer was not sufficient. The Bhil formula for tribal management was simply not good enough for the Pathans.

Second, the British could not be content to play so humble a role as that imposed by the exigencies of tribal management: such a status did not fit their notion of how a government should behave. Governments, they thought, should govern, especially in Asia; and subjects should obey. If they did not obey, prestige demanded that they should be punished. Hence there was in Wade and Mackeson a leaning towards a drastic, military solution to the problem - a demonstration of inevitable and invincible British power; and a movement towards the imposition of a British view of how rulers and subjects should behave towards one another. It might have been thought that a state would have welcomed the anarchical political system of the Pathans as affording opportunities for manoeuvre. For the British this was not so: manoeuvre was a pis aller; the preferred mode of dealing with the tribes was through a hierarchical structure of authority which the British were anxious to identify or even to create. Also the British found the tribal attitude to crime and

punishment unacceptable and endeavoured to replace it with systems more familiar to them; the Maymana League and the Ali Masjid jirga were attempts to limit tribal discretion and to impose some larger authority; Mackeson's proposal to the Sangu Khel for the abolition of feuds took the process much further.

For the third government, that of the Sikhs, the matter was simpler: the Afridi were a border problem, a people who raided the Peshawar plain. The Sikhs experienced neither the need to uphold their prestige, which later drove the British into frequent punitive expeditions, nor the scruples that subsequently kept the British from more indiscriminate vengeance. They practised under Avitabile a simple policy of deterrence - execute some Afridi to encourage the others to desist from raids, and impose economic sanctions upon them - and combined this policy with that of tribal management through Afghan intermediaries, notably through the Barakzai of Peshawar and the Khalil Arbabs. Unfortunately for the Sikhs they had to work with the British, who disapproved of their methods and did not sympathise with their objectives. The British gradually reduced the deterrent power of the Sikhs, deprived them of their Barakzai agents, objected to their other Afghan intermediaries who were rivals of British protégés, and finally dragged the Sikhs unwillingly into the Khyber itself.

Contemplating the behaviour of the three states in the Khyber, one may suggest the hypothesis that in relations of states with tribes it is the character of the states themselves that provides a major determinant of the possible limits of their dealings with tribes. If this hypothesis has any value it implies some change in the preoccupation of anthropologists. Anthropologists have concentrated their attention primarily on the tribe itself and on its political, economic and social structure; and have sought the reasons for the changing fortunes of tribes primarily within this framework. The state has been assumed to be a Weberian, impersonal, bureaucratic and military machine which makes its standard demands on the tribes for taxes and recruits.

But there are at least as many models of states as there are of tribes and the structure of the state is no less complex. In the period with which we have been concerned, the British state was represented by several layers of authority ranging from the Cabinet in London, through the Board of Control and the East India Company Courts of Directors and

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Proprietors to the Supreme Government in Calcutta, and thence through the Envoy in Kabul to the Political Agent in Peshawar. And this list takes no account of the rival layers of authority that impinged upon the Khyber, such as the Political Agent at Ludhiana who was responsible for the conduct of relations with the Sikhs, or the Political Agent at Jalalabad whose bailiwick included Ningrahar, and all the various military officers of the British and East India Company armies with their separate command structures.

It should not be supposed that these various agencies functioned harmoniously; British policy was the outcome of innumerable disputes and compromises. Throughout the period there were major differences between the Envoy in Kabul and the Political Agent in Ludhiana concerning what policy should be pursued towards the Sikhs; and there were disputes between Envoy and generals concerning the use of troops. And this picture of conflicting authority still ignores the factor of personality. Those who held office remained individuals; their characters continued to shape their recommendations. Mackeson was not the finely-honed drill at the business end of a vast, well-oiled machine, but a man seeking to survive and prosper in a jungle of warring factions. His recommendations were framed not merely in relation to the situation as he perceived it, but also in relation to their likely reception by Macnaghten, Clerk, Pollock and other individuals within the state system. Mackeson was an intelligent, able and ambitious man, who lacked any personal influence which might be exerted on his behalf and who was obliged to make his way through his own efforts. He identified himself too closely with the policy of extending British influence in Afghanistan, was correctly suspected of misrepresenting the situation in the Khyber in 1842 in order to justify a decision to reconquer Kabul, and paid the price of his commitment when the Afghan policy found disfavour with the next Governor-General, Lord Ellenborough. In short, Mackeson was compelled to represent the situation in the Khyber not just as it was but also as one faction within the state hoped it would be.

States, it would seem, have a variety of characters from which they choose that which they wish to exhibit at any time. In the case of the British Indian state there was a peculiar ambivalence deriving from the conflict between the character which it wished to exhibit to the people of India and that which it chose to display to the people of England.

To the first it wished to appear as a state of iron will, inexorable determination and limitless power; to the second it tried to show itself a state of justice, benevolence, reason and Christian principle. The consequent amalgam came to be known by its friends as imperial and by its enemies as hypocrisy. To the Khyberis it must have seemed pure mystery.

And what of the tribes themselves? Plainly the heavily decentralised system of government within the tribes, and the bitterness of their rivalries, made it difficult for them to bargain effectively with the states concerned, or to exploit the possibilities inherent in the differences in approach of the three states and the ambiguities of British policies. Khan Bahadur Khan seemingly had some perception of the situation and attempted to forge some tribal unity but, although he had some success, he and his successors were not able to hold the tribes together. For the maliks there were gains to be made in strengthening their position within the tribal system by exploiting the chances presented by the British identification of them as the people with whom they should deal. No doubt the extra cash income derived from the British enabled the maliks to increase their power over their tribes to some degree, but how limited this power remained was well-demonstrated in the autumn of 1841 when the tribesmen broke away from their maliks and selected new leaders. Religion, it seemed, was still the one factor which could briefly overcome tribal divisions and, when skilfully exploited by the tribal religious leaders and by the Barakzai of Jalalabad, give a greater direction and unity to tribal policy than any other factor. But in the end the divided character of Pathan tribal organisation defeated the efforts both of the British to subdue the tribes and of the maliks, religious leaders and Barakzai to manipulate them. Like the jellyfish, the absence of a backbone to be broken was the greatest defence of the tribes against the waves of state power which beat upon them.

To destroy a tribe a state must first create it. Such appears to be the conclusion to which this chapter leads. Of course, like many paradoxes, the statement conceals a double meaning. Translated into anthropologists' jargon it would read: to destroy a segmentary lineage system a state must first convert it into a chiefly polity. And in this form the statement brings us back to the question that was raised earlier concerning the natures of states and of their objectives in their dealings with

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tribes. It was then suggested that what might be a suitable comment on the British state's attitude to tribes would not do for other states. But the British attitude more closely represents that of the modern state and its concept of itself in relation to its citizens and to other states.

The period with which we have been concerned was too short a time span in which to observe the full development of British policy towards the Pathans, but even in that brief period the desire to create an hierarchical structure of authority in the tribe is perceptible. Two modes were employed: to create chiefs and to work through the jirga. The second mode, which was used extensively in later years, appears to offer a compromise through which the tribe may retain its acephalous character and the state may secure the influence it desires, but the jirga system would not bear the weight of authority placed upon it and would not serve the purposes of the British. So long as the tribe is placed on an innocuous frontier the acephalous system may pass, but a modern state cannot tolerate jellyfish tribes in its midst or on those frontiers that are affected by the operation of the international state system. Jellyfish tribes challenge the modern state's concept of proper organisation, menace its prestige, and threaten its security. They may be destroyed, preserved in cocoons as curiosities, or converted into something different. A hierarchical system is something different; with that a state can live.

NOTES

1. There are many descriptions of the Khyber. One contemporary with the period considered in this chapter is R. Leech, Memo 1 Oct. 1837, India Office Records, Encl. to Secret Letters (ESL) Vol. 48, Encl. No. 30 of dispatch No. 1 of 8 Feb. 1838. (Since the notes on which this chapter is based were taken, this series has been included in the series entitled Letters Political and Secret and renumbered; there is no difficulty however in finding the corresponding volume numbers, so I have not troubled to change my references.) A convenient description of the Khyber is that in the article KHAIBAR in C.M. Macgregor (comp.), *Central Asia Part I. The North West Frontier of British India* (Calcutta, 1873). Macgregor included the more open area at the western end of the Khyber, giving an approximate length of 33 miles. I rejected this definition partly on physical grounds but also because it would have involved a consideration of British

policy towards the Mohmand and introduced a number of complications so as to extend the chapter beyond all reason. It will be noted that the definition employed here places the Pass wholly in modern Pakistan. At the time with which the chapter is concerned the Pass was wholly within Afghanistan; ownership changed in consequence of the Second Anglo-Afghan War of 1878-80, when the Khyber was annexed to British India. One would have thought that by no stretch of the imagination could the Khyber be placed in Afghanistan between Jalalabad and Kabul, but that feat was recently accomplished by at least one newspaper correspondent.

2. In this chapter the term 'confederation' is used to signify units such as Afridi, Orakzai and Shinwari; 'tribe' for the main subdivisions of these units; and 'clan' for the primary subsections of these subdivisions. The term 'khel' is used indigenously for all divisions below that of the confederation.

3. See Sir F.J. Goldsmid, *James Outram*, (Smith, Elder, London, 1881), vol. 1, pp. 51-115; Sir J. Malcolm, *Report on the Province of Malwa* (Calcutta, 1927), pp. 395-6; Sir J. Kaye, *The Administration of the East India Company* (Bentley, London, 1853), pp. 463-92; W.W. Hunter, *The Indian Empire* (Trübner, London, 1882), pp. 86-8.

4. H.W. Bellew, *The Races of Afghanistan* (Thacker, London, Calcutta, 1908), p. 82. Similar views were expressed by Macgregor, *Central Asia*; W. Moorcroft and G. Trebeck, *Travels in the Himalayan Provinces*, etc. (London, 1838), vol. 2, p. 348; and A. Burnes, *Travels to Bukhara, etc.* (London, 1834), vol. 1, p. 113.

5. M. Elphinstone, *An Account of the Kingdom of Caubul* (London, 1838), vol. 1, pp. 197-9. Similar views expressed by J. Wood, *A Journey to the Source of the Oxus* (Murray, London, 1872), p. 99.

6. C. Masson, *Narrative of Various Travels, etc.* (London, 1842), vol. 1, p. 162.

7. On Sayyid Ahmad see Qeyamuddin Ahmad, *The Wahabi Movement in India* (Mukhopadhyay, Calcutta, 1966), containing a useful survey of the sources.

8. Report by A. Burnes on the Political Power of the Sikhs West of the Indus, 8 Sept. 1837, ESL 48, No. 45 of No. 4 of 21 Feb. 1838.

9. Masson, *Narrative*, vol. 3, pp. 328-411; J. Harlan, *A Memoir of India and Afghanistan* (Philadelphia, 1842), pp. 162-4; N.K. Sinha, *Ranjit Singh* (University of Calcutta, 1933), pp. 94-100; Mohan Lal, *Life of Dost Muhammad Khan* (London, 1846), vol. 1, pp. 172-83; Mackeson to Wade, 24 Oct. 1837, ESL 68, No. 71 of No. 1 of 8 Feb. 1838; Masson to Wade, 31 Mar. 1837, ESL 47, No. 20 of No. 22 of 27 Dec. 1837; Masson to Wade, 17 Apr. 1837, No. 26; Wade to Macnaghten, 25 June 1837, No. 28; Masson to Wade, 7 May 1837, No. 39, and 18 and 19 May 1837, No. 43.

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10. On the origins and course of the First Anglo-Afghan War see: J. Kaye, *History of the War in Afghanistan* (London, 1858); H.M. Durand, *The First Afghan War* (London, 1879); J.A. Norris, *The First Afghan War* (Cambridge University Press, 1967); M.E. Yapp, *Strategies of British India* (Clarendon, Oxford, 1980).
11. Mackeson to Macnaghten, 3 May 1842, ESL 69, No. 23 of No. 72 of 6 July 1840.
12. See Yapp, *Strategies*.
13. Lord to Wade (pte), 14 Dec. 1838, ESL 58, No. 18 of 11 July 1839 (PC).
14. Masson, Statement, IOL, EM 642 f. 126.
15. Shahamat Ali, *Sikhs and Afghans* (London, 1849), p. 292.
16. Colvin to Wade (pte), 22 Nov. 1838, Br.Lib. Add.Ms. 37694 f. 127.
17. The best account of these operations is in W. Barr, *Journal of a March, etc.* (London, 1844).
18. Wade to Macnaghten, 28 Oct. 1839, Wade to Maddock, 28 Oct. 1839, ESL 67, No. 223 of No. 28 of 13 Apr. 1840.
19. Mackeson was held in high esteem by all who had dealings with him. See for example the comments of George Clerk, with whom he had serious policy differences: Clerk to Maddock, 3 Jan. 1843, ESL 91, No. 47 of No. 6 of 20 Jan. 1843.
20. Macnaghten to Mackeson, 12 Oct. 1839, ESL 66, No. 43 of No. 9 of 10 Feb. 1840.
21. There is an account of these disturbances in H. Havelock, *Narrative of the War in Afghanistan* (London, 1840), vol. 2, pp. 192-226.
22. Mackeson to Macnaghten, 7 Dec. 1839, ESL 64, No. 3 of No. 9 of 13 Jan. 1840.
23. Same to same, 3 Jan. 1840, ESL 69, No. 44 of No. 67 of 16 June 1840.
24. Same to same, 8 July 1840, ESL 70, No. 123 of No. 85 of 10 Aug. 1840.
25. Macnaghten to Maddock, 7 Dec. 1840, ESL 74, No. 70 of No. 4 of 21 Jan. 1841.
26. Same to same, 8 Apr. 1841 and enclosures, ESL 78, No. 54 of No. 58 of 8 July 1841.
27. Capt. H. Burn to Macgregor, 5 Jan. 1840, ESL 66, No. 14 of No. 23 of 16 Mar. 1840.
28. Brigadier J. Anquetil, Report and enclosures, 20 Apr. 1841, ESL 78, No. 47 of No. 58 of 8 July 1841.
29. Burn to C. Troup, 18 May 1841, *ibid*.
30. G. Lawrence to Anquetil, 22 May 1841, *ibid*.
31. Mackeson to Macnaghten, 21 Mar. 1840, ESL 69, No. 7 of No. 64 of 8 June 1840.
32. Same to same, 21 Jan. 1840, *ibid*.
33. Same to same, 3 Mar. 1840, ESL 69, No. 19 of No. 68 of 22 June 1840.
34. Same to same, 28 Mar. 1840, ESL 69, No. 25 of No. 64 of 8 June 1840.

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35. Peshawar Akhbar, 27 Mar. 1840, ESL 68, No. 38 of No. 44 of 8 May 1840.

36. Mackeson to Macnaghten, 6 July 1841, ESL 80, No. 44 of No. 79 of 20 Sept. 1841.

37. Same to same, 17 Jan. 1840, ESL 66, No. 22 of No. 23 of 16 Mar. 1840.

38. Same to same, 21 Jan. 1840, 13 Apr. 1840, 18 Apr. 1840, ESL 70, No. 2 of No. 82 of 10 Aug. 1840.

39. Same to same, 7 Mar. 1840, ESL 69, No. 18 of No. 68 of 22 June 1840.

40. Same to same, 5 May 1840, ESL 69, No. 21 of No. 72 of 6 July 1840.

41. Ibid.

42. Peshawar Intelligence, 31 July - 3 Aug. 1840, ESL 71.

43. Mackeson to Macnaghten, 12 Aug. 1840, ESL 72, No. 56 of No. 124 of 16 Nov. 1840.

44. Ibid.

45. Same to same, 6 July 1841, ESL 80, No. 44 of No. 79 of 20 Sept. 1841.

46. Same to same, 5 Aug. 1841, ESL 80, No. 45A of No. 79 of 20 Sept. 1841.

47. Mackeson to Clerk 17 Oct. 1841, ESL 80, No. 20 of No. 96 of 20 Nov. 1841. Khan Bahadur Khan had a status which went beyond the Afridi arena. He had resided at court before 1818 and Shuja had married one of his daughters.

48. Mackeson to Macnaghten, 28 July 1841, ESL 80, No. 40 of No. 88 of 21 Oct. 1841.

49. It is interesting to note that the Shii religious leader, Sayyid Madad Gul, who was influential in the Gar faction, who had been sympathetic to the British cause, and whose son was to receive a British pension, and who therefore might have been expected to support Alam, remained neutral in the dispute.

50. Mackeson to Macnaghten, 6 Oct. 1841, ESL 80, No. 13 of No. 96 of 20 Nov. 1841. This claim should not be taken seriously; neither the Afridi nor the Orakzai were dependent upon the subsidies for subsistence.

51. Same to same, 9 Jan. 1840, ESL 66, No. 18 of No. 23 of 16 Mar. 1840.

52. Same to same, 6 June 1840, ESL 70, No. 43 of No. 85 of 10 Aug. 1840.

53. Same to same, 4 June, 1840, *ibid.*

54. Same to same, 20 June 1840, *ibid.*, No. 91.

55. Same to same, 22 June 1840, *ibid.*

56. Same to same, 18 Aug. 1840, ESL 71, No. 39 of No. 112 of 16 Oct. 1840.

57. Same to same, 8 Jan. 1841, ESL 75, No. 30 of No. 19 of 21 Mar. 1841.

58. Macnaghten to Mackeson, 13 Jan. 1841, ESL 75, No. 30 of No. 19 of 21 Mar. 1841.

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59. Mackeson to Macnaghten, 27 Jan. 1841, ESL 75, No. 32 of No. 19 of 21 Mar. 1841.
60. Same to same, 14 Feb. 1841, ESL 75, No. 33A of No. 19 of 21 Mar. 1841.
61. Same to same, 15 Feb. 1841, *ibid.*
62. Same to same, 17 Feb. 1841, *ibid.*
63. Shelton to Macnaghten, 19 Feb. 1841, *ibid.*
64. Details of expedition in Shelton to K. Elphinstone, 24 Feb. 1841, 15 Feb. 1841, 28 Feb. 1841, *ibid.* Nos. 33B and 33C; and Shelton to Macnaghten, 14 Mar. 1841, ESL 75, No. 52 of No. 34 of 22 Apr. 1841.
65. Mackeson to Macnaghten, 1 Mar. 1841, ESL 75, No. 43 of No. 34 of 22 Apr. 1841.
66. Same to same, 22 Mar. 1841, ESL 76, No. 22 of No. 37 of 12 May 1841.
67. Same to same, 20 Nov. 1841, ESL 81, No. 47 of No. 109 of 22 Dec. 1841; Ferris to G. Lawrence, 22 Nov. 1841, ESL 81, No. 64 of No. 109 of 22 Dec. 1841.
68. Mackeson to Maddock, 28 Nov. 1841, ESL 81, No. 55 of No. 109 of 22 Dec. 1841.
69. Mackeson to Clerk, 24 Dec. 1841, 25 Dec. 1841, 26 Dec. 1841, 2 Jan. 1842, ESL 82, Nos. 10, 11 and 16 of No. 9 of 22 Jan. 1842.
70. Mackeson to G. Pollock, 10 Mar. 1842, ESL 85, No. 9 of No. 3 of 21 Apr. 1842.
71. Mackeson to H. Lawrence, 20 Jan. 1842, 21 Jan. 1842, ESL 83, No. 55 of No. 16 of 19 Feb. 1842.
72. Mackeson to Maddock, 27 Jan. 1842, ESL 83, No. 78 of No. 16 of 19 Feb. 1842.
73. Macnaghten to Pollock, 10 Mar. 1842, ESL 85, No. 9 of No. 3 of 21 Apr. 1842.
74. Mackeson to Pollock, n.d., ca. 2 Apr. 1842, ESL 85, No. 15 of No. 3 of 21 Apr. 1842.
75. Same to same, 17 Apr. 1842, ESL 86, No. 7 of No. 14 of 17 May 1842.
76. Pollock to Maddock, n.d. Apr. 1842, ESL 85, Agra Letter 23 Apr. 1842.
77. Mackeson to Pollock, 6 May 1842, ESL 86, No. 17 of No. 15 of 8 June 1842.

Chapter 5

TRIBES AND STATES IN WAZIRISTAN

Akbar S. Ahmed

Introduction: Buffer Zones and the Great Game

The aim of this chapter is to examine certain underlying principles in the complex relationship between tribes and states on the frontier between Afghanistan and Pakistan (or before 1947, British India). The relationship is not of war or peace, black or white, but rather shades of grey, and reflects the continuing socio-political dynamics of a situation peculiar to the region. The chapter will attempt to explain in a historical perspective the continued relevance of the relation between tribes and states in the region; to assess the effects of the state and its policies on tribal economics, culture and political organisation, using concepts such as 'encapsulation';¹ to identify what elements of tribal culture (in the broadest sense) can be interpreted as reflecting attitudes to or interaction with the state as a source of political, cultural or religious authority and orthodoxy; and to show how differing social systems, although juxtaposed or connected, manage to coexist and maintain their separate identities and structures within larger administrative frameworks. I shall examine these problems of tribe and state in my role as an anthropologist working in the Tribal Areas of the North West Frontier Province (NWFP) of Pakistan, with special reference to Waziristan, the area I have recently held in my charge as Political Agent.

A major question that emerges, is why the Tribal Areas were loosely incorporated but not quite absorbed, encapsulated but not integrated, into the British Indian structure, and left undisturbed by contrast with the creation elsewhere of 'feudal' estates and even small quasi-autonomous dependant states such as Swat. The answer is not to be sought

merely in the context of the administrative frameworks and military manoeuvres of states, but rather in the nature of the expansionist aims, policies and strategies which led to the Great Game, that is the competition between Russia and Britain in Central and Southern Asia, particularly in relation to the intervening state of Afghanistan.

For the British, the Game was an extension of the Public School ethos of upper-middle-class Victorian England. It involved worthy players, referees, rules and limits. It was cast in the mock-heroic mould and posture of Empire, with associated concepts of 'honour' and 'glory', and with a dash of intrigue and danger in the service of 'Queen and Country'. The mystique of the Game and its participants was increased by the creation of the NWFP in 1901 by Lord Curzon, the champion of Empire, and by the literary productions of Kipling, its minstrel; and the nature of the Game provided some of the most evocative and popular writing of Empire, specially exemplified in works such as Kim.²

But the players were not only mighty empires; the Game took place, in fact, on three levels: at the level of competition between the Empires; at the level of relations between either of the imperial powers and the intervening buffer state, Afghanistan; and at the level where the empires tried to influence, control and use the individual tribal groups that occupied the low production zones along the central mountain regions dividing the states and empires from each other. Such tribes, matching heavy artillery and eventually air bombardment with dated but deadly .303 rifles, could stop and destroy entire battalions sent by the imperial powers. The best plays in the game involved moving pawns on the board without actually having either to escalate the Game into a full-scale war or to commit any important pieces. On the Central Asian board, however, pawns often moved of their own volition - and sometimes it seemed more expedient to lose a king than a pawn.

The tribes did not see themselves as playing either the British, or the Russian, or the Afghan game; they were simply playing their own game. It may not have been on the same scale as the Great Game, with major campaigns, air action, large-scale expenditure and organisation and sophisticated logistics, but it was certainly played with the brilliance of born tacticians, and enabled them to remain independent at a crucial period in one of the most important regions of Asia. A Mahsud malik (headman)

summed up the essence of the Game to me succinctly: 'We are like men with two jealous wives - both pulling us in different directions; sometimes we prefer one, sometimes the other.' Such a statement would indubitably have angered the Colonial Secretary at Delhi, who would have assumed he was calling the cards.

A series of policies towards the trans-Indus areas, including the NWFP, that emanated from Delhi over the last century, reflected conflicting minds and changing circumstances. The 'Masterly Inactivity' of mid-century was followed by a greater show of interest through 'Conciliatory Intervention' and led to the tougher 'Close Border Policy' and finally the aggressive 'Forward Policy'.³ While Afghanistan came to be treated as the buffer between the two Empires, the British found it convenient also to keep a buffer zone between them and Afghanistan. A somewhat unusual situation developed. Buffer zones, shatter zones, scorched-earth policies and the like are common in the history of empires but not so common in the case of vigorous, aggressive and expanding empires such as the British in the last century. After deliberations at the highest level, the border was left purposely independent, in a defined zone, a no-man's land, officially designated the Tribal Areas, and the tribes were allowed to play their own 'little game' and to maintain a large degree of cultural and political autonomy, escaping integration into the larger framework of Empire.

The establishment of the Durand Line in 1893 added a further dimension to the problem, and further underlined the independence of the border tribes.

The tribes between the administrative border and the Durand Line were a buffer to a buffer, and the Line had none of the rigidity of other international frontiers. The countries on either side of it had each to realize that any attempt to enlarge their influence with the tribes must excite the suspicions of the other. It was the usual British compromise, but there was no other acceptable solution and, considering the complexity of the problem, it worked very well.⁴

However, the pious hope of international harmony contained in the Durand agreement - 'The Government of India will at no time exercise interference in the territories lying beyond this Line on the side of Afghanistan, and his Highness the Amir will at no

time exercise interference in the territories lying beyond this Line on the side of India⁵ - was rarely respected, and the Treaty was constantly broken on both sides.

The British relationship with Kabul was a function of politics in the Tribal Areas. It is seldom realised how close Kabul is to the Tribal Areas: some 50 miles from the border of the Kurram Agency, less than a day's journey by truck and bus. The situation in the Tribal Areas was also important for British strategy in the Great Game with Russia, the competition for influence in Afghanistan. In this, the British had the advantage over the Russians in the very nature of Pakhtun tribal organisation and the peculiar form of administration that was imposed among the tribes; for example, a tribal raid into Afghanistan could always officially be discouraged, disowned, or denounced by the British, when in fact a Political Agent might well be financing or even directing it.⁶

Although it is accepted that 'The border tribes have always played an important role in determining who was to hold power in Afghanistan',⁷ the Tribal Areas were a mixed asset to the British, and kept them anxious and alert. On balance, however, they could always use the tribes to cause trouble for Kabul across the Durand Line.

Culture and Society in the Tribal Areas

It is important to distinguish the peoples of the Tribal Areas from those of the Settled Areas of the NWFP. From the late 1890s, when the British incorporated the tribes that lived along the Durand Line into what they called the Tribal Agencies or the Tribal Areas, no civil, criminal or judicial procedure codes were applied to them. This was agreed to in written treaties signed by jirgas, councils of elders representing the tribes, and by the state. For instance, a man who committed homicide in broad daylight and in front of witnesses in the Tribal Areas would not be tried according to laws prevalent in the rest of British India (including the Settled Areas) but according to Pakhtunwali,⁸ the customary and traditional Code of the Pakhtuns, as interpreted by the jirga; a man even today can shoot his wife or cousin with impunity according to Pakhtunwali, and still remain outside the laws that prevail in the rest of Pakistan. This fundamental difference between the Tribal and Settled Areas has wide ramifica-

tions in the social and political organisation of the peoples concerned. The Tribal Areas present an exceptional, perhaps unique example of a no-man's land that has existed almost until today - and has been called 'the last free place on earth'.

In previous studies, I have suggested that for heuristic purposes Pakhtun peoples of the NWFP may be generally divided into two categories of society, dominated by two distinct models: one is a system of acephalous, segmentary, egalitarian groups associated with low-production zones, the other a system of ranked groups with super- and subordinate social positions, associated with irrigated lands. The key feature of the former category of society is nang (honour), as qalang (taxes and rents) is of the latter. For convenience I shall refer to tribes or tribesmen as nang or qalang, according to which model dominates their society.¹⁰

It is important to stress that nang tribesmen, unlike tribesmen elsewhere in South Asia who have been subjected and incorporated into the larger state, do not suffer a sense of economic suppression and cultural humiliation. In the NWFP Tribal Areas, for historical and geographical reasons, the tribesmen has always emerged as one who has held his own against any larger state system, whether Mughal, Sikh or British. What is more important in sociological terms, he is acutely aware of his independence and the factors responsible for it; he is inclined to play upon his own reputation for courage and honour to emphasise his ethnic uniqueness on the Subcontinent. The 'man-to-man' attitude of the Pakhtun tribesman has led to a certain romanticisation and mystification of his character and history.¹¹

The history of the nang tribes of the Tribal Areas tells of their accompanying successful armies to India but being unable to establish empires. On their own ground, they have resisted Mughals, Sikhs and British, three of the most powerful empires of South Asia, but they have not been able to organise dynasties of their own. The contrast to the qalang tribes, who have invaded India and provided Delhi with at least six Pakhtun dynasties, reflects the general discipline, organisation and pyramidal authority structure of the qalang system.¹²

The reasons why the nang tribes did not establish themselves politically or militarily on the larger stage of India around Delhi or Bengal over the last centuries, lie in part in the structure and organisation of the tribes, and in the economic and ecological limitations on such adventures. Military

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movements among the nang tribes are not, for instance, patterned on Ibn Khaldun's model of cyclical emergence of tribal elites, like the Berbers who come down from the hills fresh with 'tribal solidarity' (asabiya) to settle and start new dynasties only to degenerate over three generations and become vulnerable to conquest by fresher tribal stock.¹³ During military encounters in the Tribal Areas, the aim is neither to occupy nor to settle remote lands. The establishment of a dynasty is discounted by the pervasive cultural principle of jealousy and rivalry between paternal cousins (tarburwali). A typical clash, invariably as a climax to tarburwali, is a short raid, usually at sunrise or sunset, culminating in the capture of the village or booty like cattle. The glory of participation in an encounter, not the setting up of a dynasty or the lengthy involvement with administration that it implies, is the motivating factor. For example, all the major raids from the Tribal Areas over the last hundred years, whether to Kabul or to Kashmir, have been characterised by their blitzkrieg nature, by their swift irresistible penetration and by the rapid inevitable disintegration of the war party (lashkar). Often the Pakhtun warrior will simply pack up and leave after a hard day's fighting, without co-ordination with or command from the lashkar.

The individualistic approach of the Frontier tribesmen to battle, and indeed to life, was familiar to British officers serving in the NWFP. For example, in the late 1930s, Colonel Pettigrew, in the course of a patrol to cover an engineer road reconnaissance, found himself on the site of an encounter between Mahsud and British forces in the campaign of 1920. On the top of a hill whose capture by the British was officially said to have been due to surprise, he met an ancient Mahsud. He asked him if he had been in the fighting.

'Of course, that is my house over there.'
'Then tell me, why didn't you fight hard to hold the ridge?' He shrugged his shoulders, hands palm upwards, a smile showing through his thick, untidy beard. 'It was freezing. There had been snow, and we were hungry and cold, so we went away.'¹⁴

This independent and highly democratic attitude to tribal war, characteristic of tribesmen in the nang category, is I suggest a direct reflection of tribal organisation.

There are some further significant aspects of warfare as a relationship between tribe and state in this region. First, tribal war is 'seasonal': it is invariably linked with the pattern of crops and cultivation. Engagements tend to be fought before or after the harvest and many a leader has discovered to his dismay that his followers have melted away at the climax of a battle if the current crop has to be harvested.¹⁵ Secondly, tribal warfare is short and quick. The nature of their mountainous terrain and their tribal organisation enable the tribesmen, ideally, to harass an invading state army of superior logistical and economic power, and to hit back in incessant guerrilla raids, but the logistic problems prevent them from sustaining a movement for any length of time, especially outside their territory. British soldiers who fought the Mahsud observed, like Pettigrew, that 'the Mahsud likes his victories to be quick. He has no stomach or patience for long drawn out affairs'.¹⁶ The short-term aspect of tribal warfare is also related to the inherent structural democracy of tribal organisation. The people who inhabit the areas on both sides of the Durand line are organised in segmentary societies that are acephalous and egalitarian in the extreme, and by definition it is difficult for them to accept the leadership of one man over any period of time. I have shown elsewhere how in extraordinary times of crisis, particularly involving concepts of religious war (jihad), religious leaders have successfully united tribes against the British. This has always proved to be a short-term social and military unit, and once the fighting is over the tribal groups tend to disperse, leadership reverts to the level of maliks, and society to what has been termed 'ordered anarchy'.¹⁷

Two fundamental features of nang Pakhtun tribal structure are crucial to an anthropological understanding of these aspects of tribal warfare. These are agnatic rivalry (tarburwali) and an intense egalitarian ethos. Both features are connected, in a fashion which makes it difficult to sustain any tribal movements for long or under the leadership of one man. Although there have been successful forays and even swift victories over neighbouring states and established armies, the very nature of their organisation prevents tribes from consummating victory or setting up an independent administration of their own. Too often, like the old Mahsud who spoke to Pettigrew, the tribesmen will fight a good day's fight and leave for home without orders or co-

ordination within the larger context of the battle. These two tribal features, tarburwali and tribal democracy, are key factors determining success or failure in relationships between the tribe and the state within this region.

In terms of the historical relationship between tribe and state, the former has been the constant, the latter the unstable factor. Empires have risen and fallen over the centuries, while tribal society has to a large degree maintained its political boundaries and safeguarded its social and cultural traditions. Incorporation into the British Empire made little impact on the tribes in the Tribal Areas, who continued in their intransigence and persistent defiance of central authority. The spirit of tribal independence was never checked by the British, however savage the measures they took.¹⁸ Although the British were manipulating the tribes to their own purposes in embarrassing Afghanistan, their turbulence and democracy made them a dangerous weapon, unsafe to handle.

The Treaties that were signed at the earliest period of contact between nang tribes like the Wazir and the imperial state, were fundamentally different in nature, content and tone from those involving galang leaders representing emergent, quasi-autonomous states such as Swat. The British signed treaties with the Wali of Swat, the Mehtar of Chitral, the Nawabs of Amb and Dir, subsequently ratified by the Government of Pakistan,¹⁹ clearly specifying terms and conditions, rights and duties of the Rulers. All important matters such as defence, external affairs, religious matters, would be the direct concern of the Central Government. By contrast, treaties with the nang tribes do not reflect the confrontation of a superior power with a subjugated or defeated people. Indeed, there are underlying and not very subtle notes that make the treaties worth less than the paper they were written on. For example, promises to 'behave' and forgo raiding were entirely conditional on the regular payment of allowances.

Thus of 5 April 1902 an agreement with a jirga representing the Mahsud stipulated that the tribe 'will be of good conduct and commit no offences in areas occupied by Government, that is to say districts like Bannu, Dera Ismail Khan, the Sherani country, or Wana or the Tochi, or roads like the Gomal or other trade routes'. The area where 'offences' could be committed is immense and left undefined. The British promised to pay the tribe

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Rs.54,000, to be distributed according to nikat (hereditary right), one third each to the three Mahsud clans, Alizai, Bahlolzalai, and Shamankhel. The promises of good conduct were made 'in consideration of these allowances'.²⁰ In political terms, such treaties were intended to prevent the tribes from raiding into British India, an intention so often frustrated as almost to deprive them of legal stature.

Treaties with the nang tribes quite specifically stipulate that the tribesmen would be allowed to administer their own territory and organise their social and economic life just as they had in the past according to custom and tradition. They would, however, in a rather ambiguous and not clearly defined manner, accept the fact that they now belonged to a larger entity called British India, though the clause that they formed part of a 'special area' within that entity was clearly underlined. Pax Britannica in the Tribal Areas was to extend to the main roads and a hundred yards either side of it, and no more. The state, that is the most powerful empire at the turn of the century, thus for various historical and strategic reasons, tolerated a buffer zone stretching from Bajaur to South Waziristan Agency, almost entirely inhabited by what I have described as nang tribes. This situation in itself contributed to the continuation of the Great Game, and added a dimension to its complexity.

Waziristan and the Wazir Tribes

Waziristan is divided into two Agencies, North and South Waziristan, and probably falls into a special category as the most turbulent area on the Sub-continent, even within the special category of the Tribal Areas, as testified by the literature in which solutions to the problem are offered.²¹ About half the Wazir tribes are located in Afghanistan (Birmal and Matun) and half in Pakistan (North and South Waziristan Agencies). These tribes seldom recognise the existence of the international border as a legal reality, and movement between the two countries among related clans is unrestricted. Movement for trade or raid from either side is facilitated by the fact that surveillance of the border is practically impossible. In the summer of 1979, with a large company of Wazir maliks, I became the first Political Agent to visit Birmal right up to the Durand Line. The impact of this visit was momentous.

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Wazir fighting near Kabul with the Mujahidin, religious resistance against the Soviet-backed regime, took time off to write to congratulate me - showing their awareness that their last sanctuary had finally been penetrated.

This was the only area on the entire Sub-continent to be at one stage directly administered by the Central High Command of the Indian Army. Up to 31 March 1924 it was considered to be an 'action service area', and political authority was vested in the force commander, advised of course by political officers. The numbers of civil and military officers killed in Waziristan must be some sort of an imperial record: five of the 35 Political Agents (heads of Administration) from 1895 to 1947 died violently on duty there. By 1923, 17 crack British battalions were posted in Waziristan, as well as para-military forces, the South Waziristan Scouts (for South Waziristan) and the Tochi Scouts (for North Waziristan) - about 2,000 men in each corps. During the 1930s, there were 28 battalions in Waziristan - more troops than on the rest of the Sub-continent. Such unusually large numbers were necessary to 'hold' Waziristan and its tribes, who were in constant rebellion and a formidable force on their own ground. The 1919-21 campaign, following the Third Anglo-Afghan War, saw the heaviest fighting the British ever experienced on the Frontier, and in the Ahnai Tangi battle the Mahsud Wazir inflicted over 2,000 casualties on the British forces.²²

North and South Waziristan Agencies, totalling about 5,000 square miles of highly inhospitable mountainous country, broken by ravines and valleys almost inaccessible through lack of roads, have rarely been penetrated by outside armies. According to the latest census data, based on rough 'estimates', the population is about 550,000, of which about 250,000 are Mahsud (entirely in South Waziristan) and about 200,000 Wazir; the remaining 100,000 are Daur and other smaller tribes such as Suleyman Khel and Dotani.²³

The Wazir and Mahsud, the two major tribal groups, are cousins, descended from Karlanri, a son of the Pakhtun apical ancestor Qays Abd al-Rashid. Both Wazir and Mahsud trace their descent through some 13 to 14 generations to Wazir, who is said to have lived in the sixteenth century. It is only recently that Mahsud have adopted an independent identity, dropping the appellation Wazir from their names: until a few decades ago they were commonly known as 'Mahsud Wazir'.

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The political organisation of both tribes may be summarised as acephalous, egalitarian and segmentary. They approximate closely to the nang category of Pakhtun society. Wazir and Mahsud society is 'democratic' and all major decisions are made through the jirga, where each household head, elder (mashar) or headman (malik) speaks his mind openly and may, if he wishes to disagree with the final verdict, even refuse to go along with the communal decision. The malik's status and strength in society depend on two factors: his individual reputation for leadership qualities, especially wisdom and courage, and the number of guns he can muster in his support, usually those of close paternal relatives. Rarely do such headmen tower above the tribal section or sub-section in leadership. The possibility of accumulating wealth and thereby armed henchmen is minimised by the restricted economic base.

Land holdings are small and population scattered. In any case, the nature of the rain-fed (barani) land, and the system of inheritance, do not permit accumulation of large holdings and therefore do not provide the means for any one man to emerge with significant economic or political power over his fellow-men.

In what way was Waziristan different, and the tribes living there more difficult to administer than others in the Tribal Areas, such as the Afridi and Mohmand, themselves famous for their martial qualities? Various answers may be suggested. First, Waziristan is the only area which borders not only Afghanistan but also the Province of Baluchistan, both of which provide ideal escape routes after raids. Secondly, the tribes are well-armed. In 1924, 'according to the latest return the armament of the tribes of Waziristan, apart from other weapons, comprises 10,880 bolt action weapons of .303 bore, of which 6,850 are said to be in Mahsud hands'.²⁴ Moreover, they know how to use their weapons. Generals who have commanded troops against him 'place the Mahsud highest as a fighter'²⁵ in the Tribal Areas. Thirdly, this is physically the largest area, and South Waziristan the largest Agency in the Tribal Areas, and contains possibly the most difficult terrain in the entire region. Fourthly, Waziristan has no fertile valleys that might attract an invader to shed blood in an attempt at conquest. Finally, it was remote in terms of distance, whether by road or rail, from centres of British military concentration such as the cantonments at Peshawar, Kohat, Mardan or Nowshera. Waziristan is not on the

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main routes into India such as the Khyber, and hence no Alexander, Timur or Babur have had to cross or attempt to settle it.

The Wazir Tribes between Afghanistan and British India

In 1849 the British conquered the trans-Indus Districts from the Sikhs and occupied Peshawar. They soon came to realise the special relationship between the Frontier tribes and the Afghan Government: 'The sentiments and tendencies of such characters are naturally antagonistic to our rule, and they can only resort to Kabul for encouragement to persist in them.'²⁶

It was only after the famous attack on Tank (the winter headquarters of South Waziristan) by the Mahsud in 1860, that Neville Chamberlain was ordered to lead a field force, composed entirely of British Indian troops, into Waziristan. He advanced to Jandola and the Takkizam, and returned down the Khaysora to Bannu, having marched for 16 days through country no foreigner had ever seen or dared to enter before. His force consisted of three squadrons of cavalry, 13 mountain guns, and nine infantry battalions. There were in addition some 1600 tribal levies under their maliks and khans. It was the most formidable fighting machine ever assembled in the area, and the first time in history that an army had marched into Waziristan. Considerable damage was done to the Mahsud, but no formal surrender was achieved.²⁷

Fearing the aims of the British in their territory, the Mahsud had sent urgent deputations to Kabul appealing for help, on the grounds that the British were annexing their territory. The memory of the First Afghan War had still not faded in Afghanistan, however, and the country was in no immediate mood for further military adventures.

Afghan-British interests in Waziristan continued over the century with varying fortunes. The Afghan Government came to cultivate leaders from Waziristan assiduously, and after the Third Anglo-Afghan War in 1919 treated them with an extra show of respect: 'On their arrival at the capital [Kabul] the Maliks were received by the Amir in person with every mark of honour and conducted to a sarai [guest-house] which had been reserved specially for their use.' Marks of honour were bestowed on the Waziristan tribes to enlist and confirm their sympathy:

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Subsequently the Amir issued rewards and presented medals to the Maliks. The latter was similar to those issued to his own troops for the recent operations against the British. Of the officers who had deserted from the militias each received a special award of Rs.300 and the sepoy Rs.100.²⁸

As late as 1920 Wana (summer headquarters of South Waziristan) was occupied by a small Afghan contingent, though a few months later a British force of two infantry brigades advanced from Jandola through the Shahur Tangi and retook the settlement; it was then decided to occupy Wana permanently, and the road through the Shahur Tangi to Wana was also constructed.²⁹

A few years later the Afghan strategy began to pay off, and their influence among the Wazir and Mahsud tribesmen increased; two corps of Wazir militia with headquarters at Matun and Urgan were formed with a nominal strength of 1200. Recruiting was opened in July 1924, and by the end of August 400 had enlisted. Some of these Wazir and a larger number of the Mahsud militia distinguished themselves in the fighting on the Turkistan frontier in the northern provinces of Afghanistan, for which services they received generous rewards.³⁰

But the Indian Political Department and its officers who manned the Tribal Areas still had a trick or two up their sleeves and their opportunity came when King Amanullah was deposed in 1929. It was not difficult for an imaginative Political Agent to suggest to the Waziristan tribes that there was booty to be had in Kabul, and honour and glory awaited them if they were to slip across the border for a few days of adventure. In 1929 Mahsud and Wazir crossed the border to Khost and joined Nadir Khan in autumn at Matun. Caroe reminds us, in his chapter on Waziristan, that 'This lashkar formed the spear-head of Nadir's advance; it was they who took Kabul for him and made it possible for a Durrani dynasty to be restored. They were in fact the King-makers of the day.'³¹ Since then they have never ceased to remind the rulers of Kabul of their chief share in that conquest.

As payment to Wazir and Mahsud tribesmen, Nadir Khan, faced with an empty treasury, was forced to allow them to loot his own capital. These tribesmen returned home by the end of the year with a great amount of loot, rifles and ammunition. Shortly after, an insurrection almost in the suburbs of

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Kabul among the followers of the dead Bacha Saqao forced Nadir Khan once again to call the Pakhtun tribes to his support. This time he was able to get them home without having to let them loot Kabul in recompense. Within a few years the same tribesmen were denouncing Nadir Khan and arguing that they had supported him only for the purpose of restoring Amanullah, the rightful King. The Waziristan tribes, aware that 'King-makers can as easily be King-breakers',³² felt ready for yet another exercise in King-making and gathering of booty in addition. In 1933 they invested Matun in Khost and it was only with great difficulty that the Afghan army, led by Hashim Khan, the King's brother, repelled them, otherwise they might well have repeated the story of 1929.

The tribes were always a two-edged weapon. It was not long before other powers, attempting to fish in the troubled waters of the Tribal Areas, took advantage of the situation. In the later 1930s a young Syrian from the revered Jilani/Geylani family, popularly called the Shami Pir, was installed at Kaniguram in the heart of Waziristan, whence it was rumoured he would lead an opposition army, though whether against the British or to Kabul was not precisely clear. With the warclouds gathering in Europe the British could ill afford another Waziristan adventure. Wazir and Mahsud tribal lashkars began to collect, and the British could have found a rapidly growing insurrection in their own backyard had not some quick-witted Political Agent once again acted swiftly. The Shami Pir was persuaded to fly out of Waziristan, apparently the richer, it is estimated, by £20,000 in gold sovereigns. These lessons were not lost on Kabul. What £20,000 could stop, a similar or smaller sum could start. Afghan subsidies to the Pakhtun tribes, especially on the British side of the Durand Line, were stepped up, and khilats (robes of honour) were liberally distributed to visiting maliks in royal audiences in Kabul.

The final example of tribe-state interaction in Waziristan had the 1947 Partition of India as a backdrop. In 1947 the tribes showed that they had not lost their capacity for swift and brilliant strategic military movement against larger state systems and superior and established armies. Spontaneously and voluntarily, they moved in large numbers to the Muslim state of Kashmir, which was disputed between India and Pakistan and in a state of turmoil. Almost alone the Pakhtun lashkar swept aside the regular troops and came within an ace of conquering Kashmir.

They scattered battalions of Dogras, the crack Kashmir regulars, and by 30 October were at Pattan, 18 miles from Srinagar. Sikh battalions of the regular Indian army were flown in and reached the Srinagar air-strip barely in time to deny it to the tribesmen and allow troops to pour in from India. It was only with the massive intervention of the regular troops and their superior logistics, with heavy armaments moved in by an all-out air-lift from Delhi, that the situation was saved for the Indians. Otherwise the tribesmen would have captured one of the most important areas of the Sub-continent and altered its subsequent destiny and history. Over the next thirty years India and Pakistan were to engage in three wars over Kashmir.

Although the main battle for Kashmir was fought in the Vale, the raiders erupted into all parts of the State. The distance from home, always an important factor in determining the length of their involvement, must be kept in mind. Srinagar is 290 miles from Fort Jamrud at the entrance to the Khyber; it is almost twice that distance from Razmak, in the heart of Waziristan. It is interesting to conjecture how the classic syndrome of Waziri war tactics would have affected their performance if the engagement had been protracted.

It is important to point out that Pakhtun tribes on both sides of the Durand Line saw the Kashmir adventure as a straightforward jihad, and that many Wazir tribesmen from the remote Birmal areas joined the lashkars, ethnic solidarity cutting across the Durand Line. There is nostalgia even today in the Tribal Areas regarding the Kashmir episode, and maliks describe it thus: 'It was the best time of my life. We went along singing and holding our rifles. Nothing was able to stand before us.'³³ Section elders speaking on behalf of jirgas meeting political officers in the Tribal Areas even today invariably begin with: 'Sahib, we have sacrificed everything for Pakistan. We fought in Kashmir and lost kin and property. We have shed blood for Islam and Pakistan. We have a right to make demands.'

Spain's comment on the Kashmir jihad is particularly relevant in the context of the argument of this chapter. 'Little attention has been paid to this, and in it lies a key to the character of the tribes and a demonstration of the limitations and potentialities of their power'³⁴ - the 'limitations' being the jealousies inspired by agnatic rivalries in the tribal organisation, and the 'potentialities'

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the formidable fighting prowess fired by a fierce sense of independence.

Conclusion

The Mahsud maliks confronted, assessed and rejected Western civilisation as represented by the British Empire, and requested their Resident, Sir Evelyn Howell, to 'let us be men like our fathers before us'.³⁵ In the end perhaps one may well agree with the comment on the political administration of Waziristan made by a senior British official after he read Howell's little classic, Mizh: 'What a record of futility it all is!'³⁶ The ethnic, political and administrative problem of the Tribal Areas remained as far from solution in 1947 as it had been for a hundred years.

The creation of the state of Pakistan in 1947 changed many things in the relationship between tribe and state. The obvious rallying point for the tribes, their rationale for raid and invasion, that is the religious motive, was abruptly removed. After 1947, to the south and east of the Durand Line it could no longer be argued that incursions and kidnappings were not directed against the Muslim local population but against the non-Muslim rulers of the land. The Wazir and Mahsud did come down in large numbers in 1947, but it was to take over the shops and bazaars left behind by the Hindus. Today Tank is almost entirely occupied by Mahsud, who own a thriving transport business, from lands around the town, and are gradually acquiring the ways of the Settled Districts. The Wazir have moved to the settled District headquarters of Bannu (from North Waziristan) and Dera Ismail Khan (from South Waziristan). Both tribes still jealously maintain the independence of their houses and lands in the Tribal Areas, and are not prepared to lift the veil that still hangs over their lives there. The forms of tribal administration and the patterns and rituals of tribal life in the Tribal Areas still continue largely as if nothing had changed.

None the less, rapid changes are afoot, with far-reaching social and economic implications. Today there is a Mahsud Political Agent in the Tribal Areas, a Mahsud General in the Pakistan army, and a Mahsud Development Commissioner in charge of a Province. Apart from these senior officials, thousands of other Wazir and Mahsud serve in various Departments of the State of Pakistan. Service it-

self implies changes in life-style, changes in attitudes, and eventually changes in culture and tradition. Perhaps the social and geographical boundary between tribe and state will in the future be no longer as sharp as it was in the past, and therefore less strongly upheld, and the next generation may even see the final absorption of the tribes, their customs and traditions, into the states on both sides of the border.

When I ask Wazir and Mahsud whether they are 'men like their fathers before them' in the most profound sense, they invariably reply in the negative. 'No. We are now soft. We have become businessmen. We own shops in Tank and Dera Ismail Khan. We run transport buses. We cultivate lands in Districts (Bannu and Dera Ismail Khan) and we have given up the ways of our fathers.' Change is in the air. Schools, roads and services are bringing fundamental changes in cultural and social attitudes.

The tribes had been 'played with' by the states, but they had also 'played off' the states against each other; they managed to remain to a great extent unadministered and culturally intact. The relation of the tribes generally, and the Waziristan tribesmen in particular, to their adjacent nation-states, changed with the rather abrupt end of a round in the Great Game in 1947 when the British left the Sub-continent. The immediate consequences are that the tribesman in Pakistan sets the pace for integration in his relationship to the larger state, whether for economic development or political absorption as in the 1970s, but in an increasingly cordial relationship. Secondly, he finds his role in the old Great Game was radically changed by the departure of one player in 1947. The balance now appears palpably uneven. In addition, although their tribal structure is still largely intact in the Tribal Areas, economic developments, large-scale migration to the Gulf States, education, the acquisition of land in the Settled Areas, and involvement in administration and business in the rest of the country, will most certainly have affected tribal organisation and the martial spirit and attitudes of the tribesman. The last military adventure on any scale involving the Waziristan tribes was over 30 years ago, that is, a full generation. Whether the new generation is capable of emulating the independent spirit and martial qualities of their forefathers, or whether they consider that model worth shedding blood for, are questions that only history can answer. Even if the tribes wished to, perhaps they

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could no longer fully play the Great Game with their old élan and confidence. Tribes in Asia appear to grow weaker in direct proportion as the states grow stronger.³⁷

NOTES

1. See F.G. Bailey, *Stratagems and Spoils* (Blackwell, Oxford, 1969).
2. A.S. Ahmed, 'An aspect of the colonial encounter in the NWFP', *Asian Affairs*, 9, 3 (1978); id., 'The colonial encounter on the NWFP: myth and mystification', in *Journal of the Anthropological Society of Oxford*, 9, 3 (1978).
3. R.I. Bruce, *The Forward Policy and its Results* (Longmans, London, 1900).
4. J.G. Elliott, *The Frontier 1839-1947: the story of the North-West Frontier of India* (Cassell, London, 1968), p.53.
5. Point 2 of the Durand Agreement, signed in Kabul by Amir Abd al-Rahman on 12 November 1893.
6. For instance, see the role of the political officers as described by O. Caroe, *The Pathans, 550 BC - AD 1957* (Macmillan, London, 1958); and E. Howell, *Mizh: a Monograph on Government's Relations with the Mahsud Tribe* (Government of India Press, Simla, 1931; reprinted with a foreword by A.S. Ahmed, Oxford University Press, Karachi, 1979). Both Caroe and Howell were political officers of note. For a topical comment on political administration and the Great Game, in which Caroe pays the highest possible compliment to the writer as a Political Agent, see his review of the reprint of *Mizh*, *Asian Affairs*, 11, 1 (1980).
7. J. Spain, *The Pathan Borderland* (Mouton, The Hague, 1963).
8. Generally defined as *melmastia* (hospitality), *badal* (revenge), *nang* (honour) and *tora* (bravery). See Caroe, *The Pathans; Spain, Borderland*; F. Barth, 'Pathan identity and its maintenance', in F. Barth (ed.), *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* (Allen and Unwin, London, 1969); A.S. Ahmed, *Millenium and Charisma among Pathans: a critical essay in Social Anthropology* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1976); id., *Social and Economic Change in the Tribal Areas* (Oxford University Press, Karachi, 1977); id., *Pukhtun Economy and Society: Traditional Structure and Economic Development in a Tribal Society* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1980).
9. B. Moynahan, 'The Free Frontier: warriors of the Khyber Pass', *Sunday Times Magazine*, 21 March 1976. See Ahmed, works listed in note 8 above.
10. Ahmed, *Millenium*, etc.
11. See note 2.
12. The Yusufzais of Rampur, who ruled Rampur State, trace their ancestry to Yusuf, the eponymous ancestor of the

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galang Yusufzai, and have a highly developed ethnic sensibility, see M. Elphinstone, *An Account of the Kingdom of Caubul* (London, 1815).

13. See E. Gellner, *Saints of the Atlas* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London, 1969).

14. H.R.C. Pettigrew, *Frontier Scouts* (published privately, 1965); as quoted in Elliott, *The Frontier*, p. 258.

15. See Ahmed, *Pukhtun Economy and Society*, p. 72.

16. Pettigrew, *Frontier Scouts*, p. 7.

17. See E. Evans-Pritchard, *The Nuer* (Clarendon, Oxford, 1940), p. 181.

18. See, for example, Spain, *The Pathan Borderland*, p. 187, for a compilation of records of 'offences' by Frontier tribes on British India from 1920-38.

19. Instruments of Accession between the Governor-General of, and on behalf of, Pakistan and the Rulers of Chitral (the Mehtar - dated 19 March 1953), Swat (the Wali - dated 17 Feb. 1954) and Amb (Nawab - dated 29 Apr. 1953), Government of Pakistan (Confidential).

20. Howell, *Mizh* (reprint), pp. 108-9.

21. See: Caroe, *The Pathans*; C.C.S. Curtis, *Monograph on Mahsud Tribes* (Government of North-West Frontier Province, 1947); Elliott, *The Frontier*; E. Howell, *Waziristan Border Administration Report for 1924-25* (Government of India Report (Confidential), 1925); id., *Mizh*; H.H. Johnson, *Mahsud Notes* (Government of India (Confidential), 1934); id., *Notes on Wana* (Government of India (Confidential), 1934); F.W. Johnston, *Notes on Wana* (Government of India (Confidential), 1903); J. Masters, *Bugles and a Tiger* (Four Square, London, 1965); Pettigrew, *Frontier Scouts*; Spain, *The Pathan Borderland*.

22. Elliott, *The Frontier*, pp. 261f.; Howell, *Mizh*.

23. Government of Pakistan, 1972 Census Report.

24. Howell, *Waziristan...1924-25*, p. 16. See also A. Keppel, *Gun-running on the Indian North-West Frontier* (Murray, London, 1911).

25. A. Skeen, *Passing it on: short talks on tribal fighting on the North-Western Frontier of India* (Aldershot, 1943; reprinted by Nisa Traders, Quetta, 1978), p. 2.

26. Letter no.120-P, dated 8 October 1881, written by Major Macaulay, Deputy Commissioner, Dera Ismail Khan, proceedings 21 July 1882, nos.8-20, quoted in p.2 of Howell, *Waziristan...1924-25*.

27. Elliott, *The Frontier*, pp.225-35.

28. General Staff, *Operations in Waziristan* (Army Headquarters, Calcutta, 1924), p. 84.

29. Elliott, *The Frontier*, p.261f.

30. General Staff, *Military Report on Waziristan* (Calcutta, 1935).

31. Caroe, *The Pathans*, p. 407.

32. *ibid.*

33. Spain, *The Pathan Borderland*, p. 310; see also I.

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Stephens, *Pakistan* (Benn, London, 1963).

34. Spain, *The Pathan Borderland*, p. 206.

35. Howell, *Mizh*, Preface.

36. Howell, *Mizh* (reprint), p. 95.

37. Ahmed, *Social and Economic Change*; also Foreword to Howell, *Mizh*.

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Chapter 6

POLITICAL ORGANISATION OF PASHTUN NOMADS AND THE STATE

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Afghan Nomads and Tribes¹

The ruling elite of Afghanistan up to 1978 was ethnically, and to a certain extent even genealogically, closely related to those Pashtun tribes to which the bulk of Afghan nomads belong. Thus one might expect that the Afghan state had taken over at least some of the political functions of the nomads and therefore altered their political organisation to the extent that they no longer needed their own decision-making institutions or political leaders.

An examination of written reports on Afghan nomads of different areas from different times, beginning with Elphinstone and ending with current anthropological accounts, reveals the seemingly simple pattern that the closer the nomad-state relations the more likely hierarchisation takes place among the nomad groups concerned, that is, the more powerful the nomad leaders that appear. As Elphinstone noted in the early nineteenth century, 'tribes most under the king's influence are the most obedient to their Khaun'.²

The relationship between state and nomad society is well described and analysed for Iran.³ Yet these analyses are not easily applicable to Afghanistan where, unlike Iran, most of the nomads belong to the politically and numerically dominant ethnic group of the country, and are not considered ethnic or tribal minorities.

More than 80 per cent of Afghan nomads are estimated to be Pashtun, but within each Pashtun tribe they form a numerical minority. Even among those tribes which are most famous for being 'nomadic', like the Ghilzai or the Durrani tribes such as Nurzai, Ishaqzai, Barakzai or Atsakzai, the majority at least in the present century, are sedentary

farmers and I doubt if they were ever purely nomadic. Thus, when considering the organisational abilities of the Ghilzai who held the throne of Isfahan for a brief period in the early eighteenth century, and nearly established an Afghan state, one has to remember that they were not nomadic. The same is true of the Durrani who shortly after did succeed in establishing an Afghan state. Not only on the state level did the Afghan nomads play a peripheral role, but also on the level of their own tribes. As Richard Tapper has stated, 'Afghan tribalism...has not on the whole been based on pastoralism or nomadism...Politically active ('troublesome') tribes were more often settled villagers or traders than pastoral nomads.'⁴

The question now arises as to whether Afghan nomads may be considered social entities at all. My contention is that they can, if properly placed in the economic and social framework of their wider society.

Pastoral nomads are professional specialists in arid areas where for ecological reasons agriculture and animal husbandry need spatial separation. This economic specialisation results not only in spatial separation of the pastoralists from the agriculturists but also in a differentiation in life-styles and forms of social organisation on the local level.

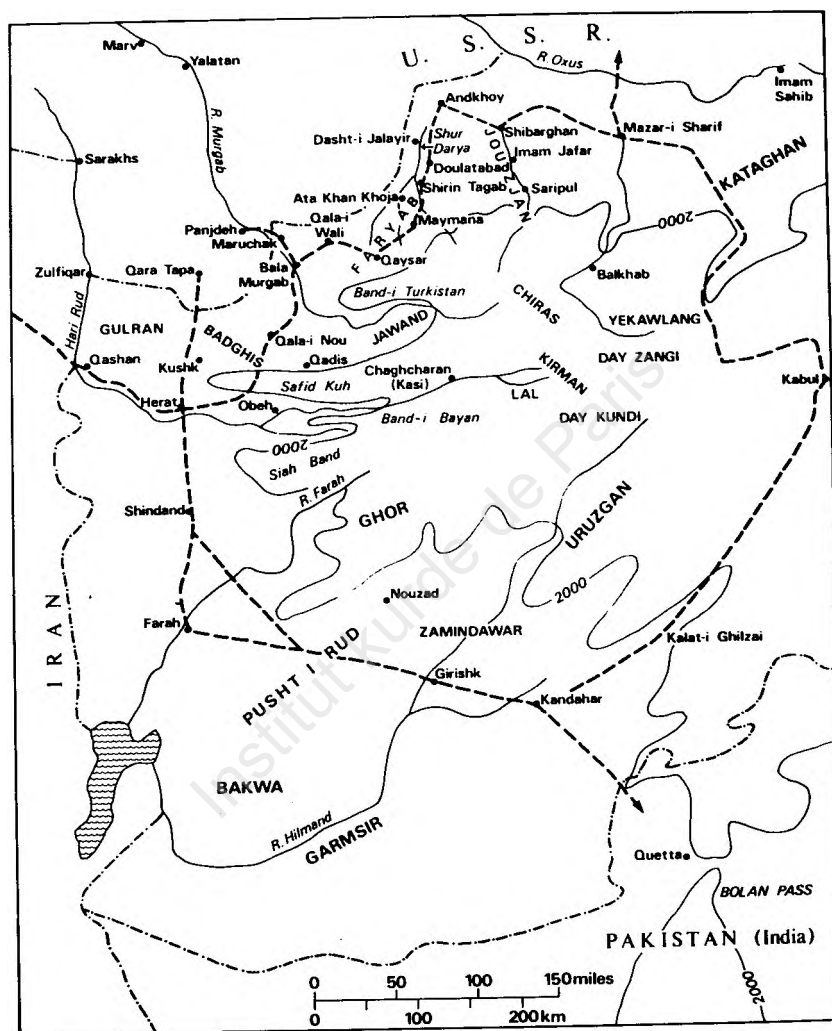
In addition to spatial mobility, nomadism as I observed it in north-west and west Afghanistan requires a great ability for frequently establishing new social ties and resolving old ones. Camps and herding units re-group more than once a year, thus forming extremely ephemeral local groups with corresponding social and political institutions.

In this respect one has to consider nomad groups as particular social and political entities sharply distinct from sedentary groups, without neglecting the fact that pastoral nomadism in Afghanistan (as elsewhere) is only part of the local rural economy. On a wider social level Afghan nomads are well integrated into a complex social system that includes peasants, traders, artisans, nomads and others. Furthermore, there always was an exchange of individuals between these occupational groups. Barth could have had Pashtun nomads in mind when he wrote, 'nomad and villager can...be regarded merely as specialized occupational groups within a single economic system'.⁵

From my knowledge of them I would say that the political organisation of nomads in Afghanistan tends to be egalitarian unless either the nomads are

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MAP 4: Sketch-map of western parts of Afghanistan, to show places mentioned in chapters 6 and 7



forced to react to political pressure from neighbours or the state, or the state itself imposes institutions of power and authority on the nomads or strengthens existing political positions such as the khan or the malik, whose functions were previously more representative than authoritative.

Imposing new or strengthening existing authority roles seems to be a traditional strategy employed by oriental states in ruling their nomads. Only if government administration develops as efficiently as it did in Iran in the last decades can the state transform this indirect rule into direct rule and make its nomads 'acephalous' again.

In order to support these general statements, especially those concerning the egalitarian tendencies of Pashtun nomads, I wish to present some facts drawn from my observations and from the literature consulted.

Nomads of Western Afghanistan

In 1970 I spent seven months among Durrani Pashtuns in Ghor and Badghis in north-western Afghanistan.⁶ From 1975 to 1977 the biologist Michael Casimir and I conducted a detailed field study on economy, ecology, social organisation and socialisation among other Durrani Pashtun nomads and villagers in Farah in western Afghanistan.

The nomad group I studied in 1970 was composed of members of the Atsakzai, Ishaqzai and Nurzai tribes of the Durrani (or Abdali) branch of Pashtuns. Attached to this group were a few households of Pashtunized Timuri. Their winter area is the fertile loess steppe of the Jawand district of Badghis. In summer the nomads cross the Safid Kuh range (called Paropamisus in older maps) to the south, and migrate into the northern parts of the province of Ghor. The whole area lies between the upper courses of the rivers Murghab and Hari Rud. Their winter area in Jawand is characterised by an undulating plain covered with a rich grass pasture, and criss-crossed by canyons sometimes about 2,000 feet deep. The value of this steppe for nomadic pasture is limited by the lack of water: every drop has to be carried up from the bottom of the canyons by pack animals. The flocks cannot move too far away from the canyons, because every other day, in order to drink, they have to climb down the dangerous paths which the nomads have cut into the sheer cliff-walls of the canyons.

Temperature is a second factor limiting animal

husbandry in Jawand. It ranges from a mean annual minimum of -18°C to a mean annual maximum of 42.5° .⁷ The nomads can winter there only by protecting their sheep and goats in the numerous small rock caves so characteristic of the area. The most suitable caves are owned privately by individual households. The number of existing caves limits the number of animals that can be pastured there in winter.

On the loess plains of Jawand dry farming is possible, and about half the nomads raise wheat, barley and melons. No nomad household, however, is able to satisfy its own need for agricultural produce, and all of them have to buy cereals from settled farmers, for which they use cash obtained by selling animals in the main livestock market of central Afghanistan, at Chaghcharan in Ghor. There is no co-ordination among the nomads over market relations. Every household decides by itself when to go to market and what to sell and buy.⁸

Most of the settled farmers in the area are Persian-speaking Firuzkuhi Aymaq. In the winter area of Jawand there is no competition for land between Pashtun nomads and Firuzkuhi because the latter cultivate irrigated fields in the canyons and dry fields near the afore-mentioned Safid Kuh mountain range, where precipitation is higher but regular watering-places for the nomads' animals are far away.

Although the pasture-lands are owned by neither individuals nor groups, access to pasture in Jawand is not free. Normally a household acquires pasture rights either through spending several consecutive winters, or by purchasing agricultural land in a place. These rights are held by individuals and are not conferred by virtue of membership in a certain group. Newcomers can be granted pasture rights only by individuals or groups of individuals who already have them, and an individual can grant these rights only if there are no objections from other members of his camp. The granting of pasture rights also includes protection for the newcomer and help in finding caves for his animals in winter.

A nomad who seeks prominence in the political arena tries to gather such newcomers around himself in order to build up a clientele. But if a danger arises that too many newcomers might overstock the pastures, the rest of the nomads have an effective means of controlling the immigration of new households, by simply blocking the narrow and steep paths in the canyon walls.

These client relations are short-lived, usually because the clients quickly establish new social

relations with as many other households as possible. For example, by creating bonds of friendship through frequent visits and invitations, by co-operation in herding and other economic activities, and finally by marital ties, the client can become independent of his patron.

There are other opportunities for ambitious persons to gain power, but before I describe them, more background information is necessary. In their summer area in northern Ghor, their ecology and relations with the settled population, that is with the Firuzkuhi Aymaq, are quite different from in the winter area. During summer the nomads camp around wells or along small rivers. Wells and river banks are privately owned, either by the Firuzkuhi or by wealthy nomads. The animals are grazed on the high plateaux covered by shrubs of *Artemisia* and thorn bushes. Although these plateaux are not private property, access to them is effectively controlled by the Firuzkuhi villagers and their chiefs. Only those nomads who own wells or land there can graze their animals without asking permission from the Firuzkuhi, and have also a limited right to bring clients with them. In this area, settled people and nomads compete on pasture land, because the villagers also engage in animal husbandry, especially goats and cattle. The only way for the nomads to spend their summers in Ghor is to establish peaceful relations with the Firuzkuhi. Since pasture rights are never held by nomad groups, neither in Jawand nor in Ghor, each household has to look for pasture individually. Thus, in the summer area of Ghor a nomadic household has two alternative strategies available. First, if it is wealthy enough it buys a well or a field along a river bank, including the associated pasture rights. However, since nomads dislike camping alone, the head of such a household has to ask others to join him. Unless they are very close kinsmen (father, brothers, sons) he has to win the agreement of the Firuzkuhi who live nearest that place. The normal procedure for winning this approval is to establish personal friendship with the chief of the Firuzkuhi group, and to pay some rent (alafchar). The second alternative is simply to become the client of another nomad who owns such pasture rights.⁹

A nomad seeking political prominence by collecting clients in this way will be only a seasonal khan, a 'summer khan', if he cannot find other ties to bind the clients to him. During the rest of the year, these summer relations are unimportant. For eight to nine months of the year the nomads live in

Jawand, therefore in order to understand better their egalitarian political organisation let us have a closer look at economic and social activities there.

The economic basis is breeding fat-tailed sheep; in addition the nomads also raise goats, making up about ten per cent of the flocks, and camels and horses for transport. Further, as stated above, some nomads also engage in dry-farming. As among all nomads, animals are individually owned, and as among most nomads, several households form herding units in order to build up herds of optimum size: that is, the maximum number of animals which can be herded by the minimum number of shepherds; also, the grazing and social behaviour of sheep and goats depend on the size of the herds.¹⁰ My informants considered the optimum size to be 500-600 sheep and goats. The average household in Jawand owned only 120 head, therefore the average herding unit consisted of four to five households. In fact I observed herding units ranging from two to ten participants.

A household's wealth in animals changes frequently, the major factors being natural growth and losses, selling, buying, and bridewealth transactions. Change in household wealth also causes changes in the herding units. These changes, and the yearly search for individual pasture rights in summer, force the herding units to reorganise at least twice a year. Normally several herding units form one camp, the size of which depends mainly on the quality of the surrounding pasture. Camps are as unstable as their constituent herding units. Other reasons for the instability of local groups are quarrels between individuals and disagreements on political matters.

Among the Pashtun nomads in the province of Farah, we were able to document the comparable instability of local groups. In the winter of 1975-6 we started fieldwork there in a camp with 11 households. After two months the camp split up, with some households joining other camps, others taking on newcomers. Thus, during the 18 months of our stay we found the initial 11 households in twelve different camps in various combinations with others. When we finally left them our 11 households were living in four different camps, together with 15 other households.

It should be noted that animal husbandry among the western Pashtuns is rather labour-intensive. The amount of labour a household can perform sets an upper limit for the accumulation of animal property. Here, ten sheep and goats per adult household member

is the minimum a household needs to continue nomadic life, while about 50 sheep per adult household member is the maximum for the household's labour capacity.

As Barth reported for the Basiri in southern Iran, nomads whose flocks fall below the minimum tend to become landless peasants, while nomads at the upper limit of wealth prefer to invest their surplus in land and then leave nomadism for landlordship.¹¹ In fact, in some areas of the Murghab valley (between the Jawand river and Kham Gerdak) and in the Shindand region of Farah province, former nomads have purchased land, quit nomadism, and now employ impoverished nomads as tenants or seasonal workers. Thus, variation of wealth among those who remain nomads is limited, and so therefore is the use that the politically ambitious can make of economic resources for gaining power among the nomads.

The Role of Kinship and Descent

Households are independent units, and may be said to be the only stable social units in the society. Although it seems paradoxical, this fact requires from the nomad not only individual decision-making, but also an unusual ability to make social contacts, for he must be continually ready to make social ties with new and different partners in order to ensure his survival. This does not mean that kinship relations are irrelevant for camp formation. Patrilineal, matrilineal and affinal relations facilitate access to a camp, and the choice of partners. I often observed in the nomads' discussions before the regrouping of herding units and camps, that next to economic factors, affinal and matrilineal relations between households were as important as agnatic relations.

After economics and close kinship, there is a third principle of social organisation: the tribal or clan system, based on a national genealogy. While this tribal or clan system permeates the thinking of the Pashtun nomads, it plays the least important role in their social group formation. Nevertheless, it requires description and analysis, because people themselves consider it important, even if the anthropologist can hardly observe its social relevance.

Pashtuns believe they are patrilineal descendants of one common ancestor, yet his name is not

remembered by all. Most genealogies name him Qays Abd al-Rashid, with the surname Pathan or Pashtun. In some parts of Afghanistan he is known as Khaled Baba, or Daru Nika,¹² or other names. He is supposed to have had three or four sons, who in their turn had several sons, grandsons, and so forth. The direct patrilineal descendants of Qays formed the lineage of the founders of the various Pashtun sections, clans and sub-clans. The genealogy within the sub-clans is generally unknown. At least in western Afghanistan, only a few Pashtuns claim to be able to trace their personal pedigree back to the clan ancestor. In general, however, the clan and sub-clan ancestors or founders can be linked by a continuous genealogy to all other clan founders and to the common ancestor of the Pashtuns, thus forming a lineage of their own, i.e. a lineage of the clan ancestors.

Since Pashtuns live dispersed over a vast territory, traditions have diverged during the centuries, especially when for political reasons in some areas certain genealogies were manipulated, or when for demographic reasons clans were subdivided or joined with others, and when these alterations were not accepted or not known by all Pashtuns. My informants were well aware of this; one Atsakzai in Jawand related the following story.

Once the Barakzai were only a sub-clan of the Atsakzai, since Barak was a son of Atsak. When Ahmad Shah Baba, a member of a small clan (Popalzai), came to power, he felt threatened by the large and powerful clan of Atsakzai, and therefore he divided up the Atsakzai into the Barakzai and the rest of the Atsakzai, simply declaring that Barak was not a son but a brother of Atsak.¹³

In spite of the impossibility in principle of drawing a generally accepted genealogy of all Pashtuns, some authors have tried it, and some even with relative success, such as Khwaja Nimatullah al-Harawi in the early seventeenth century,¹⁴ or the author of the Afghan Tazkirat al-Muluk of the later eighteenth century.¹⁵

The genealogical clan system is not the social system of the Pashtun nomads, nor is it merely an ideology. The majority of Pashtuns are settled, and there is no valid evidence that they have ever been nomads to a larger extent than they have been recently. Therefore, this genealogical clan system is a pattern of settled people and was developed among

peasants, not nomads. Accordingly it would be misleading to explain this model of social categorisation by anything which has to do with nomadism. Nor would I explain it as a 'social structure in reserve'.¹⁶

But what do the Pashtun nomads do with this model, inherited or adopted from their settled ancestors or neighbours? They can hardly use it for territorial divisions and political groupings, but they do use it for maintaining social relationships with the settled society, and for stressing their membership in the Pashtun nation. No one could doubt the Pashtunwali (being a good Pashtun) of a nomad, no matter how far away from Pashtun settlements, if he can trace his descent in a renowned Pashtun tribe and if he can link himself genealogically to Qays Abd al-Rashid or Baba Khaled.

In theory, Pashtun nomads can also use their clan model for recruiting raiding parties or groups united for aggression and mutual defence, as Sahlins has suggested for segmentary lineage systems in general.¹⁷ Yet empirically I could find no cases among Pashtun nomads in western Afghanistan where such groups were based on the patrilineal descent system. Instead, I found them invariably formed on the basis of local neighbourhood, common economic interests and close consanguineal and affinal kinship.

One is tempted to ask whether the clan model or 'segmentary lineage system' of these nomads is in a late developmental stage as described by Sahlins: 'the segmentary lineage system is self-liquidating. It is advantageous in intertribal competition, but having emerged victorious it has no longer raison d'etre'.¹⁸ This situation might be held to exist among the settled Pashtuns of western Afghanistan, who conquered the area more than two centuries ago and now use the most fertile agricultural lands there without serious competition from the outside. But the nomads in western Afghanistan still have to defend their pasture both against intrusion by other nomads and against non-Pashtun settled people, mainly in the summer areas of central Afghanistan. Here Sahlins' inter-tribal competition is still alive.

In short, all Pashtun nomads belong to tribes, clans and lineages, but at least those I observed in the west - and I doubt if it is fundamentally different elsewhere - are organised socially not on the basis of a segmentary lineage or clan system, but on other bases such as common economic interests and close affinal and cognatic kinship bonds. If we

find camps where members of a certain tribe are numerically dominant, this is not because they are tribally organised, but rather because there is a tendency for brothers and cousins to camp together, that is cousins of all categories, who, given a preference for lineage endogamy, tend to belong to the same clan. If they camp together it is not because they belong to the same tribe or clan, but simply because they are brothers or cousins.

Political Organisation and Leadership

Since segmentary lineage organisation in the strict sense does not exist, and since the social and political organisation of the western Pashtun nomads does not extend beyond narrowly delimited groups, I want first to consider the political organisation at this level.

All group decisions which concern more than one household are reached by discussions in open councils (majlis - called 'jirga' by the eastern Pashtuns). All men concerned take part in the council and each participant has the right to speak. Since decisions are not reached by majority vote, each household can be represented by as many members as it likes, and even women are allowed to speak. Discussions continue until counter-arguments are no longer raised, or until it becomes evident to everyone that a consensus is impossible, at least for that meeting. When differences of opinion persist and factions form, mediators appear and try to reconcile the differences. If they fail, the herding unit or camp usually breaks up and the households form new groups. There are no chairmen or discussion leaders, and opinion leaders or mediators are influential not by virtue of office, birth or wealth, but because of personal qualities such as experience, age, and eloquence. Persons having such qualities are known as spin-zhiri ('white-beards').

Despite the fact that decisions are reached in councils, there are some political roles. Thus, when a herding unit regroups, it chooses a spokesman (sar-khel), who is generally the head of the household richest in livestock, since one of his responsibilities is to give hospitality to visitors to the herding unit. His chief task is to represent the herding unit in its outside dealings; for example, with hired shepherds or with other herding units. If the joint herd becomes too small, he is responsible for building it up by bringing in new house-

holds along with their animals. No power to make decisions is delegated to him. He represents and is dependent upon the consensus of the herding unit.

Another political role is that of the malik; this is a traditional institution in Pashtun society,¹⁹ and is at present anchored in the state administration. The office of malik carries no power or authority, neither in its traditional nor in its state-approved form. The task of the malik is to represent his group or clientele in its relations with the outside, especially with the state. In this role, he is dependent on the group that he represents. In addition, the state entrusts him with the task of presenting regulations and pronouncements to his clients. His clientele is not restricted to members of a single herding unit or camp, but is composed of members of different villages or camps. The number of clients a malik has can vary from five to 70 persons. These clienteles are more stable than herding units or camps, but a malik must always be aware that his clients may choose another man in his stead. The head of each household is free to choose whichever man in his winter region he prefers as his malik, or to offer himself as a candidate.

The British colonial officer J.A. Robinson accurately characterised the malik as follows:

Powindah [i.e. Pashtun nomad] maliks wield much less power than do the maliks of the tribal territory of the Frontier; in fact it is only during the actual migration, when fighting is imminent, or when they are required by their tribe or section to make representations to government officials that they seem to have any power at all. Even then the course they are to follow is decided upon by the jirga... When maliks are powerful, it is because they possess strength of character, wealth, numerous relations, influence with Government and, last of all, birth. The Powindah is far more impatient of control not only by Government but by his own maliks...While he is proud to have king or malik, yet nothing in the world is so important than that they should not exercise any arbitrary power over him.²⁰

Even a hundred years earlier, Elphinstone was aware of the egalitarian aspect of the malik when he wrote that 'the elected Mulliks...are obliged, in their turn, to obtain the consent of their divisions'.²¹

The khan is a politically more important office. Although one person can be malik and khan at the same time, the offices should be clearly separated. The word khan has a wide range of meanings in Pashto, corresponding perhaps to those of the German word 'Herr'. 'Khan' placed after a person's name is the polite form of address for every grown man, for example, 'Yusuf Khan'. Khan alone means a powerful, politically influential person. The khan is not an institutional political office. To be a khan is rather a quality that, in principle, any man can acquire. In a group there can be several khans, one, or even none.

A man distinguishes himself as khan through his ability to attract followers, mainly by offering them economic advantages, as mentioned previously. At present in Jawand, a man becomes khan usually in the following way: When a nomad's livestock holding reaches a certain size, profits can no longer be used to increase the herds but must be reinvested in a different way, since the number of livestock a household can take care of is limited. These profits are therefore used to buy farm land, which is then rented to landless and herdless families. While these khans emerge from the nomadic sector, they have their power base in the agricultural sector, and although they try, they are hardly able to extend their power over the nomads.

The relationship between khan and client is dyadic, generally short-lived, and can be dissolved by either side at any time. Therefore, the clientele of a khan changes continually, and his position of power needs continuous reaffirmation. Khanship is not a hereditary office.

The existence of khans does not contradict the egalitarian basis of nomadic political organisation. The egalitarian organisation is not now supported by egalitarian ideology; on the contrary, my informants clearly expressed a desire for the 'good old days'. They believe that in those days khans had strong authority and guaranteed the glory and prosperity of the clan, and every Pashtun happily obeyed them. If there were such khans today, they say, they would readily follow them. Yet it seems to me very unlikely that such powerful nomad khans ever existed in the past.

One of the reasons why there are no such khans is that there are too many men who aspire to become khan and thus effectively block each other's political ascent. In principle everyone would subordinate himself to a great khan, but never to his neighbour

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or anyone he knows too well, or one against whom he has struggled for political power. In addition, the nomads' system of production and relations with their sedentary neighbours and the state are not structured in a way that requires strong leaders.

The egalitarian political organisation of Pashtun nomads is not a recent phenomenon, but was recorded also last century by European observers. For example,

The shepherds [i.e. nomads] are also in a great measure emancipated, even from the control of their internal government ...

Among the [nomadic] eastern Ghiljies ... the power of the chief is not considerable enough to form a tie to keep the clan together, and they are broken into little societies ... which are quite independent in all internal transactions.

The shepherds [i.e. nomads] near Cunchoghye ... have much leisure, no restraint, no government, and yet no crimes.

The [nomadic] Naussers ... live almost entirely free from the restraint of government, while the temporary appointment of a Chelwashtee [i.e. temporary war leader] is sufficient to provide for the order and safety of their marches ... When the people are collected into camps, they are governed by their own Mooshirs [i.e. informal elders], without any reference to the Khaun, and when they are scattered over the country, they subsist without any government at all.²²

Or as Broadfoot reported on nomadic Ghilzai Pashtuns in eastern Afghanistan:

the natural head of each family is implicitly obeyed; the oldest by descent of these heads of families is usually, not always, the malik of the khel, with a power but little obeyed... the head of the senior khel is chief of the tribe, and the King often grants him the title of khan. He dares not collect any income from his tribe, but lives on the produce of his own lands ... Among the eastern tribes ... he uses his influence to head plundering expeditions ... His seniority in birth makes the Afghans

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pay him the respect of an elder brother but nothing more. If his character is disliked, he has not even that; the lowest of his tribe eat, drink, and smoke with him. In urgent danger the khan is often set aside and a 'Toelwashtee' or leader is chosen, and while the danger lasts is pretty well obeyed.²³

Hughes-Buller observes of the nomadic Atsakzai that 'as usual in Afghanistan, [they] appear to have no recognized chief among themselves'. He also points out how the Afghan government was altering this egalitarian system:

it was usual in Afghan times [when the Atsakzai area was governed by the Amir of Kabul] to appoint one of a particular family ... to supervise the tribe on the part of the government and probably to be responsible that their notoriously predatory propensities were kept within moderate bounds.²⁴

Nomads and the State

An analysis of the political organisation of Pashtun nomads must obviously take into account the fact that these nomads are part of a larger ethnic unit - the Pashtuns. Except perhaps under Ahmad Shah Durrani (1747-73), who succeeded in unifying a significant part of them, the Pashtuns have never, so far as we know, had an all-encompassing central political organisation. Ahmad Shah however was following egalitarian Pashtun tradition, as he was only a primus inter pares ('durr-i durran' or 'pearl among pearls'), and could hold the loyalty of his followers only by his continuous success in war.²⁵ Not until the end of the nineteenth century did some Pashtuns found a stable state, and even then only under strong outside pressure.

To my knowledge, nomads were never actively involved in the formation of the state. Amir Abd al-Rahman granted the nomads new large pasture areas during the 1880s in order to hold together the new state and to secure it. Despite these attempts, even today most nomads are not fully integrated into the state. Abd al-Rahman and his successors were forced to recognise that the nomads not only were not integrated into the state but also, for ecological and economic reasons, were not able to fulfil their abscribed function as a boundary cordon. Therefore,

attempts were made to settle them and to establish hierarchical and state-dependent political positions and offices. The settlement succeeded only in part, and institutionalised authorities developed only among the settled population.²⁶

The nomads' specialised production system is an important part of the national economy of Afghanistan, and the ruling elite, especially the royal family, was closely related to the Pashtun nomads by the tribal system. Despite this, the nomads remained a quasi-foreign matter in the administrative body of the state, with their own independent and egalitarian political decision-making institutions. The state administration of Afghanistan was still developing at the time of my fieldwork, and did not cover all parts of the population. The nomads tend to reside in thinly-populated steppe and mountain regions, where the influence of the state authorities is weakest. In Jawand, state influence is limited to the irrigated river valleys, while the steppes and high plateaux where most nomads live are out of reach of the administration.

The function of the state in shielding the nomads from outside aggression should not be underestimated; but it is only in this regard that the nomads can be considered a part of the state. One might think that, if not directly, then at least indirectly, the state's protective function would affect the political organisation of the nomads, and one might also suppose that in former times, when the state did not exist in this form, the nomads had political offices with military functions that are not now necessary. But in fact there is no historical evidence that such institutions ever existed. It appears that even in earlier centuries, for military purposes they had only ad hoc leaders with limited powers.²⁷

Even the loose organisation of the nomads of Jawand is sufficient to form such ad hoc military groups. Local groups based on joint herding contracts and common pasturing, as in Jawand, are effective enough to organise defence, as I was able to observe in several cases. Neither a political hierarchy, nor regrouping along the lines of the clan and lineage system, are needed. The fact that today the state has made northern Afghanistan secure has in my opinion contributed little to changing the nomads' political organisation, but simply enables them to use that herding range. Even before the establishment of a central state administration, most European observers labelled them 'republican'

or even 'democratic' (see citations above).

Nomad groups that were most subject to the influence either of the Afghan state or of the British colonial administration, tended to form central institutions of authority on their own. Frequently the state or colonial authorities directly or indirectly created or strengthened the development of the nomads' political institutions in order to facilitate control over them; or the nomads themselves created such institutions in order to be able to react to the state's interference. The older European literature clearly documents this.²⁸ Robinson, for example, gives numerous documents of the British-Indian administration in which the principle of 'indirect rule' is to be extended to include even those Pashtun nomads that only seasonally came within reach of the administration. The nomads were required to present go-betweens in order to make communication possible with the local officials. They could easily respond to such demands, because they possessed an appropriate traditional institution, namely the malik. Traditionally the malik had no authority of their own, and it was the colonial administration which gave it to them, for example by making them sign contracts by which they became acknowledged leaders, by granting them the right to collect taxes, by paying them allowances, and so forth. In 1926 the British authorities at Dera Ismail Khan forced the maliks of the most important nomad groups that wintered in their area to sign a treaty which made them formal leaders with political authority and gave them powers and responsibilities they never had before.

We, the undersigned Sulaiman Khel, Nasar, Dautani, Niazi, and Aka Khel tribal maliks, accept the following terms on our own behalf and on behalf of our respective tribes:

1. No men of our tribe will commit any offence either against any other Powindahs [i.e. Pashtun nomads] or British subjects.
2. If any man of our tribes does commit any offence, we the maliks, and our tribes will be responsible to pay Rs.3,000 as fine and 'harjana' to Government (cost of the property looted will be in addition).
3. In case of any offence as in No.2, if the Deputy Commissioner wishes to imprison any responsible malik, we will have no objection.
4. We will not harbour any accused or deserter in our kirris [camps] but, on the other hand,

will hand him over to the Government.

5. We will return looted cattle of this year within five days and will also pay decrees in arrears within five days. If we fail to do so, we will pay Rs.3,000 as fine to Government (in addition to the value of the looted property).

Followed by signatures of 37 maliks and of C.E. Bruce, Lt.-Col., Deputy Commissioner.²⁹

In 1930-31, the disarmament of all immigrating nomads was announced in the 'Rules for Powindah Migration' of the district of Dera Ismail Khan; only the maliks were allowed to keep private weapons. According to the same regulations the maliks were granted a personal passport in which the officially approved camps, routes, and times for migrations were stated. These regulations made it impossible for the common nomads freely to appoint or dismiss their maliks. Also the traditional jurisdiction became meaningless, because the maliks were held personally responsible for offences against the laws, and received the means to enforce these laws with their own weapons, by asking for police support, or by denouncing offenders to the administration.³⁰

Reports on the movement of Pashtun nomads to northern Afghanistan at the end of the nineteenth century mention a number of nomad khans who organised the migration; but, as Nancy Tapper points out, these khans were army generals who had served before in the army of Amir Abd al-Rahman and who were personally entrusted by the Amir with the Pashtunisation of the north. Nevertheless, these official khans did not succeed in institutionalising their office among the nomads. Amir Habibullah also failed in 1903 to establish a hierarchical administration among the nomads.³¹

Examples of nomads building up their own institutions of leadership as a reaction to the surrounding state are not so explicitly observable in Afghanistan as in Iran, at least not in the present or the last century. The relatively large influence some nomad khans exercise in Paktia seems to derive from the particular need of the Paktia nomads to defend their interests against the Afghan state, for many eastern Afghan nomads lost their winter pastures when the Pakistani border was closed after 1961, and they then had to seek new pasture areas within Afghanistan, partly by force, partly with the state's help.³²

Pashtun Nomads and the State

In other areas of Afghanistan, for example in Jawand, nomads have little reason for negotiating with the state through co-ordinated and united action under overall leaders. In Jawand, interaction between nomads and the state is irregular. The steppes are not under the state's administration. At least until 1970, the time of my fieldwork, the state did not try to administer these nomads, either by direct or by indirect rule. The nomads did not feel threatened by the state, but they are quite aware that the state guarantees the security of their area, without expecting anything from them in return such as taxes or military service.

Where nomads live closer to government centres, as for example the group Casimir and I studied near Shindand in the province of Farah, there is a noticeable tendency for the administration to succeed in extending its influence over them; thus it distributes identity cards among them, intervenes in conflicts over grazing rights, tries to control the smuggling of animals into Iran, and most important, drafts young men for military service. This increased influence reaches the nomads through the maliks. These maliks become so busy with administrative affairs that they have to reside permanently near the government centres; alternatively the nomads choose sedentary maliks already living there. As a consequence, nomad clients tend to lose control of their maliks when they become quasi-permanent officials.

The egalitarian organisation of Pashtun nomads cannot be explained by nomadism alone, since nomad Pashtuns are only part of a mainly sedentary ethnic group, and sedentary Pashtuns show very similar egalitarian tendencies. Nevertheless, I hope I have made clear why their nomadic pastoral economy does not provide a basis for hierarchisation, and why only external factors, such as a state administration, can force the nomads to alter their political systems.

NOTES

1. Field research among Pashtun nomads in Jawand and Shindand was generously supported by the Südasiensinstitut der Universität Heidelberg (1970) and by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (1970, 1971, 1975-7).

I would like to thank Ursel Siebert for thoughtful suggestions and criticisms of an earlier version of this paper. I am also grateful to Roger J. Bel for proof reading and for

his valuable comments.

2. M. Elphinstone, *An Account of the Kingdom of Caubul* (London, 1815), vol. 1, p. 217.

3. See various chapters in this volume.

4. See chapter 1, above.

5. F. Barth, 'Nomadism in the mountain and plateau areas of South West Asia', in *Problems of the Arid Zone*, Arid Zone Research, No. 18 (UNESCO, Paris, 1962), p. 345.

6. The results of this fieldwork are published in Bernt Glatzer, *Nomaden von Gharjistan: Aspekte der wirtschaftlichen, sozialen und politischen Organisation nomadischer Durrani-Paschtunen in Nordwestafghanistan*, Beitr.z.Südasiensforschung 22 (Steiner, Wiesbaden, 1977).

7. *Kabul Times Annual* (Kabul Times Agency, 1970). The data are from Maymana, the nearest place to Jawand for which climatic data are available; the means are reckoned over eight years from 1961-9.

8. On the livestock markets and itinerant bazaars of central Afghanistan, see K. Ferdinand, 'Nomad expansion and commerce in Central Afghanistan: a sketch of some modern trends', *Folk*, 4 (1962), pp. 123-59.

9. For more details see Glatzer, *Nomaden*, p. 87f.

10. See W.W. Swidler, 'Some demographic factors regulating the formation of flocks and camps among the Brahui of Baluchistan', *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 7 (1972), pp.69-75.

11. F. Barth, *Nomads of South Persia* (Universitetsforlaget, Oslo, 1961).

12. Khaled Baba: pers. comm. by Muh.Sabir Khan of Kabul University; Daru Nika: information from an Atsakzai nomad from Shindand - other informants in that area had no idea of his name.

13. Elphinstone, *Account*, vol. 2, p. 98, reported a similar story.

14. Nimatullah ... al-Harawi, *Tarikh-i Khan Jahani va makhzan-i Afghani*, ed. S.M. Imamuddin, 2 vols, Publications 4 and 10 (Asiatic Society of Pakistan, Dacca, 1960-2).

15. The *Tazkirat al-Muluk* is a history of the royal house of Sadozai of Ahmad Shah Durrani and his followers. The preface (*muqaddima*), containing a genealogy of the Durrani Pashtuns, was translated by Raverty in the Introduction to H.G. Raverty, *A Grammar of the Puk'hto, Pus'hto, or Language of the Afghans* (Longmans, London, 1860).

16. P.C. Salzman, 'Ideology and change in Middle Eastern tribal societies', *Man (NS)*, 13 (1978), pp. 618-37.

17. M. Sahlins, 'The segmentary lineage: an organization of predatory expansion', *AA*, 63 (1961), pp. 322-43.

18. *ibid*, p. 342.

19. Cf. Elphinstone, *Account*.

20. J.A. Robinson, *Notes on Nomad Tribes of Eastern Afghanistan* (New Delhi, 1935, IOL:LPS/20, B 300), p. 8.

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21. Elphinstone, *Account*, vol.1, p. 234.

22. *ibid.*, vol.1, p. 304; vol.2, pp. 152, 170-1, 179.

23. J.S. Broadfoot, 'Reports on parts of the Ghilzai country and on some of the tribes in the neighbourhood of Ghazni', *JRGS, Supp. Papers*, 1, 3 (1886), p. 359.

24. R. Hughes-Buller, *Baluchistan District Gazetteer Series, V, Quetta-Pishin District, Text* (Ajmer, 1907), p. 72.

25. Cf. Mir Munshi Sultan Mahomed Khan (ed.), *The Life of Abdur Rahman, Amir of Afghanistan* (Murray, London, 1900), vol.2, p. 216; O. Caroe, *The Pathans 550 B.C. - A.D. 1957* (London, Macmillan, 1958), p. 255.

26. Cf. N. Tapper, chapter 7 below. The first to speak of a 'cordon of Pushtu-speaking races' in this context was C.E. Yate, *Khurasan and Sistan* (Blackwood, Edinburgh and London, 1900), p. 23.

27. The organisation of warfare, raids and defence among Pashtun nomads is described by Elphinstone, *Account*, vol.2, pp. 175-77; Broadfoot, 'Reports', p. 359; G. Oliver, cited in *Census of India 1911, VIII North-West Frontier Province* (Government Press, Peshawar, 1912), vol.1, p. 46; Yate, *Khurasan*, p. 11; Ferdinand, 'Nomad expansion', p. 154; see also Glatzer, *Nomaden*, pp. 196-203.

28. E.g. Elphinstone, *Account*, vol.1, p. 217; Broadfoot, 'Reports', p. 359; I.M. Reisner, *Razvitie feodalizma i obrazovanie gosudarstva u Afgantsev* (Akad.Nauk, Moscow, 1954), p. 225.

29. Robinson, *Notes*, p. 195.

30. *ibid.*, p. 191.

31. See chapter 7 below.

32. See A. Janata, *Nomadismus: Grundlagen und Empfehlungen für eine Perspektivplanung zum Regionalen Entwicklungsvorhaben Paktia/Afghanistan*. Im Auftrag der Bundesstelle für Entwicklungshilfe für den B'minister f. wirtsch. Zus'Arbeit (W. Germany), vol.7, 5 (1972).

Chapter 7

ABD AL-RAHMAN'S NORTH-WEST FRONTIER: THE PASHTUN COLONISATION OF AFGHAN TURKISTAN

Nancy Tapper

The aim of this chapter is to give an account of the considerations that led Amir Abd al-Rahman Khan (1880-1901) to encourage Pashtun migration to northern Afghanistan, the difficulties met in the execution of this policy, and the reasons for its final success. As a case study, this account illustrates a type of policy frequently employed by Afghan and Iranian rulers towards their tribal populations; it also throws light on some of the domestic problems that faced the Iron Amir and demonstrates a new aspect of his role in the 'Great Game' between Russia and Britain.¹

Several thousand families of Pashto-speaking pastoral nomads or semi-nomads have their homes today in the frontier provinces of north-western Afghanistan. Many of the groups living in Jouzjan and Faryab date their advent in the region to the reign of Abd al-Rahman and remember that the Amir asked their fathers and grandfathers to migrate from their ancestral lands in Farah and Kandahar to the north, where they were to establish security, defend the frontier against Russian expansion, and moreover promote their own and the nation's prosperity by exploiting vacant but fertile territory.²

Amir Abd al-Rahman's North-West Frontier

North-western Afghanistan is generally acknowledged to be among the richest agricultural areas of the country, yet at the beginning of Abd al-Rahman's reign great stretches of fertile land there lay unused. Much of the more mountainous interior was cultivated by Turkic-speaking Uzbeks and Persian-speaking Aymaqs, Arabs and Tajiks, and earlier in the century Uzbek, Turkmen, Arab and Aymaq pastoral-

ists had occupied the frontier districts; in the early 1880s, however, the latter had few settled or nomadic inhabitants. The local communities had been weakened and depopulated by a long series of internecine wars before Afghan rule was established, by cholera epidemics and famine (especially in 1871-3), but perhaps most drastically by the Turkmen raids that were continuous throughout much of the nineteenth century - Salur, Sariq and Teke coming from the west, and Qara Arsari from the Oxus.

Badghis and Gulran, the northern frontier districts of Herat province, were for many years virtually deserted, but Maitland's enthusiastic description suggested that this condition could easily be remedied:

Badghis is a country of beautiful grassy downs, sloping gently to the northward. The soil of the valleys, and also of the high ground when near the hills, is exceedingly fertile and produces excellent crops of wheat and barley without irrigation. The grass in spring and early summer is magnificent, standing several feet high in the bottoms, sweet and good as English meadow grass and, like it, filled with wild flowers.³

Likewise the once-populous settlements north and west of Maymana were abandoned by 1880, having

gradually succumbed to the attacks of the Turkomans one after another, in many cases being absolutely destroyed, the people - men, women, and children - all being carried off into slavery, and the result is that no one has dared to go out to those places ever since. Not only has the population of these outer districts been carried off bodily, but even that in the more settled districts along the high road has suffered in proportion.⁴

To the north-east of Maymana, in the plains of Afghan Turkistan, there was a similar dearth of population, both in the cities and in the countryside, in which, according to Yate, 'the supply of water was far in excess of present requirements, and cultivators were the only things wanting',⁵ while Peacocke observed that 'Granted only a sufficient population, a very few years would suffice to develop the plains of Afghan Turkistan into a granary that would quite eclipse that supposed to be afforded by the Herat

Valley.'⁶ Amir Abd al-Rahman determined to repopulate these wastelands, and in this he largely succeeded.

Clearly a primary imperative of his policy regarding these lands was that their economic potential be realised, so as to increase the wealth and revenue of the country. Political considerations, however, were even more important: Russian moves in Central Asia, more or less openly threatening Afghanistan, were to cause the Amir great anxiety throughout his reign, and even before the north-western border was clearly delineated he had decided to fortify the marches and to settle a trustworthy population there, both to protect the interior from Russian advances and to ensure that his own territorial claims would be recognised. To these ends he applied to the Indian Government for maps and other information concerning the frontiers of his realm as they had been defined in the Agreement of 1872-3, and he requested that they should be properly demarcated. In 1883, finding revenues insufficient to allow him to continue with the fortification and settlement of the north-western regions, he called on the Viceroy to provide funds for these purposes; in the same year an annual subsidy of twelve lacs of rupees was arranged, enabling the Amir to proceed with measures for the protection of his frontier. Among the measures already in train was the attempt described below to establish sections of the Herat tribes as border guards. It was when this attempt proved unsuccessful that he first introduced large numbers of Pashtuns to the north-west, and since that time their numbers have steadily increased.

The First Attempt to Colonise the North-West Frontier

The Russian advance across Transcaspia had been watched with anxiety in Afghanistan. In early 1882 the Russians were heard to be encouraging agriculture and settling nomads as cultivators near Marv and Sarakhs. The Amir was moved to action, and in the spring of that year the Governor of Herat was ordered to direct his attention to the northern regions of his province, where lay the most vulnerable and least clearly defined sections of the Afghan frontier. Forts were to be repaired and garrisons established, and the Governor began to arrange for the settlement of loyal and warlike populations near by. These provisions were initially directed against the Turkmens who were in retreat from the Russians and

moving southward from Marv, Sarakhs, and Yalatan; only later were they seen as measures against the Russian advance itself.

Two of the Aymaq tribes of Herat, the Jamshidi and the Qala-i Nou Hazara, were considered by Abd al-Rahman as potential settlers and both were anxious to win the assignment. Eventually in January 1883 priority was definitely given to the Jamshidi, who were not only former occupants of the lands in question but were also considered the more loyal of the two groups. Under the Jamshidi leader Yalangtush Khan, Jamshidi and Sariq Turkmen of Panjdeh began to settle; by June, the programme of colonisation seemed to be making progress in its aims of 'improving the country', freeing the border areas from the continuing threat of Teke and Qara Turkmen raids, and securing the region against possible Russian encroachment. Meanwhile, the other Herat tribes were all eager to gain access to the now relatively secure lands in Badghis and along the Murghab, and their intrigues forced the Herat officials to admit Firuzkuhi and Qala-i Nou Hazara to participation in the settlement scheme alongside the Jamshidi and the Sariq. Funds for the scheme soon ran short, however, and the grain and forage supplies in the area were used up; moreover, attempts to collect high revenues from the Sariq alienated their support. Disputes arose among the various tribal leaders in Badghis, including Tajo Khan Ishaqzai, the Pashtun commander of the military escort sent by the Government. The resultant confusion, which continued throughout 1883 and 1884, put the project in jeopardy. None the less, by the beginning of 1885 some 1,000 to 2,000 families of Jamshidi, Hazara, Firuzkuhi and Sariq had successfully established themselves in the vicinity of Bala Murghab.

The fact that the frontier was still undefined at this time set the stage for an important episode in the 'Great Game'. There was great fear in England that the Afghan claims to and presence at Panjdeh would lead to open fighting with the approaching Russians under General Komarov and become a casus belli between Russia and England. The Viceroy's direction of Afghan foreign affairs did not guarantee automatic British support against foreign aggression, but with British concern to prevent any Russian intervention in Afghanistan and especially a Russian advance on Herat, the possibility of a major crisis became real. As tension increased on the frontier in the early months of 1885, Colonel Ridgeway of the Afghan Boundary Commission advised the withdrawal of

the new settlers to the interior, where they could more easily be supported in case of a Russian attack. Nothing was done, however, and the Panjdeh crisis in late March proved a severe and perhaps unfair test of the settlers' capacity for defending their country, for most of them, like the Afghan and British troops on the frontier at the time, were thrown into disorder by the Russian move, and they retreated southwards with their families. The Jamshidi and Sariq remained, but belief in their loyalty too was shaken. It seemed likely that all the Herat tribes might eventually succumb to Russian influence and intrigue.

The Amir declared that the Sariq, whose only worry was the safety of their property, were untrustworthy; moreover, with the Russians using ethnological arguments to justify their territorial claims, the Sariq presence on both sides of the frontier complicated the boundary settlement and endangered its permanence. Yalangtush Khan Jamshidi, though praised by A.C. Yate for his behaviour during the Panjdeh affair,⁷ was removed from his chiefship, accused, probably unjustly, of having carried on seditious correspondence with the Russians from the time of their occupation of Marv in 1884. With other members of his family he was taken prisoner to Kabul. The Amir is reported to have said later that it was 'a mistake to trust any but Afghans with the charge of the Chahar Aimaks'.⁸ The removal of this popular leader aggravated the later problems in settling the frontier areas and almost certainly provoked Aymaq collaboration with the Russians; fear of Aymaq treachery was a continuing theme throughout Abd al-Rahman's reign.

In June C.E. Yate sent in a memorandum on Badghis in which he stated that, in spite of their prior right, the Amir would be wise to remove the Jamshidi from the border and replace them with Ghilzai Pashtuns unlikely to submit to Russian influence, and in July Colonel Ridgeway requested that the Amir be informed of such a recommendation. The Ghilzai concerned were those inhabiting the Dara-i Bum and Upper Murghab valleys, whom Yate wrongly claimed to be recent arrivals from Kalat-i Ghilzai; some undoubtedly were, but most were related to the Tokhi, Hotaki and other Ghilzai, both nomads and cultivators, whose ancestors had been removed by Nadir Shah Afshar from their homeland in Kalat to the Obeh region east of Herat. The inhabitants of Qadis were later included in the plan, as were some Achakzai Durrani of Pusht-i Rud; whose summer quart-

ers were in the hills north-east of Herat.

By the autumn of 1885 Abd al-Rahman had determined that the Sariq Turkmens and Jamshidi who had remained in the Bala Murghab region should be removed from the frontier, and should be replaced by Pashtuns on whose loyalty he could depend. This measure, which was to be put into effect in the following spring, coincided with the maturation of the Amir's plans for colonising the Turkistan waste-lands.

Abd al-Rahman's 'Waste-Lands' Policy

In August 1885 the Amir was quoted as saying:

There was an extensive plain in Turkistan which was lying waste. I had a great mind to make it a cultivated and inhabited place. I devised a plan to root out from Afghanistan the enmity of cousinship and domestic quarrels, which are mixed up in the nature of this people. So I gave takavi [advances] and road expenses to such people, and sent them to that direction. Up to this time, 18,000 families have settled there.⁹

To consolidate his rule in Afghanistan, throughout his reign Amir Abd al-Rahman employed the practice of removing political dissidents to parts of the country far from their homes. Several thousand such exiles - though it is unlikely to have been as many as 18,000 families - had already reached the north of the country by 1885; most of them were Pashtuns though very few were nomads. (Before his accession there were few Pashtuns in Afghan Turkistan apart from a colony of some 3,000 families of Ghilzai cultivators settled near Mazar-i Sharif.) Certainly as early as 1882 the Amir was aware of the various advantages that could come of such a practice: if he helped the exiles to begin cultivation in their new homes, while confiscating their former lands and including them among the Government holdings, not only did he benefit the country by increasing both internal security and the area of land under cultivation, but he also gained two new sources of much-needed revenue, both the confiscated and the newly-exploited lands. In the early years of his reign he gave growing importance to the idea of opening up these unused lands, but it was only in 1885 that he announced a new and rather different policy, of

encouraging voluntary migrations to the north. Tax concessions, road expenses, and provisions for grain and agricultural implements were among the various incentives used to attract prospective migrants; often sanctions of a more compelling nature were added. That there were sometimes also political motives to this new policy is evident from the Amir's remarks quoted above, but the policy differed significantly from that of political exile, for the voluntary migrants were not necessarily regarded as politically dangerous in their former homes.

While exile to Turkistan for specifically political reasons did not cease, during the rest of Abd al-Rahman's reign voluntary migration there was a continuing and important theme. The Amir wanted the migrants, largely but not exclusively Pashtuns, to engage 'in the cultivation of waste lands in Turkistan, in the hopes of strengthening Turkistan in case of war by the admixture of Afghan races'.¹⁰ Another consideration was the overpopulation felt to exist in Kabul and other parts of the south-east. Thus, a grain shortage in late 1885 convinced the Amir that Kabul province was not sufficiently productive to support its population, and he persuaded many Kabulis and others to migrate north; in October it was reported that:

About 3,000 families have emigrated from Deh Afghanan, and about 5,000 families from the Ghilzai country to take up their residence in Turkistan. Sardar Muhammad Ishak Khan [Governor of Turkistan] is giving them crown lands for cultivation. Of these emigrants the most respectable and strongest Afghans are sent to reside in Maimena. The Amir grants 2 lbs of flour to each emigrant daily, and one mule for every seven emigrants for their carriage free of charge; people go most willingly on account of the scarcity in Kabul.¹¹

Maitland, travelling between Aq Ribat and Sayghan in November 1885, met a 'constant stream of people migrating from the country about Kabul to Afghan Turkistan' and noted that they were motivated by food shortages as well as the Amir's encouragement in hopes of leavening 'the Usbak population of Turkistan with people on whose support he can rely in case of foreign invasion and from whom also the Turkistan troops can be recruited'.¹²

Such reports are numerous from late 1885 onwards, and by early 1886 the number of new settlers

in the area stretching from Maymana to Badakhshan, but particularly in the eastern parts, may well have exceeded the 18,000 families claimed by the Amir in the previous August. Most of the migrants were already experienced farmers and were instructed to continue cultivation in their new lands, which they did with much success. Thus, in the summer of 1886 Yate observed near Balkh that 'A certain portion of the waste land has been taken up by Afghan immigrants from Kabul, who seem to be rapidly extending their gardens and orchards and to be good cultivators.'¹³

The Amir did not at first consider fostering pastoralism in Afghan Turkistan. Practised on a large scale, it would entail the absence of settlers from the frontier for several months of the year, frustrating a main aim of his policy - the establishment of a settled population to defend the border regions. Indeed, at the inception of his policy of encouraging voluntary migration, he does not seem to have appreciated the degree to which pastoralism and cultivation were economically complementary and both necessary if the waste-lands were to be exploited with maximum benefit. He lacked sympathy with the nomadic way of life and moreover was unaware of the difficulties entailed by his insistence that nomad immigrants to the north should settle and start cultivation. In late 1886, however, he began to realise the advantages of restocking the extensive northern grazing lands from Bala Murghab to Badakhshan, and by 1890 was talking of this as a new way of increasing the wealth of the country and the Government revenues. In fact, both the abortive attempt to settle the Herat tribes on the Badghis frontier, and the more successful colonisation of the area from 1886 onwards by Pashtun tribes, were having the effect of opening up the grazing-lands for the nomads.

The Second Attempt

In the winter of 1885-6, the region of Bala Murghab and Qala-i Wali was still occupied by Jamshidi and Sarii Turkmen; the Governor of Herat was awaiting the spring before replacing them, according to instructions, with local Ghilzai. The Amir, however, apparently now intended a more comprehensive colonisation of the region, involving a wholesale northwards migration of his own tribesmen - Durrani. The Durrani lands were south of Herat city but even at this time many Pusht-i Rud Durrani nomads (especially

Ishaqzai and Nurzai) entered Ghor, the easternmost district of the province, in the summer; some of these went as far as the Band-i Bayan near Kasi (modern Chaghcharan) for pasturage, a few (the Achakzai already mentioned) crossed into Badghis, while the rest, content with the abundant grazing in the valleys of Taymani country, remained there from May to September. Nomads from the south and west had been using the pastures in Ghor for generations, but they were now expanding steadily northwards, and in the mid-1880s the numbers of these summer immigrants (estimated at some 14,000 families) were said already to equal those of the local Taymani population, and to be increasing yearly. This tendency probably contributed to a significant degree to the eventual success of Abd al-Rahman's plans to locate Pashtuns on the north-western frontier. The Durrani tribes most strongly represented among the groups that eventually became established in the north-west were the Ishaqzai and the Nurzai; their homelands lay within the former province of Farah, where the nomadic portions of each tribe probably numbered some 5,000 families, based particularly in the large sub-province of Pusht-i Rud, in the districts of Zamindawar, Nouzad, Girishk and Garmsir.

Early in 1886 orders were issued to the Governors of Kandahar, Farah, and Herat, to collect Pashtuns and invite them to migrate to the frontier areas of Herat. To judge from the later confusion, the orders were not sufficiently specific on two important points: whether the migrants should be landowners in their present homes or not; and whether they should be pastoralists or cultivators by occupation. It would appear that the orders were aimed at landless pastoral nomads, but in the event failed to reach any substantial number of these. At any rate, the incentives offered indicate the Amir's intention that whatever the migrants' former condition, in their new homeland they should receive land and cultivate it.

In March, the Governor of Herat invited Pashtuns from Pusht-i Rud to come and settle in Badghis at Maruchak and Qala-i Wali, while the Governor of Kandahar published a proclamation from the Amir to the following effect: the Amir had for seven years been planning to improve the condition of members of his own tribe by sending them to colonise the lands of Murghab and Badghis, which had been devastated by the Turkmens. The area in question, he said, were both fertile and well-watered by the Murghab river, and offered highly desirable dwelling-places for

both pastoralists and cultivators. He bade the nomads of Pusht-i Rud, in their own interest, move up there and settle down; the Government would pay all road and baggage expenses and would provide advances (taqawi) for bullocks and seed; the advances were to be paid back after three years, and from the fourth year onwards taxes would be collected at the rate of one-quarter from irrigated and one-tenth from dry-farmed land. The nomads should consider the offer, and if agreeable should apply to their respective local authorities for the road expenses, set out for their destinations, and begin to farm.¹⁴

There was no response, however, and the Governor of Kandahar called the Durrani leaders to explain to him their objections to the Amir's offer. They professed their loyalty to the Amir, but considered it folly that they, who had villages and lands of their own, should leave their homes for new areas. This was reported to the Amir; he was annoyed with the Durrani lack of enthusiasm for a project which he had considered in their own interest. Early in April he gave orders that one family from each of the 12,000 ploughlands (gulba) in Kandahar district should be compelled to migrate north: they would receive road expenses and bullocks for cultivation, but should be supported financially by the families left behind. The Amir specifically summoned Tajo Khan of Nouzad, the Ishaqzai chief who had commanded the sowars escorting the first colonisation attempt three years earlier, and called on him to take people of his own tribe northwards, expecting that people of other tribes would follow. The Governors of Kandahar and Farah were instructed to give him every assistance. He returned from Kabul to Pusht-i Rud, where he set about collecting people for the migration north.

Meanwhile, in Badghis, the planned replacement of the Sariq and Jamshidi by the Ghilzai was duly effected in May. Most of the Sariq went north to Panjdeh, while the Jamshidi were moved to Kushk and Obeh. C.E. Yate witnessed the scene on the Murghab as the Jamshidi crossed the bridge from the eastern to the western bank, where some 1,000 to 2,000 families of Ghilzai were waiting to take their place. He remarked on the contentment with which the new situation was accepted by both groups, particularly the Ghilzai, who affirmed 'that they would never allow a single Russian to cross the frontier'.¹⁵ According to the Saraj al-tawarikh, the newcomers were '2,400 families from the people of Farah, Isfazar, Pusht-i Rud, and the Herat plain,

who were in Badghis'; of these, 500 Farah households were now settled by the Governor of Herat in the Qashan district and the rest in Murghab.¹⁶ Such places of origin seem to imply that these groups were Durrani, not Ghilzai. The account does not fit exactly with Yate's observations; possibly it refers to the 1,000 Durrani families who arrived from Farah some months later. In June, however, some 300 families of Achakzai Durrani from Pusht-i Rud, who had reached their customary summer quarters not far to the south of Bala Murghab, were invited, at the Amir's orders, to settle in Qala-i Wali.

While these newcomers were settling in, the next wave of immigrants, Durrani from Farah and Kandahar, was slow in getting under way. During May and June, with the aid of a body of Government sowars, Tajo Khan collected a large number of nomad families from Pusht-i Rud and forced them to begin the march northwards. Many of the leading nomads in the party objected to Tajo Khan's authority, and some of them went to Kabul to appeal before the Amir, protesting that they had been forced to abandon their own lands, while his orders had specified that only the landless should migrate. They received a firman confirming that those with land in the south should not leave it, so the chiefs rejoined their families, who had by now passed through Farah into the mountains east of Herat, and set off home for Pusht-i Rud. After encounters with the authorities of Herat and Farah, some of them were sent back north, others were allowed to remain in their homeland.

The rest of the Pusht-i Rud migrants proceeded in early September to Herat, and were directed to settle in Firuzkuhi country in eastern Badghis. According to the Saraj al-tawarikh, only 1,363 families left Pusht-i Rud with Tajo Khan; in late October, however, General Ghous al-Din Khan reported to the Commander-in-Chief at Herat that 5,000 families (25,000-30,000 souls), all of the Ishaqzai tribe, had arrived in the north-west, though this report was later shown to be inaccurate. In November Tajo Khan himself declared that 2,600 families (19,000-20,000 souls) had arrived and said that more would come the following year. Meanwhile a separate group from Farah, about 1,000 families (5,000 souls) of nomads of the Barakzai, Ishaqzai, Nurzai and 'Farsi' tribes, had also reached Herat in September, and were in their turn sent to Qaratapa and Gulran.

It seems that the arrival of these immigrants, probably amounting to some 4,000 families, and the

Amir's directives as to accommodating them and supplying them with grain, threw Herat into confusion - for the harvest had failed that year and the population was already in a state of distress. Soon after their arrival, the nomads were said to be without money and in need of grain and advances to enable them to cultivate. The next month, the Jamshidi at Kushk and the Hazara of Qala-i Nou began to complain of the requisitions being made on them, and of the fact that they had been forced to build shelters for the newcomers. Meanwhile the Russians too were disturbed by the influx of Pashtuns into the frontier districts: they were said to have strengthened their garrisons at Marv and Sarakhs. There was general apprehension on both sides that clashes would occur between the Pashtuns and the Turkmens, and accordingly some attempt was made to preserve a vacant strip of land along the frontier.

At the end of October, since Tajo Khan's party had not yet settled down, General Ghous al-Din was deputed from Herat to visit Qala-i Nou and assign quarters to them in the Murghab region. Wheat supplies were issued from Government granaries in Herat, Farah and Ghorat, but the nomads themselves, in spite of their claims to be destitute, managed to buy all the wheat available in the Maymana district. All the newcomers were said to be unhappy and in great fear of the coming cold season - one report stated that they had even left their flocks behind in Pusht-i Rud.

The Amir clearly intended the nomads to become self-sufficient economically, by growing their own grain in the future. This was essential in order to avoid further drains on Government resources and increased hostility on the part of the local inhabitants. It is not clear, however, whether he expected the nomads themselves to become settled cultivators, or to engage labourers or tenants to work for them, or to adopt a semi-nomadic existence. In November, when he was brought a map of the frontier between Maymana and Herat, showing the lands which had been allotted to the newcomers, he is said to have observed that a million pastoral families would be needed to populate the waste-lands of Badghis.

At the end of 1886 it became known that while the Farah groups settled around Gulran had duly begun cultivation, the settlers near Bala Murghab had not and were becoming restless and insubordinate. Tajo Khan himself complained to the Amir that the Firuzkuhi were threatening to rob his followers of

their flocks and camels. In January 1887, General Ghous al-Din, having completed the task of assigning lands and villages to the settlers, was given direct administrative control of the Jamshidi of Kushk, the Hazara of Qala-i Nou, the Firuzkuhi, and the Pashtun nomads. According to Ghulam Rasul Khan Akhundzada of Ata Khan Khoja near Maymana (interviewed in 1971), his great-grandfather Qazi Jan Muhammad of the Babakzai Ishaqzai was appointed qazi to the newcomers, while Tajo Khan Khanikhel Ishaqzai was hakim, assisted by Mir Afzal Khan, chief of the Nurzai, as naib.

Although the success of the new settlement scheme was far from assured, the Amir was now determined on prosecuting his new policy for strengthening the north-western frontier. Already in June 1886 he was quoted as saying, 'It is proper that as the King is an Afghan, his tribesmen the Afghans should guard the frontiers';¹⁷ now, in March 1887, replying to the Viceroy of India who had expressed himself worried by the Amir's policy of sending Afghans (i.e. Pashtuns) near the frontier and thus possibly giving the Russians an excuse for intervention, he wrote:

I want to see the Herat frontiers manned and furnished not only with the regular troops but also with my own tribesmen, the Durrani. During this year alone I have had 8,000 families removed from the country on the other side of the Helmund.¹⁸

The Amir was soon to be disappointed. A few days later he heard more reliable information on the composition of the migrant groups settled in western Badghis; there were only 3,000 families (some 20,000 souls), of which only about 500 families were actually Durrani of the Ishaqzai, Nurzai, and Achakzai tribes; the rest were a motley assortment of Opra,¹⁹ Parsiwan, and Ghilzai, who had eagerly joined the migration, having no lands of their own in the south. The Amir was upset, and ordered that the nomads should pay for the 6,000 kharwar of wheat they were about to be given, but being now well supplied with the grain they had bought themselves in Maymana they were able to ignore the Government issue.

None the less, the spring of 1887 was a disaster for the settlers; through lack of rain the pastures failed, and the animals died in large numbers. Then, on their way south to their traditional

summer quarters in the Siah Band range, the Ishaqzai and other Pusht-i Rud nomads were robbed of thousands of animals by the Firuzkuhi Aymaqs. Tajo Khan wrote to the Amir to inform him of these hardships; he complained that there was no sweet water in Badghis other than that from the Murghab river, that the pastures, however, excellent, were inadequate for more than a few hundred families, that the camels suffered terribly from the flies and mosquitoes, and that the nomads found life there impossible. The area should be colonised by sedentary agriculturalists, who could more easily defend their few animals from summer insects and winter cold. Tajo Khan's complaints were largely justified, but the Amir replied scathingly that if the nomads could not protect their flocks from a few wretched Firuzkuhi, how could they possibly be expected to guard the frontier against the Russians? Let them go, he added, wherever they want, and find themselves a place where their animals will no longer be troubled by flies, nor themselves by fleas.²⁰

The nomads did not wait for this answer, and having reached the mountains in July, many of them moved on south towards Pusht-i Rud, and were apparently already there by August. The Amir is reported to have passed the following scornful comments, which may also have reflected his current disappointment with the lack of Durrani support during the Ghilzai rebellion:

With regard to the Ishakzai Maldars who returned from Badghis-i Herat to Pusht-i Rud-i Helmand the effect [of] their return is of no consequence. His intention, he says, was that the Durranis should become the ruling race, and accordingly he offered them a chance of displaying their valour by holding against the enemy the frontiers of Afghanistan; but as they have chosen to decline this honourable post, it is their own affair.²¹

Those that did return north at the end of the summer abandoned Badghis and moved towards Maymana and Turkistan proper.

Meanwhile in Bala Murghab the Achakzai and Ghilzai of Herat had successfully irrigated some lands, and were more content with their situation. On the other hand, the failure of the spring pastures, accompanied by total ruin of the grain crops through drought and locusts, had by autumn rendered desperate the situation of the Farah groups settled

at Gulran and Qaratapa, and in spite of their more auspicious beginnings they too began to return to their old homes.

The second attempt to colonise the north-west frontier ended, like the first, in failure, due this time to lack of preparation by the local authorities for receiving the newcomers, to the hostility of the Aymaqs, and above all to natural disasters. It could also be argued that the nature of executive action under Abd al-Rahman made the failure of such a policy likely. There was extreme centralisation of the Government at Kabul. Communication with provincial officials was poor; and it would seem they were rarely kept informed of policies indirectly affecting their areas or, more importantly, of later ad hoc decisions made by the Amir in response to petitions or reports from perhaps only one part of the area concerned. As the latter often contradicted the initial directives, yet were not widely publicised, there was considerable scope for individuals to manipulate the administration to their own ends. In short, discrepancies in administrative interpretation and implementation were rarely anticipated and were often dealt with in a piecemeal and hence ambiguous fashion. None the less, perhaps the Amir's greatest strength was his perseverance; in this particular case he did not abandon his new policy, and indeed it did not take much to encourage new waves of Pashtun nomads, who soon came up to live in the north-west in larger numbers than before.

The Establishment of the Nomads in the North-West

Amir Abd al-Rahman's initial orders were that some 12,000 families from Pusht-i Rud and Farah should be sent to the Herat frontier; as we have seen, no more than 4,000 families had arrived in 1886, though Tajo Khan himself promised that more would come the following year. In fact it seems that 1887 saw no new migrations from south to north, only the retreat of many of the nomads to their original homelands. It is not clear which groups these were - Tajo Khan Ishaqzai and Mir Afzal Khan Nurzai, both of whom did return south, may have left the bulk of their followers in the north. Those who remained certainly included Achakzai and many of the Ghilzai and others who apparently had no land elsewhere. Whatever the situation after Tajo Khan's first expedition, nomads living today in the north-west say that their ancestors were brought there by Tajo Khan Ishaqzai, but

they do speak of a second migration as having occurred a year or two after the first.

A second organised migration may have taken place during the year 1888. At the beginning of that year Tajo Khan was still speaking of his people's unlucky attempt to move north and the difficulties they had experienced, but in January it was reported that the Governor of Kandahar had again been asked by Abd al-Rahman to send about 12,000 families of Ghilzai and others from Pusht-i Rud to the Murghab area, and in the spring the Amir ordered the Governor of Herat to encourage the cultivation of waste-land in the province and authorised him to grant taqawi advances to suitable persons. None the less, no large groups of nomads, comparable to those of 1886, were reported arriving on the frontiers at this time and the few who had arrived in Badghis, Murghab, and Maymana by the autumn of 1888 took no part in the troubles which then disrupted the neighbouring province of Turkistan.

In the months of August and September 1888, the Governor of Turkistan, the Amir's cousin Sardar Muhammad Ishaq Khan, made a bid to establish the independence of Turkistan under his own control and had himself proclaimed Amir. Abd al-Rahman moved quickly to suppress this rebellion, and its failure caused the hitherto semi-autonomous provinces of Turkistan and Maymana to be fully integrated under Abd al-Rahman's rule. This whole episode had, however, surprisingly little effect on either the Pashtun nomads on the north-west frontier or the Amir's immigration policies generally. While Ishaq sought support from the Ghilzai prisoners and exiles in Turkistan whom he freed and used to contact their tribesmen in the south-east, there is no record of similar approaches to the nomads; such contact was possibly prevented by Maymana's position as a province independent of Ishaq Khan. Of the nomads during the rising we hear only that those on the Murghab, 'apprehending danger from the Uzbeks took refuge in intrenchments',²² though during the disorder following Ishaq Khan's flight to Russia at the end of September, the nomads raided as far north as Doulatabad and Andkhoy.

The Amir was generally pleased with the loyalty of the people of Herat province, while he came round to the view that the Uzbeks of Turkistan, who had been among Ishaq Khan's most important supporters, were innocent and the Ghilzai, Kabulis, and other emigrants from eastern Afghanistan had been the source of trouble. He carried out harsh reprisals

Pashtun Colonisation of Turkistan

on all the inhabitants of Turkistan, executing or exiling the worst offenders; the eastern immigrants, ordered to return to their former homes, did so in large numbers. Despite this unsatisfactory end to one aspect of his waste-lands policy the Amir was undaunted, and particularly during his stay in Turkistan (from late 1888 until the summer of 1890) he made great efforts again to encourage settlement there: 'The Amir is trying to induce families from all parts of Afghanistan to emigrate to Turkistan and settle there to replace those who have fled across the Oxus or been deported. Liberal terms are being promised to those who will go.'²³ Firmans were sent to the various Governors directing them to explain to the people,

You people are poor and servants of His Highness the Amir. Some of you should willingly go to Turkistan and reside there. Government will supply you with funds to enable you to go. When you reach Turkistan, Government will furnish you with implements for agricultural purposes gratis, and an advance of money for the same purpose and Government lands to build your houses on. His Highness requires 30,000 families to be there. He will take care of them in every way.²⁴

However, it was in the settlement of the north-eastern parts of the country that these measures had their greatest effect. In the north-west, it is probable that many of the nomads who in 1887 fled back to Pusht-i Rud and Farah were now of their own accord beginning to return in a piecemeal fashion to the borderlands. Various factors would have persuaded them to do this: oppression in their homeland, the continuing and loudly proclaimed interest of the Amir in opening up the north-west, and the fact that they had already been assigned places in the frontier regions; besides, in the summer quarters they would have renewed contacts with their fellow-tribesmen who had remained in the north, and would have heard from them that the natural disasters of 1886-7 were exceptional. Indeed, many nomads arriving in the north now declared the potential wealth of the pastures there compared with those in their homeland, and were delighted to have been introduced to them. Moreover, the newcomers were attracted by the proximity of markets in Russian territory, especially that at Panjdeh, and they were quick to begin trading in grain, livestock, and pastoral produce; in

this they were indirectly encouraged by taxes and transit dues on trade within Afghanistan. Measures taken by the Amir to prohibit such trade and re-direct it to internal markets or to create Government monopolies in such goods seem to have had only temporary effect.

It is certain that a voluntary migration of nomads to the north was soon under way. For instance, in the summer of 1890 some of the Kandaharis settled at Bala Murghab appeared before the Amir and pleased him greatly when they told him that they were some 8,000 families and that their numbers were increasing daily. Yate also attests to this trend: in 1893 he heard how Nurzai who had emigrated from Bakwa in Pusht-i Rud to the western parts of Badghis found the area a paradise for grazing, and how the nomads from Nouzad and Zamindawar by then living on the eastern side of Badghis travelled back and forth between there and their former homelands, serving as an important line of communication. Noting that every year the colonisation of the frontier was increasing, Yate declared Abd al-Rahman's policy of peopling it with Pashtuns an excellent one.²⁵

Tajo Khan himself appears to have remained as hakim of the nomads in Pusht-i Rud, where he and Mir Afzal Khan Nurzai were involved in the years 1888-90 in almost continuous dispute with the Government over the taxation of their followers. In late 1889 various groups of Pusht-i Rud nomads, numbering 400 families, went to see the Amir in Turkistan to complain of Tajo Khan's behaviour. The settlement of their grievances was entrusted to the Governor of Kandahar, though with little success. Further complaints led, at the end of 1889, to the dismissal of Tajo Khan from the post of hakim. Meanwhile it seems reasonable to suppose that many of the complainants remained in Turkistan, probably at the instance of Abd al-Rahman himself.

Some of Tajo Khan's followers had already in 1887 or 1888 moved eastwards to winter in the region of Maymana and Turkistan proper. Others followed them some years later: for instance in 1895 numbers of Achakzai nomads in Badghis moved towards Maymana, where they hoped to benefit from General Ghaus al-Din's more favourable administration. Again, in 1896, difficulties with local officials in Badghis determined many of the Pusht-i Rud nomads there to move further east. However, large numbers of both Ghilzai and Durrani continued to occupy Badghis and Gulran. Others of Tajo Khan's followers dispersed to more distant quarters, Pashto-speaking Baluch

groups, for example, going as far as Imam Sahib on the Oxus, though some of these later returned to the Sar-i Pul region. Later, some of the southern nomads who had fellow-tribesmen already in Turkistan came directly through the central mountains to join them: this process was continuing in 1970.

The areas initially involved in General Ghous al-Din's distribution of lands and villages among the immigrants in 1886 were those extending between Zulfiqar on the Iranian border and Qadis, though the regions west of Maymana may also have been included. Most of the Pashtun nomads inhabiting the northern parts of the present-day Faryab province, such as the Shur Darya and Shirin Tagab valleys, say they arrived in those places at General Ghous al-Din's direction, though this may not have occurred until the 1890s, when the General was based in Maymana. Pashtuns now living in the Shur Darya valley, in Ata Khan Khoja and Dasht-i Jalayir, say these were waste-lands (jangal), and indeed Yate observed of the Qaysar/Shur Darya valley in 1886:

Formerly it was well inhabited, and there were large settlements of both Arab and Ersari nomads, who grazed their flocks in the chul to the west: these, though, were gradually reduced by [Sariq] Turkoman raids, and in 1877 the last two Usbeg villages at Ata Khan Khojeh and Jalaiar were attacked and plundered, and since then the land has lain waste.²⁶

Possibly lands distant from the frontier were also distributed at this time. Some Ishaqzai and Baluch groups living now in the districts of Shibarghan and Sar-i Pul say their ancestors settled there immediately after their arrival from Nouzad with Tajo Khan. Indeed they say these districts too had been largely vacant and unused, and that Tajo Khan himself took possession of lands near Sar-i Pul for a time.

Whatever the status of those parts of the newly-settled regions away from the frontier, by 1903, and probably many years earlier, they were certainly occupied by groups associated with Tajo Khan's migration. According to a letter from the Governor of Balkh to Amir Habibullah, dated 28 June 1903, Tajo Khan's sons Kamal Khan and Aqa Muhammad Khan had submitted for the Amir's information material 'regarding the settlement of the Durrani sheep- and cattle-owners' residing in different places in Turkistan. The Amir directed the Governor to make

appropriate arrangements for them, and suggested that they should not live in small groups but in compact settlements of 1,000 houses, and that these settlements should be specific distances from each other. Meanwhile he sent two separate firmans to the nomads 'of the Nurzai and Ishakzai tribesmen, inhabiting Sar-i-pul, &c., in the district of Turkestan'. A census was to be taken and the nomads were to elect a khan. All these proposals seem to have been designed to create an efficient military organisation, and it was further arranged that the nomads buy arms for themselves. In the spring of 1904 Kamal Khan and his brother were called to Kabul on this business.²⁷

A report of 1907 by the Kabul news-writer who accompanied Amir Habibullah on his journey from Herat to Mazar-i Sharif, enumerates the Pashtun tribes which he observed living at that time in the north and north-west of Afghanistan. Altogether, there were 11,000 families of Durrani, comprising 1,100 Alizai in Maymana, and 9,900 Ishaqzai, of whom 2,000 lived in Badghis, 900 in Maymana, 7,000 in Sar-i Pul; while there were 9,200 families of non-Durrani Pashtuns: 3,400 of them living in the Maymana and Andkhoy regions, and 5,800 in the vicinity of Sar-i Pul and Shibarghan. The numbers are almost certainly greatly exaggerated, but several important groups - notably Nurzai - escaped observation. Contrary to Abd al-Rahman's fears concerning the excessive proportion of Opras in the first migration 20 years earlier, by 1907 the majority of the Pashtun colonists appeared to be of the royal tribe - Durrani; this preponderance has continued in those areas until the present.

There was one final factor, not the least important, which contributed to the Pashtun movements into Turkistan. This was the opening up of the Hazarajat as summer pasturages for the nomads.

The Hazara Revolt and Consequences of its Suppression

Because of their support of Ishaq Khan's rebellion the Amir began in the autumn of 1888 to remove the Sheykh Ali Hazaras from their commanding position on the main road from Kabul to the north, and scattered them in colonies throughout Afghanistan. On his way north in December the Amir was reported as saying that he would not punish the Sheykh Ali Hazaras,

But I will not allow them to live in the country. I am quite wearied of the behaviour of these people. They should take with them their families and household property and go out of the country, and I will populate their country with Afghans.²⁸

Thus the area was opened to settlement, as had been other parts of the eastern Hazarajat during the same period; before this, Pashtun encroachment in the Hazarajat had been minimal. It was only with the end of the Hazara war that the Ghilzai began to penetrate deep into the Hazarajat from the east and nomads from both south-west and north-west Afghanistan extended their summer quarters into the country of the Day Zangi and Day Kundi Hazaras.

The Hazaras rebelled against efforts on the part of the Amir to extend government control in the Hazarajat, their mountainous homeland in central Afghanistan. The rising began in Uruzgan in the spring of 1891 and was soon transformed into a vicious religious war between the Shiite Hazaras and the Sunni majority in Afghanistan. The rebellion was suppressed in September 1893. The southern Durrani were slow to take part in the Hazara campaigns, believing that the Amir intended to weaken and impoverish them through service and requisitions. Likewise the nomads in Badghis refused to send troops against the Hazaras in Uruzgan. Among others Tajo Khan Ishaqzai was in 1892 enjoined by firman to support the war, and shortly afterwards his son Kamal Khan, recently dismissed for oppression from his post as Governor of Balkhab, was appointed to disarm the Hazaras. His zeal proved excessive, however, and in 1893 he found himself a political prisoner in Kabul. Seyf Akhundzada Ishaqzai (ancestor of the leading Pashtun family in Jouzjan in 1970) was similarly involved in the campaigns and his descendants' present control of lands in the Hazarajat almost certainly dates from this period. Indeed, from the time of the Hazara war and the slightly earlier revolt in west-central Afghanistan of the Firuzkuhi Aymaqs, the summer quarters of the nomads wintering in Jouzjan, Faryab and Badghis have extended from Kasi, Lal and Kirman in the south to the Band-i Turkistan range in the north.

The Amir had hoped to establish permanent year-round settlements in the Hazarajat. Tribal levies and the nomads who had provided him with transport for the campaigns were offered land, and the Durrani of Kandahar and various Ghilzai groups were asked to

send many thousands of families to settle there. Many nomads were encouraged to seek summer grazing in the Hazarajat but, principally because of the extreme winter cold, very few permanent settlements would seem to have been established. The more immediate effect of the Amir's policy was to open up central Afghanistan to travel and trade, and over a number of years certain trading practices developed which enabled the Pashtuns to dominate the local inhabitants and assured them control of farmland and grazing in some areas.²⁹

Early Leaders of the North-Western Nomads

Tajo Khan, already prominent in the early 1880s, remained an important figure among the nomads for many years. His influence on the national scene is indicated by the fact that two of his daughters and a grand-daughter were married to royal princes. However, after his return to Nouzad in 1887, though he retained nominal chiefship of the frontier nomads as their hakim, his actual role grew less important to them, and he seems to have remained aloof from affairs in the north-west. Thus, when he was dismissed from his post as hakim of the Pusht-i Rud nomads at the end of 1889, it was because of his activities in the south. This event cannot have caused more than a temporary decline in his influence in Pusht-i Rud, though the post of hakim seems to have been transferred to Mir Afzal Khan Nurzai. Tajo Khan died at the end of 1892, and Mir Afzal Khan a few months later; chiefship of the Ishaqzai tribe and general authority over the Pusht-i Rud nomads were given to Tajo Khan's two sons, Kamal Khan and Jamal Khan, who in spite of various conflicts with the Government maintained their leadership during the rest of Abd al-Rahman's reign.

The manner in which the northern nomads were administered during Amir Habibullah's reign (1901-19) is somewhat obscure. For some time there was apparently a hierarchy involving a hakim of all the nomads of Kataghan, Turkistan, Herat and Pusht-i Rud, a sarrishtadar of the nomads of Turkistan itself, and the tahsildar subordinate to the latter. In January 1908, Tajo Khan's son Jamal Khan was appointed to the post of hakim; he probably had little direct contact with the nomads, though he was officially expected to

look after the welfare of his subjects and

enquire into their grievances against the local Hakims. He will also make enquiries as to the amount of money realized from them as fines in recent years, and whether it was credited to the State treasury, or not.³⁰

Jamal Khan's brother Kamal Khan was chief of the Pusht-i Rud nomads, and like him resided at Dara Mian in Nouzad in winter and at Puza Lich near Kasi in summer.

Meanwhile new leaders emerged in the north. Ghulam Rasul Khan Nazarzai Ishaqzai, whose father Seyf Akhundzada had been involved in the first northward migration under Tajo Khan, was recognised chief khan of the Turkistan nomads and appointed their sarrishtadar early in Habibullah's reign. In 1906-7, however, there were complaints about Ghulam Rasul Khan's activities as sarrishtadar, possibly instigated by his tahsildar, Nik Muhammad Khan of Khanikhel, a relative of Jamal Khan. Amir Habibullah appointed a Muhammadzai as sarrishtadar of the Turkistan nomads in place of Ghulam Rasul Khan, a move strenuously opposed by the latter. The Amir himself soon made a tour of the provinces (1907), during which he visited Ghulam Rasul Khan at Ziarat Hazrat Imam (now known as Imam Jafar) in Sar-i Pul. The new sarrishtadar was suspended and replaced by another Muhammadzai, Khuday Dad Khan, who retained the post until the end of 1909. Ghulam Rasul Khan accompanied the Amir back to Kabul, having been told that he was to be provided with arms to safeguard the people living on the border of Turkistan; but he was detained in the capital for over a year while his former conduct was investigated. Eventually petitions sent by the Sar-i Pul Ishaqzai appealing for the return of their Khan, and other support which he acquired in Kabul, secured his release. By the autumn of 1910 Ghulam Rasul Khan had regained the Amir's favour, and he and Tajo Khan's son Kamal Khan were appointed to guard the boundary between Russia and Turkistan, having been supplied with some 3,000 fire-arms for that purpose. In 1914 we learn that Ghulam Rasul Khan, who already had the responsibility for the collection of grazing taxes in Turkistan, was granted the monopoly of collecting tolls at the Turkistan border.

Tajo Khan's sons continued for a while to be recognised as leaders of all the Ishaqzai, but eventually lost contact with and influence over those branches of the tribe settled in Turkistan, devoting themselves exclusively to affairs in Herat and

Pusht-i Rud; some of Tajo Khan's family were important in Gulran in the 1970s. Ghulam Rasul Khan and his seven brothers severed their ties with the south and consolidated their position of dominance in the Sar-i Pul region, especially after the Saqawi rebellion of 1929.³¹

Conclusion

The successful colonisation of north-western Afghanistan by Pashtun nomads was due to various factors; only some of these were recognised or controlled by Amir Abd al-Rahman, but without the impetus provided by his policies the eventual large-scale movement would never have taken place. Three related considerations prompted the Amir's policy of encouraging Pashtun migration to the north-west: Russian moves in Central Asia, the ethnic diversity and hostility of the population of the Afghan borderlands, and the economic potential of the vacant lands there.

Abd al-Rahman had spent his youth near Mazar-i Sharif, and considered Afghan Turkistan and Herat to be integral parts of any Afghan nation. This view conformed with later British and Russian concern to maintain Afghanistan as a buffer-state. Alternative frontiers would have endangered Afghan geographical integrity, and would have been unacceptable to any Afghan leader. However, many groups in the population of these regions identified with culturally similar communities over the frontier to the north and west, and all of them were at best uncommitted to Afghan hegemony. After the Panjdeh débâcle, the Amir no longer trusted even the more loyal of these groups; he decided that only Pashtuns could be relied on in the borderlands. The dearth of population there facilitated his policy, and the unoccupied but fertile lands provided him with the incentive needed for encouraging Pashtun colonisation. This decision to infuse the area with Pashtun settlers was a novel and seemingly astute solution to the problem of controlling Turkistan and the north-west and integrating them into the Afghan state, but the Amir appears not to have appreciated the scale of the plan, and he took little account of the social and administrative difficulties entailed in its implementation.

Though Abd al-Rahman rarely hesitated to use force if other methods proved inadequate, in this case he was constrained by events in other parts of the country. Even during more pacific times a suc-

cession of local risings provided continuous employment for all the troops at the Amir's disposal; no sooner was one revolt quelled than the troops concerned had to be diverted to meet some other emergency. During the period when the colonisation policy was being carried out, the Ghilzai rebellion, the rising of Ishaq Khan, and the Hazara war fully occupied the Amir's available forces. Of course, if the migration had been completely forcible, this would have alienated the loyalty of the colonists to the Amir's regime, and defeated the main purpose of his policy. But this consideration probably counted for little with the Amir, and although he offered considerable incentives, he did deploy what force was available to 'encourage' the migration. Much of his domestic policy was pursued by such carrot and stick methods.

Given the immense Government effort that would have been required to ensure success, the colonisation plan might well have failed but for the inherent attractions that north-western Afghanistan offered to the newcomers. Above all, cultivable lands were abundant, and winter and spring pastures were superior to those in the south-west; besides, the central mountains were now conveniently opened to the Pashtun nomads for use as summer pasturage. On arrival in the north-west the nomads were able to continue their pastoral way of life, which became increasingly profitable on the inclusion of karakul sheep in their flocks. Few of them had any inclination towards agriculture at first, and although their winter tent-villages often stood on arable land, this in most cases lay uncultivated for several decades. Only the leading nomads were quick to settle and establish claims to extensive areas of farmland as well as pasturage. As large landowners they entered the elite of rural society and gained ascendancy in that area. The Pashtuns brought with them ideas of their ethnic superiority which were reinforced by Government support and by the grant of both formal and informal privileges over the other ethnic groups. With these political and economic advantages, the Pashtun khans were from the beginning able to assert and maintain their dominance in the north-west. However, they were able to unite their Pashtun following for political purposes only on exceptional occasions, when the Pashtuns as a group were threatened - the most significant being the Saqawi period of 1929. At this time only the Hazaras stood by them when the Uzbeks, Tajiks, and Aymaqs of Turkistan rose in support of the Tajik

leader Bacha Saqao, who had seized the throne at Kabul. With the rout of the local population in Turkistan following the restoration of the Durrani monarchy by Nadir Shah, even more lands came under Pashtun control in Turkistan and the north-west. Around this time, the rank and file nomads began to realise that they could survive the summer heat of the plains (which they had doubted before) and that farmland could be an important and secure economic resource. A trend towards a dual economy, based on both cultivation and pastoralism, was initiated.

In the provinces of Jouzjan and Faryab, the Pashtuns continued in the 1970s to dominate the other ethnic groups politically, even though numerically they did not exceed some 25 per cent of the local population. Far less than half of the Pashtuns continued to practise an exclusively pastoral nomadic way of life. A significant number were wholly oriented towards settled agriculture, while possibly the greatest proportion were semi-sedentary, having winter villages and farmlands which half the members of the group remained to supervise during the summer months, the rest accompanying the flocks to the steppes and mountains during the spring and summer. It would appear that the lands available in the area for cultivation and pastoralism were already overexploited by present techniques; but it may be said that in the 80 or so years since the nomads' advent in north-western Afghanistan they had, as a result of their personal economic ambitions, come near achieving the goals established by Abd al-Rahman.³²

NOTES

1. This chapter is a slightly revised version of my 'The advent of Pashtun *maldars* in north-western Afghanistan', *BSOAS*, 36, 1 (1973), pp. 55-79. The original article, where full references are given, was based primarily on the diaries and news-letters of the British news-writers in Afghanistan, found in the series LPS/7 in the India Office Library, London. These records must be used with caution, but can often be checked against the major Afghan source for the period, Mullah Fayz Muhammad Hazara, *Saraj al-Tawarikh*, vol. 3 (Kabul, 1333/1914-5). The contemporary sources were sometimes supplemented by oral traditions collected by Richard Tapper and myself during the course of field research in northern Afghanistan in 1970-2 as part of a Social Science Research Council project. In addition, H. Kakar's book *Afghanistan* (Punjab Educational Press, Lahore 1971), the only substantial study of Abd al-

Rahman's domestic policies, was of considerable use. My thanks are due to Hasan Kakar, Habib Pashtunzoy, Musa Pashtun-Marufi, Adrian Mayer and Malcolm Yapp for comments on early drafts of the article; I am especially indebted to Richard Tapper for supplying material from the *Saraj al-Tawarikh*.

2. There has been no historical account of the processes and policies that led to the large-scale northward migration, other than a cursory discussion by R.D. McChesney in 'The economic reforms of Amir Abdul Rahman Khan', *Afghanistan*, 21, 3 (1968), pp. 19-20; his account of the migration was based on a single source, Fayz Muhammad, *Saraj*. Pashtuns in the north-west were mentioned briefly in the following: J. Humlum, *La géographie de l'Afghanistan* (Gyldendal, Copenhagen, 1959); H.F. Schurmann, *The Mongols of Afghanistan* (Mouton, The Hague, 1962); S.I. Bruk, *Karta narodov peredney Azii* (Akad. Nauk, Moscow, 1960); however, the major Soviet ethnography, N.A. Kislyakov and A.I. Pershits, *Narody peredney Azii* (Akad. Nauk, Moscow, 1957), omits all reference to them. Since the publication of my original article, further accounts of Pashtuns in the north-west have appeared: first, a brief geographical survey of Badghis by X. de Planhol, 'Sur la frontière turkmène de l'Afghanistan', *Revue géographique de l'Est*, 13, 1-2 (1973), pp. 1-16; secondly, ethnographic accounts by B. Glatzer (based on field research in 1970), *Nomaden von Gharjistan* (Steiner, Wiesbaden, 1977) and see chapter 6 above; and B. Tavakolian (based on field research in 1977), see esp. 'Research Report: Sheikhanzai pastoral nomads of Northwest Afghanistan', *Newsletter of Commission on Nomadic Peoples*, 4 (Sept. 1979), pp. 9-16. Meanwhile, Hasan Kakar has published an even more substantial historical study of Afghanistan during Abd al-Rahman's reign, in which he gives an account of the colonisation of north-west Afghanistan that essentially agrees with mine, see his *Government and Society in Afghanistan* (University of Texas Press, Austin, 1979), pp. 131-5. His comments (pp. 243f.) on the sources we have both used are particularly enlightening.

I refer to these migrants as 'nomads', but it must be born in mind that in their own self-consciousness their nomadic migrations are subsidiary in importance to their identity as Pashtun tribesmen and as pastoralists (*maldar*).

3. *Gazetteer of Afghanistan, Part III, Herat* (Calcutta, 4th ed. 1910), p. 14.

4. C.E. Yate, *Northern Afghanistan* (Blackwoods, Edinburgh and London, 1888), pp. 134-5.

5. *ibid.*, p. 254.

6. *Gazetteer of Afghanistan, Part II, Afghan Turkestan* (Calcutta, 4th ed., 1907), p. iv.

7. A.C. Yate, *England and Russia face to face in Asia: travels with the Afghan Boundary Commission* (Blackwoods, Edinburgh and London, 1887), p. 329.

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8. Anon., *Biographical Accounts of Chiefs, Sardars, and Others of Afghanistan* (Calcutta, 1888), p. 228.
9. 'Kabul news-letter' (KNL), 29 Aug. 1885, LPS/7/45, 759.
10. 'Peshawar confidential diary' (PCD), 28 Nov. 1885, LPS/7/45, 1640.
11. PCD, 24 Oct. 1885, LPS/7/45, 1252. Certain tax concessions were also promised, see KNL, 29 Dec. 1885, LPS/7/46, 999.
12. Maitland to Ridgeway, 28 Jan. 1886, LPS/7/46, 1483.
13. C.E. Yate, *Northern Afghanistan*, p. 254.
14. Fayz Muhammad, *Saraj* p. 511; 'Memorandum of trans-frontier intelligence' (MTFI), March 1886, LPS/7/46, 1427. The latter contains a translation of much of the Amir's proclamation as it was read during Friday prayers in the mosques; there is no indication that the message was ever directly transmitted to the pastoral nomads at whom it was aimed.
15. C.E. Yate, *Northern Afghanistan*, p. 218.
16. Fayz Muhammad, *Saraj* p. 495.
17. KNL, 29 June 1886, LPS/7/47, 901.
18. Abd al-Rahman to Dufferin, 15 Mar. 1887, LPS/7/49, 1302.
19. For taxation and other purposes, two tribal divisions were recognised by government: Durrani and Opra. The latter was a residual category including 'Parsiwans', Ghilzai, and Hazara among others. Today in northern Afghanistan the term Opra is used by the Durrani, though they may not include Ghilzai within the category. The term is synonymous with the more common 'Parsiwan', which includes (a) all Pashto-speaking groups lacking the *-zai* suffix in their name, both those such as Baluch whose diverse origins are recognised, and those such as Maliki, Khalili, Baburi, etc., whose origins are obscure and who are said by Durrani to speak Persian rather than Pashto among themselves; (b) peoples who speak Persian as their first language, such as Aymaqs, Tajiks and Hazaras. Uzbeks and other Turkic-speakers are often classed as Parsiwan, but not usually Opra, by the Durrani.
20. Fayz Muhammad, *Saraj* p. 567.
21. 'Kandahar news-letter', 16 Aug. 1887, LPS/7/51, 259. The Ghilzai rebellion in 1886 and 1887 was essentially a reaction to the harsh taxation imposed on the Ghilzai. To suppress it, the Amir tried, as he did in the face of most disturbances, to exploit ethnic or tribal rivalries, to divide and rule. It is in this case somewhat ironic that a ruler who came to power with Ghilzai support (the Amir's own tribesmen, the Durrani, having sided with his rival Sardar Ayub Khan in 1880-1) was forced in late 1886 to seek Durrani help. The failure of Pashtun migration to the north-west was connected to other aspects of the Amir's policy towards the Durrani: in September 1886 the Barakzai Durrani, who had previously enjoyed land-grants (*jagir*) free of taxation, learned that they

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would no longer be exempted from these or other dues. Though the Barakzai were inclined to consider this simply a further means devised by the Amir for oppressing and ruining the Durrani of Kandahar, officials claimed it was a punishment for those Durrani who had refused to go to Badghis when ordered to do so. In January 1887 Abd al-Rahman reversed his decision about the Barakzai jagirs to gain their support against the Ghilzai.

22. 'Herat news-letter', 20 Aug. 1888, LPS/7/55, 492.

23. MFFI, Apr. 1890, LPS/7/60, 13.

24. KNL, 16 Apr. 1890, LPS/7/60, 155.

25. C.E. Yate, 'Notes on the fortifications and troops of Herat and on Badghis and northern Afghanistan', 25 May 1893, LPS/7/70, 179off.

26. C.E. Yate, *Northern Afghanistan*, p. 231-2.

27. 'Memorandum handed to Mr Dobbs by H.H. Amir on 27th July 1904', LPS/7/169, 1733.

28. KNL (from Camp Dahanah-i Ghori), 4 Dec. 1888, LPS/7/55, 1389.

29. See K. Ferdinand's most illuminating discussion of the various debt relations between Pashtuns and Hazaras, 'Nomad expansion and commerce in central Afghanistan', *Folk*, 4 (1962), pp. 140, 149. However, he implies a helplessness on the part of the Hazaras and Aymaqs in the face of Pashtun expansion which is perhaps misleading; certainly the Aymaqs of Chiras and elsewhere in the north have a local reputation for fearless resistance to Pashtun oppression, and the Yakawlang, Day Kundi and Day Zangi Hazaras are famous among the Pashtuns of Turkistan for their ability to unite for common political or economic ends in the Hazarajat. Cf. R. Tapper, 'Ethnicity and class: dimensions of inter-group conflict in Afghanistan', forthcoming in N. Shahrani and R. Canfield (eds), *Revolutions and Rebellions in Afghanistan*.

30. 'Kabul Diary', 22 Jan. 1908, LPS/7/212, 436; Fakir Saiyid Iftikhar-ud-din, 'Report on the tour in Afghanistan of His Majesty Amir Habib-ulla Khan G.C.B., G.C.M.G., 1907', Simla, 1908, LPS/7/225, 319, p. xi.

31. See R. Tapper, 'Ethnicity and class'.

32. See further, R. Tapper and N. Tapper, Report on Project No. HR 1141/1, 'The role of nomads in a region of northern Afghanistan', Social Science Research Council, London 1972; N. Tapper, 'Marriage and social organization among Durrani Pashtuns in northern Afghanistan', unpublished PhD thesis, University of London, 1979; and works by R. Tapper, Glatzer, Tavakolian, referred to above.

Chapter 8

WHY TRIBES HAVE CHIEFS: A CASE FROM BALUCHISTAN

Philip Carl Salzman

Heuristics

Tribal political structures are influenced, conditioned and determined by both internal, local factors and external, supra-local factors. It is misleading to single out a priori, as is sometimes done, one or the other sphere as of primary importance, for this means either ignoring major influences or bringing them in through the back door by taking them as given.

Internal forms, inherent tendencies, and local system parameters are major influences in the formation and operation of tribal political systems: such factors as tribal values, cognitive frameworks, and cultural commitments, as mode, means and relations of production, and as environment, adaptation and eco-system must be examined and taken into account, but internal and local causes cannot be assumed a priori to be the decisive determinants.

Similarly, external ties, foreign relations, and extraneous pressures are major influences in the formation and operation of tribal political systems: such factors as high religions, literary traditions, and formalised cultural transmission, as state pressures, government preferences, and national administration manoeuvres, and as inter-tribal alliances, rivalries and conflicts, must be examined and taken into account, but external and supra-local causes cannot be assumed a priori to be the decisive determinants.

Accounting for tribal political structures, and for the tribal political systems of which they are the skeletons, requires consideration of all elements which inhabit and constrain, and those which encourage and facilitate, the development and maintenance of the particular forms under examination.

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Any particular political form results from the interplay of various factors, each pushing in its own direction, and thus can be seen as a compromise consequence of the multiplicity of factors.

To take this interplay of factors into account requires an analysis placing each major characteristic of the political system under consideration on a scale of greater and lesser value, so that each factor can be seen as working towards one or another value on the scale, and the place of the existing characteristic as a result of all the factors at work. In this way, the influence of both positive and negative factors can be scrutinised, and the impact on the structure of a change in one or another factor understood.

In specifying these factors, and examining the part they play, elements both internal to tribal life and external to it must be considered as positive and negative factors. Culture, economy, and adaptation, and high culture, state pressures, and inter-tribal relations are all likely to be of some importance, and at least several will be major factors.

But what, exactly, is the phenomenon to be understood, the pattern to be explained, the 'dependent variable'? What are the constituents of 'tribal political structures' and how do they vary? 'Political structures' I take to be arrangements for handling questions of leadership, decision-making, conflict and the like. ('Tribes', for the purposes of this discussion, need not be defined analytically; customary usage will suffice.)

In considering variation among tribal political structures, there are six dimensions that can provide a basis for initial exploration: First there is the scale of the unit. What is the size of the population for which the particular political structure exists? In comparing political systems, similarity in form of structure - whether segmentary lineage system, chiefdom, or other - is not enough to indicate similarity of political system; a polity of 100 families is significantly different from a polity of 10,000 families. Conditions underlying differences of scale, and consequences from differences in scale, need to be examined. Second, there is the degree of contingency in the political structure. To what extent does the political system work in an ongoing fashion, and to what extent is it inoperative in some circumstances and operative in others? In some cases maximal political units are activated only very occasionally, while in other

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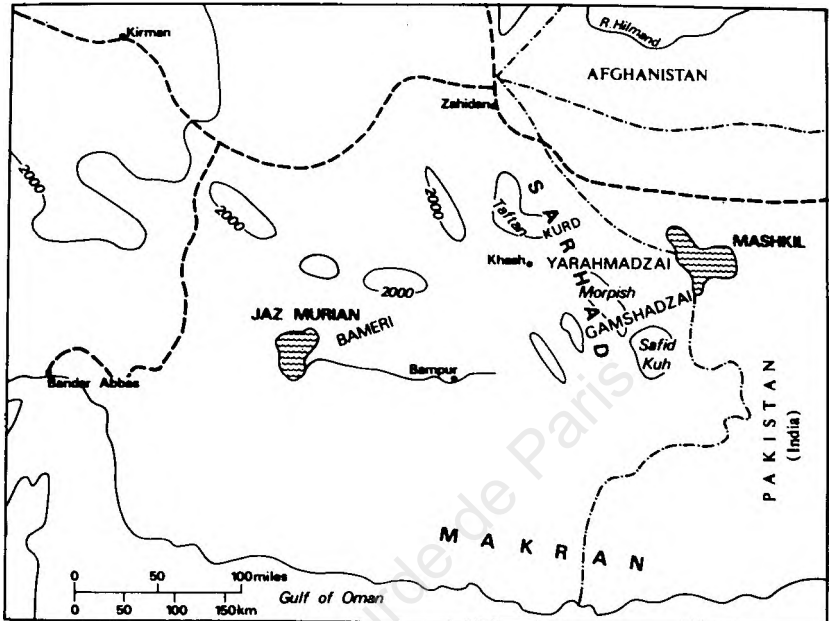
cases they and their political structures are operative at all times; contingent and ongoing polities, even if of the same scale and structure, are substantially different from one another. Third, there is the extent of centralisation. To what degree are decisions made on behalf of the collectivity, and to what degree by constituent parts, such as sub-groups and individuals? Fourth, there is the presence or absence of specialised political offices. Are there roles specified in terms of political authority? Even when there is a degree of centralisation, decisions can be based upon different structures, from general assemblies, to councils, to officials. It is important to note the conditions under which political offices, as opposed to assemblies, are found, are the consequences of different degrees of specialisation in political roles. Fifth, there is the scope of authority. To what areas of life does political authority extend; what are the spheres within which decisions are made by means of the political structure? Similar political structures can vary in the scope of their intervention in spheres of tribal life, from highly restricted to widely applicable. Sixth, there is the basis of enforcement. To what extent, and by what means, can decisions made in the political system be enforced; what is the basis of acceptance and conformity in the polity? Different political systems rely on different combinations of motivations - intrinsic, internalised, and extrinsic (positive and negative sanctions); these various patterns require different bases and have different consequences.

These analytic dimensions provide conceptual tools for acting upon the assumption that political systems vary from society to society and from tribe to tribe (as long as tribes are not defined as those groupings with a particular type of political system). More specifically, to say that two tribes have segmentary political systems, or that two others have chiefs, is hardly to say that the tribes in each set have similar political structures except in terms of structural form. After all, the role of chief varies markedly from group to group: there are chiefs and CHIEFS, and no doubt Chiefs and chiefs. And the role and importance of lineages varies between tribes: there are lineages and LINEAGES; and so on.

Furthermore, we have been warned about characterising whole societies in terms of particular structural forms. It is misleading to do so because particular forms can have different scope and con-

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MAP 5: Sketch-map of Iranian Baluchistan, to show places mentioned in chapter 8



tent, and can live with a variety of institutional neighbours, any set of which can influence the total effect.

So it is rather important to pin down as precisely as possible the nature of the political system, and the range of variations between tribal political systems, before looking to explanation. But once this is done, one can turn attention to the complex of factors, both positive and negative, of which the political structure, or one or more characteristics of it, is the consequence. Why is it that one tribe consists of 500 souls and another of 50,000 souls? Why is it that pasture is centrally allocated in one tribe and entirely open in another? Why can one chief collect substantial taxes while another cannot? Why can a council of elders in one tribe enforce judicial decisions whereas in another tribe resolutions of conflict must be voluntarily accepted by all parties? Why are some tribes larger, more centralised, more structurally stable, more specialised in role development, or more interventionist, than others?

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In attempting to answer such questions, it will be necessary to look at factors both within and without the tribe, both internal and external to it, both local and supra-local. Taking the full range of factors into account might be facilitated by a regional perspective. This approach, rather than taking the tribe as the most exclusive unit of analysis, focuses upon the wider region, and examines the place of the tribe in the region and the influence of other regional sub-groups upon the tribe. The heuristic assertion underlying the regional approach is that local groups not only make adjustments to others within the region but that many of the group characteristics which can be taken as primary features arise specifically as a result of inter-group relations within the region.

At the same time, attention must be given to internal elements, such as cultural commitments, organisational patterns, and demographic parameters, which are forces and constraints in their own right. How much of an independent force these internal factors are, and to what extent external factors are able to influence patterns of tribal life, are central questions to be explored. Probably the questions cannot be answered at a general level, but can be dealt with only through specification of the circumstances under which a particular factor, or complex of factors, is influential to one extent or another.

In any case, the determination of the importance of various factors requires, at the present state of knowledge, further exploration of case material, which will provide more grist for the theoretical mill and will bring closer the day when more systematic and detailed comparative analysis is possible.

The Yarahmadzai Political Structure, 1850-1935

The Yarahmadzai (Shah Nawazi) Baluch of south-eastern Iran¹ have what might be called a rather unlikely political structure: it is rather difficult to describe and explain, and presents something of a puzzle to the anthropologist. At the most abstract level, it might be characterised as a segmentary lineage system with a chief on top. Now both of these institutions - segmentary lineage systems and chiefs - are familiar presences in the Middle Eastern tribal scene; so what is the cause of the difficulty, the puzzle? The awkwardness of the Yar-

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ahmadzai political system for the anthropological observer is not so much in the separate parts of the system, but rather their juxtaposition, their combination as parts of a system. Chiefs and segmentary lineage systems do not, should not, fit very well together.

It is all very well to say that the Yarahmadzai political structure is 'a segmentary lineage system with a chief on top'. But the thing about segmentary lineage systems is that they have no tops, and thus there is no top for a chief to be on. So where is the chief, or, to put it another way, how can there be a chief in a system with no top? For we mean by 'chief' the office of highest political authority in the group, and so there must be a hierarchy of authority at the top of which the chief may reside. But by 'segmentary lineage system' we mean a set of equal lineages allied relatively and contingently for political action, decisions being made by assemblies and councils, with no offices and no hierarchy of authority, and thus no top. Chiefs and segmentary lineage systems would seem to be incompatible, both logically and practically; a chiefdom is hierarchical, centralised, and based upon stable relations among its constituent groups, whereas a segmentary lineage system is egalitarian, decentralised, and based upon variable and contingent relations among its constituent groups.

Given, then, that the Yarahmadzai political system is made up of incompatible elements, how does it work? Two patterns can be discerned: One is an allocation of spheres, a division of activities between the two contradictory political frameworks, such that one kind of circumstance elicits response in terms of one framework, i.e. the segmentary lineage system, and another kind of circumstance elicits response in terms of another framework, i.e. the chiefship. The second pattern, although it is tempting to call it an anti-pattern, is the repeated trespassing of one system upon the other, thus making the operation of each system skewed, as it were, by the influence of the other. Here the incompatibility of the two organisational frameworks manifests itself in claims and counter-claims, interactions reflecting the cross-purposes of the actors, and a good deal of plain, old-fashioned confusion and inefficiency.

Let us now approach the Yarahmadzai political structure through a more detailed examination of the chiefship. In general, the Yarahmadzai chief (sardar in Baluchi, the local language) is weak in

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comparison to many other tribal chiefs in Iran, although more or less typical for independent tribes in Iranian Baluchistan (such as the Ismailzai/Shah Bakhsh and the Gamshadzai of the Sarhad, and the Bameri of the Jaz Murian). The authority of the Sardar is quite limited and his power severely constrained; he is much more a leader than a ruler, his tribesmen much more followers than subjects.

Perhaps, before exploring the details of the position of the Sardar, it is appropriate to allude to the underlying questions of this investigation: Why do the Yarahmadzai have a chief? Why, having a chiefship, is not the chief stronger? What are the elements underlying the existence of the chiefship and its particular role in the political system? It is to these questions that the discussion is ultimately directed, and to which we shall turn after an account of the sardarship in terms of the six dimensions of tribal political structure: scale, contingency, centralisation, specialised offices, scope of authority, and enforcement.

Scale. In the approximately 200 years of its development, the Yarahmadzai tribe has grown from a handful of individuals to a population of several thousand souls. Estimates vary, but perhaps the safest figure for the present is 5,000; this is certainly the correct order of magnitude: many more than hundreds, and considerably less than 10,000. Of course, in previous decades, the population was substantially smaller, and the farther one goes back, the smaller the tribal population was. Now the purpose of this elementary and imprecise exercise in demography is to establish the constituency of the Yarahmadzai chief, the number of individuals for whom the Sardar is chief. The tribe today, as a maximal political unit, is a relatively small one compared with others in Iran, and at the turn of the century was at best half its present size. So the Yarahmadzai Sardars led a small tribe: the warriors numbered in the hundreds and the tribal economy was that of households numbering in the hundreds. From the demographic perspective, the Sardar was not especially powerful, having a relatively modest following.

Contingency. The Yarahmadzai tribe is now an on-going maximal political entity, a permanent focus of ultimate political loyalty, a framework of ties and obligations which remains relevant whatever the political issue and the level of sub-groups involved.

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This fact is both manifested in and affected by the office of Sardar, which stands for the tribe as a whole. The tribal level of political organisation does not lie inactive until being brought into life by certain political events and structural configurations; on the contrary, the tribe is an ongoing entity at all times, and tribal membership is a relevant fact for all tribesmen at all times.

However, this is not to say that the tribe as a polity comes even close to monopolising political status within the tribe. Lower-level units maintain substantial political rights, duties and responsibilities. The most important of these are protection of life and property, manifested in self-help and collective responsibility, which is organised in terms of patrilineages of structural equivalence which are activated contingently. Control of certain resources, such as wells, also lies with minor lineage groups. Thus, within the ongoing tribal framework, sub-units of various levels are contingently activated and de-activated and reactivated in response to conflicts over life, injury and property. The individual tribesman finds himself not infrequently acting as a member of a lineage of greater or lesser depth (depending on the structural distance of the adversary) in regard to matters of the gravest importance, matters that are clearly political, in a fashion that is clearly political. The degree of contingency within the tribe must therefore be seen to be significant.

The coexistence of the non-contingent tribe with a series of contingent political sub-groups can be seen not only as a parameter of the efficacy of the tribal units, but also as a potential threat to the unity of the tribe and thus its existence as an ongoing entity. The balance is maintained, and the tribal unit reinforced, by a division of spheres between the tribe and its sub-groups. While the lineages have the right and obligation to defend members and property through self-help, to take revenge and demand compensation according to the laws of blood feud, the tribe as a whole has the right and obligation to press for peace, to encourage settlement, and to compensate the injured. This division of rights is seen most dramatically in the formation of adversary groups according to the rules of structural equivalence, and the contrary structuring of compensation after peace-making, in which all minimal lineages of the tribe other than the offended one, no matter whether close to the offending or offended minimal lineages, contribute to the

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compensation of the latter. That is to say, in the settlement compensation, all minimal lineages act as members of the tribe as a whole in redressing the grievance of the offended lineage. Thus, in spite of the contingent sub-groups and the heavy political content of their rights and responsibilities, the tribe as a whole maintains its presence and influence, never disappearing, hovering always in the background, asserting its presence in ongoing and decisive ways.

In sum, the tribe as a unit, although far from monopolising the political rights and responsibilities of tribal life, is able to maintain a continuing influential presence. Tribal affiliation and tribal claims continue to be in the minds of the tribesmen, even when they are acting as members of sub-groups, even when the claims of sub-groups take first priority. That this is the case is largely the result of the office of chief, for the Sardar is the living symbol of the tribe as a whole and is the active advocate of tribal claims, reminding, encouraging, threatening, pleading, manipulating, and agitating on behalf of the tribe in the name of the tribe as a whole. Make no mistake, the tribe as a political unit is greatly weakened by the contingent political sub-groups within it, for these groups carry rights and responsibilities which are thus outside the control of the tribe, and because the sub-groups therefore present a continual threat to the unity of the tribe. Limited in power, competing for loyalty with its constituent sub-groups, threatened by schism and disunity, the tribe as a political unit none the less exists continually, and continually influences the course of events.

Centralisation. The Yarahmadzai tribe is highly decentralised. As indicated above, defence and vengeance rest with the lineages that make up the larger tribal entity. And while the tribe has peace-making as a legitimate area of application, such processes are far from limited to the tribe; bilateral peace-making between lineages is built into the rules of blood feud and is available at any level subject only to the will of the parties involved. Access to pasture and natural water sources within tribal territory is a birthright and not subject to any central allocation or control. Livestock and cultivation are owned, controlled, and disposed of by individuals and small families. Dwellings and household equipment are owned and controlled by individuals and their families. Weapons are acquired and owned

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by individuals. Movement out of and back to the tribal territory is a matter of individual discretion. Movement within the tribal territory is based upon the discretionary decision of herding camps and individual families. Religious observance is guided by mullahs living among and supported by the tribesmen. There is no internal aspect of tribal life which is centrally controlled; the Sardar has virtually no hold over the resources or activities of the tribesmen, nor is there much in the way of co-ordination or guidance, and what little there is - as in regard to peace-making - is voluntary on the part of the tribesmen.

What centralisation there is among the Yarahmadzai can be seen primarily in external relations, in foreign affairs. External groups wishing access to tribal territory, such as tinkers or herders from other tribes, must receive sanction from the Sardar. More important are other groups of political weight, such as neighbouring tribes and representatives of the government. Here the Sardar represents the tribe and acts on its behalf. Negotiations with outsiders over such weighty matters as war and peace, control of disputed resources, and political alliance and affiliation, are conducted through the Sardar. However, the term 'through' is used advisedly, for the Sardar represents the tribesmen, he does not and cannot dictate to them; he leads rather than rules them. A leader whose followers refuse to follow is no longer a leader, and so, even in this area which is especially the realm of the chief, he must be highly sensitive to public opinion, to the preferences of and constraints upon his tribesmen.

Office. Beyond that of the Sardar, there is only one other political office in the tribal structure, the leader (mastair) of the minimal lineage. Now 'mastair' is a general concept of political precedence, and in any group of tribesmen - a family, a group of children, a maximal lineage - there is a ranking in terms of this precedence. But in most cases the status of mastair is informal. Only in the case of the minimal lineage headman is the recognition formal, the formality residing in the explicit acknowledgement given by the Sardar. As the leader of a small constituent sub-group of the tribe, the mastair looks first and foremost to his lineage, and only secondarily to the Sardar as leader of the tribe. He is not an agent of the Sardar without a constituency of his own; on the contrary, he holds his office largely by virtue of support

from his lineage.

Among the Yarahmadzai, then, there is one political office, the chiefship, which represents the tribe as a whole. There is a second office, the minimal lineage headmanship, which provides a link between the smaller, cohesive groups of kinsmen and the chief. There are no offices at the tribal level for agents of the Sardar. Nor are there offices representing the higher level of lineage organisation which draw together larger agglomerations of tribesmen. Thus the Sardar has no proto-bureaucracy at his command, no functionaries whom he controls. Nor has he a lengthy chain of command, no line of officials based upon larger groupings which could conceivably carry out directives and provide political support. In consequence, the Sardar has no political apparatus on which to depend, and so must rely upon general support from the tribesmen at large in a context of independent lineage groupings and fluid public opinion.

Of course, the relative structural solitude of the Sardar and the fluidity of his political base, while defining the limitations of his role, do not nullify the importance of his office. The continuity and influence that the sardarship provides for the tribal level of organisation clearly mark off the political system of the Yarahmadzai from those based solely upon segmentary lineage systems or other wholly decentralised structures without offices at the maximal level of organisation.

Authority. The authority of the Yarahmadzai Sardar is severely limited. As the leader of independent tribesmen, the Sardar stands for and represents the tribe, but is largely the servant of the tribe. Most areas of tribal life are in the hands of lower-level groups or individuals, as discussed above, which leaves little of policy or administration in the hands of the Sardar. Decisions pertaining to the tribe at large are based, as is the case at every level of organisation, on discussion, consultation, debate, assessment and reassessment, and compromise. One would not be far wrong to characterise the internal role of the Sardar as that of animateur, giving life to, actuating, propelling the tribe as a political unit through providing an example for, encouraging, bullying, inspiring, and threatening his tribesmen. But as with any animateur, the Sardar ultimately depends on the decisions and actions of his tribesmen, for without them voluntarily behind him, he is little more than a figure-head, an empty

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symbol. In setting tribal policy - usually done in terms of specific cases rather than through abstract general pronouncements - and making decisions, the Sardar must to a large extent be crystallising and enunciating public sentiment and opinion, for to deviate too far from his tribesmen would undermine his support and his position. There is no advantage for the Sardar in taking positions which arouse resentment among his followers, which will prove difficult or impossible to implement, and which will in the end undercut his limited authority.

Enforcement. The restricted nature of the Sardar's authority is clearly manifested in the virtual absence of means for sanctioning. Generally speaking, the Sardar is unable to enforce policies, decisions, and jural dispositions. There is no police arm available to the Sardar, no mechanism for bringing physical coercion to bear upon the tribesmen. Not that he has any such authority: capital punishment, corporal punishment, or incarceration are not acts that would be legitimate for him. In any case, the means of coercion are distributed throughout the tribe, and the organisation of coercion is a decentralised tribe-wide system, the segmentary lineage system. The Sardar, as every other tribesman, is, in regard to matters of physical coercion, caught up in the lineage system; coercive action by the Sardar and members of his lineage, at whatever level of segmentation, would simply activate the structurally equivalent opposing lineage. Physical force is not a means available to the Sardar for governance of the tribe.

Nor is the Sardar able to sanction by offering or withholding material resources. Little of the collective tribal resources is under his control. And, given the notoriously volatile nature of wealth in livestock and the highly restricted possibilities of cultivation in the tribal environment, the Sardar hardly has the private economic means to use material resources as a major means of supporting his position. The Sardar is not an economic patron; he is not able to support his tribal followers and thus place them in the position of clients. The Sardar is not in a position to use economic resources for sanctioning power.

However, the Sardar does perform services for the tribesmen, and these are valuable and valued. Perhaps the most common service is acting as an intermediary (wasta) between individual tribesmen, between groups of tribesmen, between the tribe and

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other tribes, and between the tribe and government authorities. These services can be offered or withheld, and by such means tribesmen can be sanctioned, positively or negatively, at the discretion of the Sardar. Now while tribesmen can be so sanctioned, the Sardar's latitude of manoeuvre is not so great as might seem at first glance. In fact, the incumbent of the sardarship fulfils his role and maintains his status by means of performing these services for his tribesmen; there is little more to the role of peacetime Sardar than providing such services. And providing these services to assert his office, the Sardar is not in a position - beyond limited selectivity in application - to grant or withhold them at will, to use them as sanctions to pressure or punish his tribesmen. In short, the Sardar cannot impose his will upon tribesmen by means of force or by manipulating transactions.

To sum up, the sardarship is a weak political office. The Sardar leads a small tribe, the unity of which is to a degree undercut by politically strong sub-groups of a contingent nature which operate more or less independently of the tribal level of organisation. Few important areas of tribal life fall under the central control of the Sardar, who has no political apparatus to assist him and few sanctions at his disposal. Far from being an oriental despot, a powerful ruler, or even a well-placed patron, the Sardar is a leader of independent tribesmen, a symbol and representative of the tribe and the tribesmen, and an animateur for the tribe as a maximal political entity.

Explaining the Yarahmadzai Chiefship

In accounting for the nature of the Yarahmadzai sardarship and its particular characteristics, we must take into account a complex of factors, some influencing in one direction, some in another, this factor supporting a particular type of structure, that factor undercutting the same type of structure, such that the Yarahmadzai political structure can be seen as the consequence of conflicting currents.

Let us begin with the factors that inhibit political hierarchy, offices, and centralisation of decision-making, control, and enforcement. Three types of factors are of major importance here: ecological adaptation, technology and social demography.

In general, the adaptation of the Yarahmadzai - which might be characterised as 'multi-resource

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nomadism' - militates against hierarchical political structures. The environment of northern Baluchistan is harsh and erratic, with high aridity and highly variable precipitation. Both the small-stock pastoralism and the limited-rainfall grain cultivation are subject to great fluctuations of success and failure. The supplementary date-palm cultivation, hunting and gathering and predatory raiding are more dependable but more restricted in importance.

The tribal adaptation has a number of consequences which have important implications for the political system. First, the volatility of the primary forms of production inhibits the accumulation of wealth in the hands of individuals and small groups. At the same time, the available alternative forms of accumulation (perhaps most important as modes of compensation for local failures), especially predatory, are open to all members of the tribe, and would likely favour those less well off. Thus differentiation in terms of material wealth, which would support a hierarchical structure, is not a significant characteristic of the tribal economy. Second, the high level of mobility, the ability to move spatially, guarantees that the tribesmen are not a 'captive' constituency. They and their families move frequently in the course of the annual round. The primary capital resources, livestock, are highly mobile. The technology of household living, storage, and consumption, is attuned to nomadism: the dwellings are tents and the household equipment is portable. Each household has transport animals, usually camels, or access to them. Thus the tribesmen have easy access to strategies of retreat and escape from internal despotism or external threat. A Sardar who oppressed, exploited, or even seriously irritated his tribesmen would find his constituency disappearing into the mountains or over the horizon. Third, the availability of natural resources, especially pasture and water, is extremely erratic and unpredictable, both in time and space. This fact, together with the sparseness of the resources whenever and wherever they occur, make decentralised decision-making about exploitation of natural resources virtually mandatory. Thus co-ordination of population movement and of resource exploitation, which could be an important function of a central authority, is not possible here. Fourth, the low population density resulting from the factors already mentioned means that the tribesmen are spread over great distances, which makes it difficult to contact and keep in touch with them. This further

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makes co-ordination and control difficult. In addition, the low density means that tribesmen seldom feel crowded or need externally controlled organisation or co-ordination.

Further technological factors support the considerations presented above. First, the means of communication and transportation are primitive; animal transport and face-to-face communications are most common and more or less the limits. Second, the means of physical coercion (weaponry) are primitive, limited to small fire-arms at best, and are equally distributed throughout the tribe. That a small group could establish political control through superior fire-power, or enhance their power through a monopoly of weaponry, is inconceivable in the tribal context. Third, technological means for developing agriculture, especially through the use of irrigation, are not available on a significant scale, such that they could provide an economic basis for political differentiation and an anchor for a non-mobile sector of the population which would be less independent. The absence of such a development deprives the Sardar of control over a body of dependent agricultural workers and of patronage that could have made independent pastoral producers more dependent.

Finally, the social and political demography of the region inhibits a tight political control by the Sardar. Retreat and escape are possible for tribesmen because of two factors. First, the region is far from crowded. The Yarahmadzai are not pressed in on every side by other populations crowded in their own territories and loathe to sustain any intruders. On the contrary, there are more or less unoccupied areas which could support new groups in the austere style to which they had become accustomed. Second, the surrounding tribes (especially the Gamshadzai and Ismailzai, which are similar in most respects to the Yarahmadzai) and other groupings are not unwelcoming. There are no serious linguistic, religious, or ethnic barriers. In some cases, there is a history of collaboration, of affinal ties, and even of common descent. These factors contribute to the voluntary nature of participation in the tribal polity, and work against a mandatory, compulsory presence within the tribe, and thus place constraints on the ability of the Sardar to control his tribesmen.

The adaptation, economy, technology, and demography of the Yarahmadzai tribesmen are conducive to autonomy of the household and the minimal lineage. They tend to make very difficult any concentration

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of the means of production, or coercion, or administration, thus removing the support that any such concentration would provide for political differentiation and hierarchy, for control and centralisation.

What, then, is the basis of the political differentiation and hierarchy in the tribe, as manifested in the office of Sardar? The functional answer is that it is based on the provision of an essential service: mediation between the tribe and external powers. The structural answer is that a population which is intimately and immediately engaged with a powerful external presence, but which does not throw up a political organisation that can compete with the external presence on a more or less comparable level, will become dependent on that external force or be absorbed by it, the only alternative being retreat and escape. Thus tribes with politically powerful neighbours take three forms: the subordinate, the politically evolved, and the no-longer-present. The Yarahmadzai, with its chief and ongoing level of tribal organisation, is an example of the second type of tribe, a tribe which has evolved politically in response to engagement with a politically more highly-organised neighbour.

The Yarahmadzai tribe did not come into being in a political vacuum. On the contrary, from its beginning, the tribe was located, if not in, at least on the borders of, a territory that was occupied by a highly-organised system of formidable economic and political power. This quasi-feudal proto-state was organised and controlled by the Kurds, who supplied the political and military elite, and the hakom, ruler, of the complex polity.²

The Kurds were originally sent to the Sarhad of Baluchistan by Shah Abbas the Great as part of his policy of weakening dangerous tribes by removing them from their local territories, by splitting them up, and by sending them to distant areas occupied by diverse, and thus not solidary, populations. As with certain other groups, he was able to make the Kurds his agents, acting on his behalf, by sending them to an unsettled (but not unoccupied) outlying area with a mandate to establish order in the name of the crown.

In the Sarhad, the Kurds established themselves at the location of the only substantial natural water-source in the region, on the slopes of the Kuh-i Taftan, and at the central, strategic location on the plains, at Khash, which was an area of good but not readily accessible water and of good soil. They gained control over the small, dispersed, and socially fragmented populations of the region, some of which

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were primarily settled cultivators on the mountain slopes, and others of which were locally-organised small-stock pastoralists, and all of which, as told by the Kurds, were pagan rather than Muslim. The Kurds established a tribute (rayat) system, in which they regularly received a substantial portion, in kind, from the producers, who were labelled rayati. Other groups, mainly nomads, became part-time retainers providing additional political and military support, in return for a portion of the spoils: these retainers were called topangchini.

This type of system - the hakomate, ruled by a hakom with support from his kin group, the hakomzat, based in fortified agricultural centres while extending throughout a region, provided for primarily by dependent agricultural populations and in a more limited fashion by pastoral producers, supported by quasi-military subordinates, usually nomads - is common in Iranian Baluchistan, especially the regions south of the Sarhad. But it is rare in the Sarhad, a region with less accessible water and with a climate unsuitable for date-palm cultivation. The Sarhad is occupied, for the most part, by nomadic tribes having multi-resource economies; it is only in the Taftan/Khash region that a hakomate developed, under the Kurds.

The Kurdish hakomate was well established as the embryonic Yarahmadzai moved from the Safid Kuh in the south-east to the Morpish mountain range on the south-eastern border of the hakomate. There they settled, increasing over the years and expanding in a relatively unoccupied area toward the east and the Mashkel drainage basin, and at the same time towards the west and highland plains area of the Kurdish hakomate. Initially, as reported by the Kurds but stoutly denied by contemporary Yarahmadzai, the latter were topangchini, fighters, for the Kurds, having a subordinate political status but maintaining considerable autonomy and independence. In all probability, the Yarahmadzai did recognise the political ascendancy of the Kurds, acknowledging it symbolically when necessary and co-operating with them when convenient and desirable. The Yarahmadzai, unlike the nomadic groups of the hakomates in southern Baluchistan, never recognised the hakom as a leader to whom they had allegiance. Instead, it seems, the Yarahmadzai threw up their own political leader, the Sardar, and crystallised their unity at a maximal, tribal level of political organisation.

Now although the Kurds maintained a loyalty to the Iranian crown, governed as agents of the crown,

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and received some encouragement and support from the crown, officials of the government and their monetary and military resources were far from the hakomate, in distant Bampur to the south or even more distant Kirman to the west. In practice, the Kurdish hakomate was for the most part on its own, although it could draw for support upon alliances with other hakomates. Thus, as the Yarahmadzai tribe grew larger, more powerful, and more ambitious, the Kurds faced a serious challenge. In the event, the Yarahmadzai tribe expanded at the expense of the Kurds and their dependents. This engagement between the Kurds and the Yarahmadzai took place in fits and starts, over several generations during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. During the course of the on-again, off-again conflict, interspersed with periods of settlement and peace-making, considerable blood was spilled, and at one point the Kurds were driven out of the Sarhad altogether. The final disposition, at the time of arrival of the Iranian government in 1928-35, was that the Yarahmadzai had taken control of the plains and the Kurds had re-formed in the Taftan range, and that the Yarahmadzai tribe was the major political power in the region.

During this conflict, the Yarahmadzai Sardars had been war-leaders and peace-negotiators, strategists and mediators, meeting the Kurdish hakoms as independent political leaders. Here we can see positive feedback at work in political development: the Yarahmadzai could challenge the Kurds because of (among other things) their tribal political structure, with its leadership and coherence at the maximal level, and at the same time the tribal political structure was reinforced and enhanced by the engagement with the Kurds, in which the value and importance of the sardarship and tribal unity was demonstrated.³

In sum, the centrifugal influences upon the Yarahmadzai political system, balanced by the centripetal influence of political engagement with highly organised external powers, have resulted in the particular form of Yarahmadzai political structure, the restricted chiefship ingeniously fitted to a modified segmentary lineage system. That the lineage system is a major structure, that the chiefship is highly limited, and that the tribe is as egalitarian and decentralised as it is, are largely the effects of these centrifugal factors. That there is a chiefship and continuing maximal level of organisation, that the tribal political system is as hierarchical and centralised as it is, are largely effects of that centripetal factor.

Before returning to general considerations, a

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word remains to be said about the multiformity of the Yarahmadzai political system, about the fact that the system contains two more or less separate, almost contradictory, structures, that is, the chiefship and the segmentary lineage system. Now we have taken this juxtaposition, this combination of two seemingly incompatible structures, as anomalous, as peculiar, as difficult to explain. But we have attempted to explain it, both in terms of the factors and influences that gave rise to each, and in terms of the ways each is fitted to the other, how the two structures have accommodated so as to coexist. However, the sense of anomaly remains, because there is in our analytic models an implicit assumption of perfect integration, of structural purity, of institutional consistency.

And yet, it does not really make much sense to expect a society to be all of a piece.⁴ This is especially true if we regard society as, in some substantial measure, a set of social arrangements for dealing with needs, for coping with problems, for adapting to circumstances and external forces.⁵ Circumstances and problems are not all of the same type and cannot all be addressed by the same response, nor are the needs constant over time, but rather there is one thing and then another quite different. With these considerations in mind, we might consider multiformity, as in the case of the Yarahmadzai political structure, as a set of organisational alternatives which can be brought to bear alternately as different types of problems and circumstances come up, such that a particular situation can be responded to by means of the most appropriate organisational form of those available. In the Yarahmadzai case, situations most effectively dealt with by a decentralised response can be attacked through the segmentary lineage system, whereas situations most usefully dealt with by means of co-ordination can be responded to through the chiefship. Thus multiformity is not necessarily a reflection of malintegration, but is more likely a prudent maintenance of organisational alternatives in response to the variety of circumstances with which the tribesmen must deal.

Since 1935 and the more effective encapsulation of the Yarahmadzai tribe within the Iranian state, the balance between the tribal political hierarchy and the segmentary lineage system has shifted, with the hierarchy and the chiefship coming to have relatively more weight and the lineage system somewhat less. With encapsulation, the Sardar became the reluctant bottom man in the national government hierarchy, presenting demands of the government to his tribesmen,

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and being responsible to government for the actions of his tribesmen. The Sardar, from being an independent leader of free tribesmen, became a middleman, the two-way channel of information and goods, the resolver (or obfuscator) of differences between the tribe and government representatives, and the advocate of the tribe to the government.⁶

The Sardar took this new role under threat of military sanction, but also in response to financial benefits. These levers have had serious consequences not only for the parameters within which the Sardar operates, but also for the relationship between him and the tribesmen. One consequence is that the chief has limited but significant external politico-military support, independent of the intentions and wishes of the tribesmen. A second is that the chief has external sources of economic goods and services, which can be used both to bolster his own economic position and also as patronage to influence his tribesmen. So there has been a shift in the relationship, with the Sardar somewhat less of a leader and somewhat more of a patron, and the tribesmen somewhat less independent followers and somewhat more dependent clients. Economic and political differentiation and centralisation thus increase, and the egalitarian, decentralised lineage system less frequently and less effectively provides the means for dealing with political and economic concerns. The tribal political system remains multi-form, but is now weighted more heavily than before towards hierarchy.

Conclusion

Tribal political systems are a consequence of multi-directional and sometimes contradictory influences stemming from internal forms, inherent tendencies, and local system parameters, on the one hand, and extraneous pressures, foreign influences, and external ties, on the other hand. The structural forms resulting from these influences are compromises of all the varying tendencies; sometimes these compromises can be built into a unitary structure, but sometimes they are of a multiform nature.

The internal factors - adaptation, economy, technology, demography - that influenced the Yarahmadzai political system towards egalitarian, decentralised, contingent structures, would, with other characteristics than obtain among them, have influences in other directions. Richer and more dependable natural resources would provide a better basis for an extractable surplus and for control and co-ordination. An

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economy based more upon market exchange, especially with external populations, would be more susceptible to control and co-ordination. More stable means of production would be more conducive to accumulation of wealth and economic differentiation. Higher population density, both internally and externally, would make the tribesmen more accessible. A less nomadic technology of production would also make the producers more accessible, and a military technology less available to the population at large would facilitate concentration of the means of coercion. Differentiation and concentration of the means of production, coercion, or administration would favour increased political differentiation, hierarchy, centralisation and organisational diffusion. Internal factors with values in the other direction, such as even lower population density, or an economy based more upon marginal resources, or the like, would influence the political system more strongly towards egalitarianism, decentralisation, and structural contingency.

The external factors among the Yarahmadzai - especially political engagement with a more highly organised external power - that influenced their political system towards hierarchical, centralised structures and institutions, particularly the chiefship, would, with other characteristics than among the Yarahmadzai, have influences in other directions. External relations limited to decentralised tribal groups would probably not support the development of hierarchical, centralised structures.⁷ External relations based upon extensive economic exchange with other, especially sedentary populations, would require liaison and co-ordination, and would support institutionalised offices and structures. Engagement with an even stronger external power would, if the tribe were to remain independent, require greater mobilisation of human and economic resources, and thus an even higher level of organisation. Encapsulation within a powerful state (as happened to the Yarahmadzai after 1935, the point at which they became the Shah Nawazi) can lead to a more hierarchical, centralised, and crystallised structure as a result of a state policy of indirect rule and the consequent access of the tribal political hierarchy to the resources (administrative, economic and military) of the state.

In sum, we shall have more hope of understanding why tribes have chiefs:

- if we carefully delineate the various substantive aspects of tribal political systems and conceptualise them as structural and functional variables;

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- if we do not underemphasise the multiplicity of the factors, not all pressing in the same direction, that influence tribal political systems;
- if we do not underestimate the importance of factors intrinsic to non-political aspects of tribal life, and at the same time do not underestimate the importance of factors extrinsic to tribal life, especially those pressures that arise from engagement with other populations;
- if we recognise that societies are not perfectly integrated or structurally pure, that there is often a multiformity, with two or more structural forms maintained as organisational alternatives, each of which may be activated in response to particular types of challenges; and
- if we concentrate upon the specification of those conditions, of the complex patterns of sometimes contradictory forces, under which one or another type of tribal political system develops and is maintained.

NOTES

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2. B.J. Spooner, 'Politics, kinship and ecology in southeast Persia', *Ethnology*, 8 (1969), pp. 139-52; J.F. Bestor, 'The Kurds of Iranian Baluchistan: a regional elite', unpublished MA thesis, McGill University, 1979.

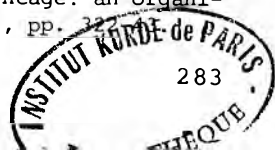
3. Cf. R. Cohen and E. Service (eds.), *Origins of the State* (ISHI, Philadelphia, 1978).

4. P.C. Salzman, 'Introduction: processes of sedentarization as adaptation and response', in P.C. Salzman (ed.), *When Nomads Settle: Processes of Sedentarization as Adaptation and Response* (Praeger/Bergin, New York, 1980), pp. 1-19.

5. P.C. Salzman, 'Ideology and change in Middle Eastern tribal societies', *Man (NS)*, 13 (1978), pp. 618-37.

6. P.C. Salzman, 'Continuity and change in Baluchi tribal leadership', *IJMES*, 4 (1973), pp. 428-39; id. 'Tribal chiefs as middlemen: the politics of encapsulation in the Middle East', *AQ*, 47 (1974), pp. 203-10.

7. Cf. M.D. Sahlins, 'The segmentary lineage: an organization of predatory expansion', *AA*, 63 (1961), pp. 22-32.



Chapter 9

IRAN AND THE QASHQAI TRIBAL CONFEDERACY

Lois Beck

Introduction¹

This chapter is directed toward understanding the dialectical processes involved in the contact between pastoral nomadic tribes and state-organised societies. In recent discussions in anthropology and history, the existence of socio-political units is sometimes explained in terms of external and more powerful forces. This is a welcome change of perspective from previous holistic and functionalist orientations, but it is incomplete. Knowing what the external powers are and how they impinge on pastoral nomadic populations does not adequately explain why some populations develop hierarchical political institutions and form confederacies while others do not. It does not explain why, among tribes under the rule of a single state, confederacies emerge in one area and not another, nor why the life spans of different confederacies within a state do not coincide. Knowing the nature of the external stimulus does not explain how political hierarchies emerge, nor can it predict where the core leadership will emerge. Finally, it does not explain the relative effectiveness of tribal leaders and their confederacies.

Internal factors also contribute in important ways to the emergence of hierarchical political institutions, and it is an understanding of the dynamic interaction between external and internal factors that best explains political development. Also, the setting in which the interaction occurs introduces factors that mediate between the population and external powers. For example, the context in which a trade route is opened, a commercial enterprise is developed, or a foreign power is involved may restructure the interaction between a population

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and an external power to the point that institutionalised political structures develop within the population. The following factors are relevant in the development of political hierarchies and confederacies among nomadic pastoralists: ecological setting, geographical and strategic location, resource base, economic production and exchange, socio-economic stratification, trade (regional, national, international), trade routes, capitalist penetration, foreign involvement, proximity of cities, competing groups and classes, warfare, ties with institutionalised religion, and minority (or ethnic) status. They can change in importance through time, and each is dynamically connected with others.

In the case of the Qashqai, the factors of urban proximity, trade routes, and foreign involvement were closely connected, and explanations for the historically early emergence of the confederacy as a major political power in south-west Iran, and for its longevity, include involvement with the Iranian state and all the factors mentioned above. The Qashqai case is unusual in these respects, but its examination can illuminate tribe-state relations elsewhere and inform the development and testing of hypotheses. The complexity of the Qashqai case invalidates any single-cause explanation for tribal and confederacy development. Those who seek explanations for political hierarchies in single features such as population growth, resource scarcity, capitalist penetration or 'state' pressure, may be encouraged by the discussion of the Qashqai case to look again at historical and ethnographic materials for indications of additional, interacting features.

Recent hypotheses concerning political development among pastoral nomads focus on their interactions with states, state-organised societies, and external stimuli. Irons suggests that

among pastoral nomadic societies, hierarchical political institutions are generated only by external political relations with state societies, and never develop purely as a result of the internal dynamics of such societies ... in the absence of relatively intensive political interaction with sedentary society, pastoral nomads will be organized into small autonomous groups, or segmentary lineage systems. Chiefly office with real authority will be generated only by interaction with sedentary state-organized society.²

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But since all pastoral nomadic societies interact politically with sedentary state-organised societies, the 'internal dynamics' of the former cannot be seen apart from their contacts with the latter. Also, a determination of the time when interaction between the two societies becomes 'intense' is problematic. Tapper explains two ideal types of tribal leaders - 'brigands' and 'chiefs' - in terms of the relative weakness or strength of the central government, while Garthwaite suggests that 'the potential for tribal confederation is directly proportional to the strength of an external stimulus',³ a hypothesis which is general and broadly applicable.

In order to enhance the utility of hypotheses concerning tribe-state relations and the formation of tribal confederacies, the dynamic, dialectical processes involved in the interactions must be considered. Helfgott's discussion of the 'constant dynamic in Iranian history involving the structured relations between two distinct socioeconomic formations - one characterized by the natural division of labor and kinship relations and the other characterized by a more complex division of labor and class rule'⁴ is relevant in this regard. Hypotheses should also recognise complexities within the socio-political unit and the external powers. Therefore, it is hypothesised that the more complex and multifaceted a pastoral nomadic population's interactions are with external political powers, the greater the potential for hierarchical political institutions and the formation of a tribal confederacy. Finally, an adequate explanation of the interaction between pastoral nomadic societies and state-organised societies is not possible without an understanding of the historical, ecological and socio-political context.

Background

From earliest historical evidence, the various groups affiliated as 'Qashqai' were not of homogeneous origin. The dominant political elements were Turkic, derived from western Oghuz/Ghuzz groups. One reference places some Qashqai south of Isfahan in 1415, and Fasai mentioned the involvement of Farsi-Madan (later a major Qashqai tribe) in a revolt against Shah Abbas in 1590. The main development of the Qashqai confederacy appears to have begun in the seventeenth century. However, no detailed historical data on the Qashqai exist until the eighteenth

century. Some Qashqai were sent to Khurasan from Fars by Nadir Shah Afshar in the 1730s, but their organisation with others in Fars previous to that time is not known. Once further into the eighteenth century, there is substantial evidence for Qashqai activity.⁵

The key role in tribe-state relations in the Qashqai case was that of the ilkhani or paramount leader. In his history of the Qashqai, Oberling uses the ilkhani title for Jani Aqa (early 1700s) and for subsequent paramount tribal leaders, while Garrod states that the first ilkhani was appointed by Karim Khan Zand (1747-79). Lambton notes the appointment during Karim Khan's reign of a Qashqai khan as ilbegi (chief) of all Turkic tribes in Fars, which may have been the precursor of the ilkhani appointment. Fasai claims that Jani Khan was the first Qashqai to possess the ilkhani title, which was bestowed by government, he says, in 1818/19. Whether earlier khans were regarded as ilkhani by their subjects or formally appointed by the state before 1818 is not yet documented. However, Malik Mansur Khan, a current Qashqai leader, says that his ancestors were first made ilbegi mamlakat-i Fars by the state, then ilkhani mamlakat-i Fars, and finally ilkhani Qashqai. Muhammad Huseyn Khan Qashqai says that Jani Khan was ilkhani mamlakat-i Fars and Muhammad Quli his son the first ilkhani Qashqai.⁶

It is clear that Qashqai leaders were a major political force in the region well before the 1818 date given by Fasai. Centralised tribal leadership was present by the time of Jani Aqa in the early 1700s, and paramount leadership has remained in one lineage to the present day. Many tribal groups and individuals brought by Karim Khan Zand to Fars to serve as his standing army remained behind after the Zand collapse and contributed to Qashqai strength and organisation. The proximity of the Zand capital, Shiraz, and the nature of Karim Khan's rule, undoubtedly contributed greatly to the centralisation of the Qashqai. Bestowal of the ilkhani title by the state, whenever it occurred, appears to be the recognition of a position already in existence rather than the 'creation' of it. This is not to say, however, that centralised leadership did not always serve in a mediatory capacity with regard to external political powers, particularly the Iranian state.

The Qashqai are distinguished from other tribal and nomadic pastoral populations in south-west Iran by their political allegiances and affiliations.

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Many of the Turks, Lurs, Kurds, Arabs, Persians and gypsies who sought resources in Qashqai territory aligned themselves with Qashqai leaders and over time assumed Qashqai identity. The primary basis of this identity was political allegiance to leaders and affiliation to tribal groups (subtribes, tribes, confederacy). In the twentieth century, the major Qashqai tribes were Amaleh, Darehshuri, Kashkuli-Buzurg, Shish-Buluki, and Farsi-Madan. Others were Qarachahi, Kashkuli Kuchik, Safi-Khani, Namadi, Igdir, Jafarbeglu, Rahimi, Bollu, and Gallehzan. Identity also came with residence in Qashqai territory and the assumption of associated rights and duties of control and defence. Qashqai identity implied various cultural features such as Turkic speech, dress and custom, but these were not uniformly adopted by tribal members, and cultural variation among Qashqai still exists today. It is not uncommon to find Qashqai speaking Luri or Kurdish. The identifying labels 'Qashqai' and 'Turk' (which in Fars are virtually synonymous) are associated with these political affiliations.

The Ruling Family

The nature of the lineage and family of the paramount leaders helps to explain Qashqai political power and continuity. Leadership remained within a single lineage for a longer period than in any other tribal group or confederacy in Iran, comparable in longevity to some of Iran's urban-based elite families. Also, Qashqai khans and supporters have had close cultural and personal ties, which contrasts with the situation in some other major tribes and confederacies in Iran. For example, Bakhtiari khans were said to be despised by much of their affiliated populations,⁸ while the Qashqai ruling family had the support of their tribal followers and considerable charismatic influence over them.

The contemporary leaders of the Qashqai confederacy trace descent from Amir Ghazi Shahilu (reputed relative of Shah Ismail (1501-24) who established Shii Islam as the state religion) and from his descendant six generations later, Jani Aqa, who is considered the founder of the confederacy.⁹ The fact that paramount leadership has never left the Shahilu patrilineage, the inability of other Qashqai political forces to take over leadership of the confederacy after the leaders' exile in 1954-6, and the speed with which the latter resumed leadership on

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their return from exile in 1979, are evidence of the charismatic notions held about the lineage and its leadership.¹⁰

The Shahilu lineage did not derive from one of the Qashqai tribes, nor is it today a segment of one. It has been a separate socio-political unit since at least the time of Jani Aqa. The paramount leaders were therefore not structurally or socially constrained by kinship ties to one particular tribal group. However, since groups were affiliated directly to the ruling lineage, the attachments could be tenuous, for the rulers ran the risk of losing supporters if their actions or demands were unacceptable.

Marriage restrictions have helped to maintain the exclusiveness of the Shahilu lineage. Outsiders have rarely been allowed to marry women of the family, and the lineage's small size has meant that finding marriage partners within the family for both sexes has been difficult. But through the generations, the family has created alliances in carefully-chosen sectors of Iranian politics. Men of the ruling family married within the lineage or with collateral kin, or they married with a few select khan families of component Qashqai tribes, with other tribal elites such as the Bakhtiari khans, and with city-based elite. Women of the ruling family did not have this range of possible marriage partners, since more control was exercised over their marriages. Some never married, and the reason often given was that suitable men of comparable or higher status did not exist. However, marriage would deprive these women of much of their power within and outside the family, and so some chose to remain unmarried.

Another key to understanding the strength and longevity of the confederacy is in the paramount leaders' consistent identification, in the twentieth century and possibly earlier, with Qashqai culture and life-style, certain aspects of which they helped to form. In tribal territory and often in cities, the leaders wore distinctive Qashqai hats (in two styles). They rarely dressed like Iran's upper-class political elite, nor did they identify with the latter, despite superficial similarities. They established tent-camps, perfected hunting and riding skills, worked personally on their properties, and were available - whether in tent-camps or urban residences - to any tribesperson who came to them. They delighted in wedding celebrations, in which central elements of the Qashqai cultural system were expressed. Women of the ruling family often wore Qashqai

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women's dress and participated in camp life and wedding ceremonies. Both men and women set themselves apart, when possible, from Persians, whom they privately ridiculed. They associated Persian culture with corruption, dishonesty, deceit, and disingenuous politeness, traits which have given them difficulty in the past.

The khans' use of the cultural system was a prime reason for the loyalty and allegiance of the Qashqai population. In contrast with the Bakhtiari case, cultural connections between Qashqai khans and commoners were strong and overt. Their relationships were generally respectful and sometimes emotional. There was pride for both in being Qashqai, and each acknowledged the importance of the other in history. Especially in the period of nation-state-building in twentieth-century Iran, the disadvantages of being a national minority were lessened by the khans' powerful national position.

The identification of both khans and commoners with the Qashqai cultural system was closely connected with the politics of Qashqai-state relations. It was strongly asserted when the state was weak, while in periods of state strength there was more assimilation to the national culture.

The Setting

The context in which the Qashqai confederacy developed contains many features that help explain its particular character. The setting was especially favourable for the political forms that emerged. It is noteworthy that the tribal groups immediately to the north-west and south-east of the Qashqai, residing in quite different settings, had different political institutions. Aspects of the context that were particularly significant in the Qashqai case are: ecology, strategic location (urban proximity, trade routes, distance from national borders, distance from national centre), isolated and protected seasonal pastures, migration routes, geographical distribution, and the role of the Persian majority.

The Qashqai occupy territory that is ecologically varied and rich in resources. It is not a marginal desert region with greatly fluctuating pastoral resources. Population density in and near tribal territory, given the severe climate and lack of water and natural fuels, are suitable only for seasonal occupancy, others are permanently occupied. De Planhol notes that nomadic pastoralism in the

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relatively lush Zagros Mountains is unexpected since the physical environment seems to favour a settled agricultural way of life.¹¹ Competitors have included other pastoralists (tribal and non-tribal), agriculturalists, village and urban settlers, and collectors of natural resources. A key factor of political development in this area, therefore, is the ecological setting; the area's history has involved a struggle for access and control. It is suggested that centralised political institutions were essential for any population's sustained control and use of this land.¹² Tribal and confederacy organisation allowed Qashqai households to produce at maximum levels with relative freedom from predatory incursions and to extract the resources and surpluses of others, which augmented household economies (especially in times of poor pastoral conditions or government harassment) and contributed to the overall, long-term political strength of the population.¹³ The state's interest in the Qashqai is partly explained by its desire for the economic surplus generated by the population. Finally, the ecological setting contributed to socio-economic stratification and the emergence and maintenance of a wealthy ruling class.

The Qashqai are also strategically located. Shiraz, the major city in south-west Iran, is located between their winter and summer pastures, south and north of the city, and most Qashqai must migrate past it twice annually. Shiraz was a magnet for Qashqai political and economic affairs. Top tribal leaders had residences and extensive contacts in the city which, combined with their tribal backing and their wealth, made them major figures in local politics. Tribal and urban politics often overlapped. Some Qashqai khans were able to use their position in the region as a basis for national prominence. Much economic activity in Shiraz was geared towards, and supported by, the economic production of its hinterland, an important part of which was Qashqai territory. Qashqai economies were tied with this market centre and were therefore integrated into regional, national and international economic systems. Important trade and travel routes linked Shiraz and its hinterland with national and international markets. It was especially the link between the Persian Gulf and south Iran (via Bushire and Bandar Abbas) that drew the attention of the state and foreign powers, and figured directly in the struggles among these powers and regional ones (local government, tribes, merchants). Had Qashqai terri-

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tory not bisected or abutted the three principal routes (to Bushire, Bandar Abbas and Isfahan) a very different tribal history would have been recorded.¹⁴

Qashqai territory did not touch or overlap with Iran's state frontiers. The state never used them to defend its borders, except in the eighteenth century when some Qashqai were taken to Khurasan, and they were free from pressures which might be applied by neighbouring states and by fellow-tribespeople across frontiers. Other tribal groups do have members across frontiers, which may contribute to their lack of commitment to the state and may encourage efforts at unification that threaten the state. Borders provide escape routes for tribes that resist state pressure, as in the Turkmen case.¹⁵ Tribes situated on borders may benefit from outside military support, but they can also suffer in numbers and wealth because of ensuing conflicts. Border tribes are often victims of competitions between other forces.¹⁶ Leaders of such border tribes can use the presence of two states, often competing, but they are also more vulnerable to internal political rivals, who can play to the interests of the rival states.¹⁷ It is suggested that distance from borders was conducive to tribal autonomy in the long run, and the absence of competition over the Qashqai between bordering states helped the Shahilu lineage to retain leadership over a long period.

Distance from the capital is another strategic feature. As noted above, Qashqai proximity to the Zand capital at Shiraz was an important factor in the early development of the confederacy. With the fall of the Zand dynasty in the 1790s, the central government moved to Tehran, where it has remained. This allowed the confederacy, after the important formative years under the Zands, a high degree of autonomy from state control and interference. Tribal proximity to the capital can bring influence in national affairs, but it can also sever tribal leaders from their tribal base; both occurred in the Bakhtiari case. Except for a brief period during the Constitutional era (1905-11), the Qashqai were not viewed by the state as a military threat to the capital. Before Riza Shah, Qashqai leaders did not pursue national leadership as persistently as did Bakhtiari leaders; most Qashqai leaders preferred to use their Tehran connections to serve their class and tribal interests in Fars. During and following the Riza Shah period, they attempted to strengthen their position with regard to the state, and a few

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did seek national leadership, but the Qashqai masses were too distant from the national capital to be much involved. (They were, however, affected when the state brought punishments against them because of their leaders' actions.)

Another feature of the Qashqai context is the relatively isolated nature of the winter and summer pastures, which were largely inaccessible to external forces, while their mountains were easily defensible. Before the advent of Riza Shah's improved roads and mechanised army, a state force could only with difficulty attack the Qashqai or threaten their lands. Even in the modern age of aircraft, paved roads and tanks, military forces can do limited damage to the dispersed, mobile Qashqai population. No major military adventures were undertaken in their territory at their expense, with the important exception of aerial bombing of migrating groups, and no other tribal confederacy seriously threatened their occupancy of land.¹⁸ In the 1960s, some Qashqai who were fugitives from Pahlavi justice successfully hid in mountain strongholds under Qashqai protection. The Islamic Republic has been unable to impose its authority over Qashqai territory during its first two years.¹⁹

The isolated, easily protected nature of Qashqai pastures contrasts with the nature of their migration routes. These have been their Achilles' heel, and they are also a factor behind the development of hierarchical tribal leadership. Qashqai pastoralism depended, for ecological reasons, on the seasonal movement of herds between widely separated pastures; nomadism was not a political adaptation in the Qashqai case.²⁰ Migration routes took them past Shiraz and through heavily settled, non-tribal agricultural areas. External powers capable of blocking migration routes threatened their economic survival. Regional, national and foreign armies have attempted, sometimes successfully, to keep some Qashqai from travelling between winter and summer pastures. As recently as 1971, the gendarmerie prohibited their migrations until the celebration of the 2,500 years of the monarchy had concluded, on the grounds that the movement of tribal people by Persepolis and Shiraz would be a security risk to the government as well as to the important international guests. While the Shah celebrated, nomads suffered and many animals died, trapped in the cold and barren summer pastures. The Qashqai were also vulnerable to raids and attacks by non-Qashqai populations during their migrations between seasonal pastures.

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Until the imposition of gendarmerie control in the mid-1960s, Qashqai khans and headmen played important roles in co-ordinating movements of population during political crises, and the ilkhani often ceremonially announced the commencement of the spring migration to leaders of the major tribes. However, the role of Qashqai leaders in the general co-ordination of migrations has been exaggerated, partly following Barth's reports on the neighbouring Basiri.²¹ Except under conditions of political instability, the Qashqai were relatively free to migrate when and where they chose, uncontrolled by leaders, especially after the migration had begun. Dozens of major routes and hundreds of minor ones existed, and migrating groups were independently able quickly to alter their paths if harassment, congestion, or poor conditions were reported to lie ahead.

The geographical distribution of the large Qashqai population in vast, widely-separated seasonal pastures has always caused problems for state administration. While some of Iran's major tribes reside and migrate within single provinces and can be administratively contained, the Qashqai are found in significant numbers in five areas (the present provinces of Fars, Isfahan, Kuhgiluyeh-Boyr Ahmad, Khuzistan, the Gulf coast) and fall under different provincial governments. Many reside in two or more provinces during the year. The government's administration of the Qashqai was almost always indirect, even during most periods of strong state rule, and government policy, being relayed through tribal mediators and state officials, was often vague and unimplemented.

A final element in the Qashqai setting is their minority status in relation to the dominant Persian population of the region and nation. Tribal leadership and the organisation of the confederacy protected and co-ordinated Qashqai activities and served as political and military counter-forces to intrusions and to Persian control of nearby centres of power and wealth - the state apparatus, the bazaars, and the religious institutions. Although of diverse ethnic and tribal origins, the Qashqai express their common identity as 'Turks', affirming group solidarity and creating boundaries between them and members of the surrounding society, who are Persians ('Tajik') or Lurs (often called 'Tajik' by the Qashqai). As noted above, Qashqai leaders shared this cultural identity and used its associated symbols and institutions to support their leadership.

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Pressures from Outside

The nature and impact of external political powers on the Qashqai must now be examined. It is suggested that the more complex and multifaceted a pastoral nomadic population's interactions with external political powers, the greater the potential for development of hierarchical political institutions and formation of a tribal confederacy. Why external political powers were interested in the Qashqai, and how the tribal population and its leaders responded, must be considered. It is not just an issue of 'response', however, for Qashqai leaders were often in a position to initiate interaction. They cannot be seen as passive victims of external forces.

External political powers include the central government, provincial government, foreign powers, other tribes and confederacies, and institutionalised religion. Another external stimulus consists of economic forces. Although two or more powers occasionally combined forces to deal with the Qashqai, their respective interests did not necessarily coincide. In fact, much of the colour in the history of south-west Iran derives from the opposing interests and resulting conflicts between and among these powers. The relationships of tribal, provincial, national and international politics through time, as outlined in Oberling's The Qashqa'i Nomads of Fars, for example, are extremely complex. Discussion of each kind of external power has as its necessary backdrop the contextual conditions outlined above.

The central government is the most important and continuous of the external powers. The literature often but ambiguously uses 'state' and 'central government' interchangeably.) Part of the central government's interest in the Qashqai would apply to any population occupying the rich southern Zagros: taxes and revenues, military service, law and order (especially near settled areas and trade routes), loyalty and obedience. But mostly its interest was drawn by the fact that the Qashqai, numerous, tribally-organised, armed, mobile, and sometimes politically independent, resisted imposition of government control (taxation, conscription, loyalty) and interfered with central administration. From the time that historical materials first mention them and perhaps earlier, they were seen as a threat by central authorities. Some governments were not in a position to discipline or control the Qashqai, who were then autonomous. Others worked through, rather than against, Qashqai leaders in order to

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facilitate their administration. Still other governments intrigued and battled against them, sometimes quite effectively.

Relations between the central government and the Qashqai follow a general pattern of indirect but locationally close rule under Karim Khan Zand in the latter part of the eighteenth century, direct decentralised rule under the Qajars in the nineteenth century, direct centralised rule under the Pahlavis between the 1920s and 1978, and, up to at least January 1981, weak disintegrated authority under the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Under the Safavids, the Qashqai tribes appear to have grown by an amalgamation process through the exercise of tribal leadership.²² According to tribal legend, some of them fought for Safavid rulers, and some leaders were given government titles and privileges. Ismail Khan and Hasan Khan, sons of Jani Aqa, accompanied Nadir Shah on his conquest of India in 1738 but were later mutilated by him and exiled to Khurasan. Karim Khan Zand allowed Ismail Khan to return to Fars, and the two men had a close personal relationship. Karim Khan, 'surrounded by friendly tribesmen',²³ appointed a Qashqai ilkhani or ilbegi.²⁴ Ismail Khan's son, Jani Khan, supported Karim Khan's Zand successors, and Aqa Muhammad Khan, the first Qajar ruler, took revenge on the Qashqai. The Qajar period was characterised by varying tribe-state relations, largely due to the often conflicting involvement of other external powers and the different abilities and interests of successive Qajar rulers. The Qajars sought to rule the Qashqai indirectly by instituting the office of paramount leader. The Pahlavis worked to destroy tribal power, and tribe-state relations entered a new era. The Khumeyni regime has as yet been unable to establish its authority in the Qashqai areas.

During each of these periods, paramount Qashqai leaders dealt directly with state rulers - a major characteristic of Qashqai relations with central authorities through history. Local officials were often ignored by both sides, and they suspected, often correctly, that politicking was occurring behind their backs. Relations between khans and rulers ran the gamut of intermarriage and parliament service to imprisonment and execution, sometimes in the same individuals. In attempts to exercise greater control, rulers occasionally exiled Qashqai families to distant locations, kept tribal leaders and/or relatives as court hostages, and arranged marriage alliances with court families.

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Five aspects of central-government power need elaboration. First, from at least Qajar times, the central government's confirmation/appointment of the paramount Qashqai khan as ilkhani made him a government official responsible for handling tribal as well as non-tribal affairs, such as tax collection, conscription and order. While the formal appointment almost always coincided with internal recognition of a paramount leader, the powers and privileges that accompanied the title were considerable, and ilkhani were able to enhance their already strong positions. On several occasions, the central government - often under pressure from other powers - deposed a tribally-favoured ilkhani and named a rival, intending to create an internal tribal crisis. However, tribal members usually refused allegiance, and the government was stuck with a leader who could not perform effectively.

Second, the taxes to be derived from the Qashqai and from tribes and villages under their control were considerable. In the 1830s the governors of Fars and Kirman literally chased the Qashqai from one province to the other and back again, supposedly for the privilege of having them on their tax rolls.²⁵ From the time of the establishment of the ilkhani, and perhaps before, his lieutenant, who held the title of ilbegi, had the task of collecting taxes from tribal members. The ilbegi kept a portion for his immediate supporters (the Amaleh), who were exempt from taxes, and on occasion passed part to the central government authorities. The central government was therefore interested in amicable relations with the ilbegi and other members of the ruling family.

Third, formal arrangements between Qashqai leaders and central authorities specified that levies would be produced for the shahs' armies. In the years of the Qashqai regiment, and when the khans had command of forces, national service brought the Qashqai leadership arms, ammunition, booty, legitimate military action against competitors, and general tribal strength.

Fourth, the central government at different periods entrusted to Qashqai leaders the task of securing the countryside. Their territory was often considered an autonomous administrative region - Vilayat-i Qashqai - and the ilkhani held responsible for it. The ilkhani and members of the ruling family were assigned various local governorships and the duty of bringing order to neighbouring tribes and areas, which added to their power and wealth. The

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loci of government concern were the rich agricultural areas of Fars (from which the government could then safely secure taxes and conscripts) and the trade routes to Bushire, Bandar Abbas and Isfahan (from which the government could profit by its foreign and mercantile connections). There was much for Qashqai leaders to gain in these ventures, and largely as a result, much of Fars was in the hands of, or connected with, the Qashqai.²⁶

Fifth, the central government rarely reached the Qashqai masses directly, and when it did, contact was through agents and officers who were assigned duties but assumed additional, more profitable ones at their own initiative. One of the main roles of the leaders was handling such government officials and protecting tribespeople from their predatory incursions. Individuals and groups affiliated themselves to Qashqai leaders in order to escape the harassments and extortions of officials. Non-Qashqai agriculturalists in and near Qashqai territory, tending their own or Qashqai fields, also sought protection in this way; they were called rayat-i Qashqai. Those who fell under Qashqai protection had advantages in this regard that others did not, and the leaders in turn gained agricultural surpluses, clients, and territories.

National government was sometimes directly opposed to provincial government - the second external power - which was not always organised to serve national interests, such as in tax collection and military activity. The Qashqai were often used in power struggles between the two governments, and Qashqai leaders, in their own interests, actively promoted their connections with each. As a check on provincial autonomy, the central government installed its own power figures in the south, such as relatives of the monarch. The Governor-General of Fars was a state appointee, but local interests, such as mercantile families, foreign powers and Qashqai leaders, could influence, even determine, the appointment. (No Qashqai was ever Governor-General.) The Governor-General occasionally confirmed/appointed the ilkhani on behalf of the state. The central government was sometimes unable to control its provincial governors, who were then able to act in their own interests. Both the Qashqai and the British took advantage of central-government weakness in this area. The Governor-General of Fars and the ilkhani were frequently considered the two top political figures in the south. A third powerful local figure, who also had important national

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connections, was the Qavam al-Mulk, head of a wealthy Shiraz merchant-landowner family. Through the nineteenth and early twentieth century, this family's interests and those of the Qashqai ruling family were opposed. However, their opposition was stimulated by the British, who used the Qavam (and his Khamseh confederacy troops - see below) to fight the Qashqai. During this period Qashqai political history was partly an expression of the varying relations between the ilkhani, the Governor-General of Fars, and the Qavam al-Mulk. In summary, provincial government was a mix of national and local politics. Qashqai leaders, who were directly involved at both levels, were used by and contributed to the various conflicting interests.

Foreign powers - particularly the British and to a lesser degree the Germans and Americans - form the third category of external power. The Russians, who were the major power in northern Iran in the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century, had little direct impact on the southern Zagros tribes, while the British played major roles in local politics and in Qashqai history. From the early eighteenth century to the mid-twentieth, and especially during the Constitutional revolution and the two World Wars, British diplomatic and commercial affairs intruded into the political and economic life of the province. While pursuing their own interests, the British claimed that they were acting on behalf of the Iranian government, whose apparent inability to bring order to southern Iran they found increasingly frustrating.

The first clashes between the British and the Qashqai were recorded in 1850-60, when Qashqai troops assisted in the defence of south Iran during the Anglo-Persian war, and the British encouraged the Iranian government to punish a few Qashqai for the destruction of telegraph wire near Shiraz.²⁷ The concern of the British with the Qashqai originally focused on what they believed to be Qashqai disruption of their trade. In 1861-2, partly because of British pressure on the government, the Khamseh tribal confederacy was created, under the leadership of the Qavam al-Mulk, to provide a balance of power in the south. The Qavam's family had similar commercial interests to the British, who used and financed this confederacy's leaders and forces for their own ends. When the British threatened to create their own local army, the central government, apparently lacking other options, entrusted the maintenance of safety on the roads and

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stability in the province to the Qashqai ilkhani. When the British could still not find safe passage for their commerce, they pressured the government to support the establishment of a Swedish-officered gendarmerie, and provided additional money to the Qavam al-Mulk for road safety and for attacks on the Qashqai.²⁸

At the beginning of World War I, the British were mainly concerned with the safety of the Khuzistan oil fields. The German General Staff sent Wilhelm Wassmuss, a former German Consul in Bushire, to provoke tribal uprisings against the British and their allied Khamseh tribes. Wassmuss dealt directly with the Qashqai ilkhani and helped to organise Qashqai forces. Regional politics during these years were an expression of the British-German struggle. In 1916, dissatisfied with the Qavam's performance of what they thought had been lavishly paid for, the British financed and officered their own military force, the South Persia Rifles, which added another military power to the area. (A third foreign military force in the region at the time was a cavalry regiment brought from India to strengthen the British consular guard in Shiraz.) In 1916-18 Sir Percy Sykes and the Qashqai ilkhani arranged peaceful relations; the British even formally recognised the latter's title. (This is the only reported occasion of ilkhani entitlement by a foreign power.) But peace was ended when the Qavam used the South Persia Rifles against the Qashqai; this was 'as much a Qawāmi invasion as a British one'.²⁹ The British resumed efforts to create dissidence among the Qashqai khans by offering money and arms to those who would side with them against the ilkhani. Sykes successfully pressed for the dismissal of the ilkhani, but this was not accepted by the affiliated tribes and he was shortly thereafter reinstated.

The British and Germans exploited and, to a great extent, even created local politics in southwest Iran in what they felt were their own national interests. The Qashqai lost much and gained little in their foreign affiliations during World War I. One of the reasons Riza Shah came down so heavily on Iran's pastoral nomadic tribes was his fear of tribal and foreign collusion against his new nation, a fear well justified by events prior to his reign. The foreign presence directly contributed, therefore, to Riza Shah's oppressions of the tribes.

During World War II, connections between the Qashqai and the Germans were re-established, largely to counter renewed British involvement with the

Qavam and the Khamseh tribes. Two of the ilkhani's brothers resided in Germany, and one of them served with the German army in Russia. The Germans sent agents to the ilkhani camp. The British played a part in the 1943 treaty negotiation between the Qashqai and the central government, and they were apparently involved in the 1946 'tribal uprising'.³⁰

The United States became deeply involved in Iran after World War II. The greatest blow to the Qashqai came with the ousting (through United States intrigue) of Prime Minister Muhammad Musaddiq, who had been supported by Qashqai leaders, and with the resulting exile of the ilkhani and his brothers in 1954-6. Although United States policy stressed Iran's national armed forces, concern over oil and the Soviet presence prompted suggestions for programmes for 'the tribes', some of which were implemented: incorporation of tribesmen in the army, settlement schemes, and health and education programmes. The Qashqai received another major setback under the United States-encouraged land reforms of 1962-72. Qashqai lands were nationalised, as well as deeded to and encroached upon by non-Qashqai, and Qashqai khans were removed from office. Without their leadership, most Qashqai were extremely vulnerable to external pressures.³¹

Foreign powers have had major impact on southern Iran. They have never, except for brief forays by the South Persia Rifles, invaded Qashqai territory, but their manoeuvres and intrigues against one another and with and against national and local governments, other tribes, and some dissident Qashqai groups, were major influences in the course of Qashqai political history.

The fourth category of external power consists of other tribes and confederacies. The history of inter-tribal relations in south-west Iran has yet to be written, but ethnographic and historical evidence demonstrates that this aspect of tribe-state relations was also important. The southern Zagros contains many tribally-organised populations which compete over supporters, land, resources, and links with external powers. The Qashqai were particularly successful in these matters. The cultural diversity within the confederacy is partial evidence for inter-tribal mobility. It seems reasonable to attribute changes of affiliation and allegiance among tribal groups and leaders to popular perceptions of political effectiveness. Inter-tribal alliances were largely provoked or necessitated by pressures from external powers. A checkerboard model of inter-

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tribal relations³² may be appropriate for some specific historical events, but it does not represent the complexity of ties through time nor the many changes in alignment, and it does not explain the differential impact of other external powers.

One inter-tribal relationship that appears fairly consistent from 1861 to World War II was that between the Qashqai and the Khamseh confederacies. The Khamseh was created specifically to foment conflict in the area, and it was used by British and local mercantile interests against the Qashqai. Before this, the tribes of what became the Khamseh had been loosely affiliated with the Qashqai. The ending of British support, and the state's removal of both indigenous and externally-imposed leaders, signalled the effective end of these tribes as political forces.

The major tribes to the north-west, the Boyr Ahmad and the Mamasani (both Kuhgiluyeh Lur tribes), were on occasion allied with the Qashqai, particularly in hostile action against government troops, the British, and the Qavam's Khamseh troops. But on other occasions, the government used the Qashqai to fight against the Lurs, and at least three governors appointed from the Qashqai ruling family were given responsibility for establishing order in the Kuhgiluyeh.³³ The Lur tribes never had the centralised political organisation of the Qashqai or the Bakhtiari, largely, I suggest, because of the nature of their location. They were not as strategically located in terms of urban areas, trade routes, and (in the twentieth century) oil fields, and as a result foreign powers and state authorities were not so interested in manipulating or controlling them. A centralised, co-ordinating, mediatory leadership was not needed and did not emerge.³⁴ However, the Qashqai khans viewed the Lur tribes as potential political allies, and intermarriages between the khan families attest to the complex political relations between them. Many - perhaps even a majority - of the Qashqai are Lur in origin, which indicates, among other things, the extent to which the Qashqai political system attracted and retained populations in the region.

North of the Qashqai summer pastures are the Bakhtiari, who are also Lurs. Their shared border is not long, and Qashqai commoners had less contact with Bakhtiari than with Lurs. Partly because of the ties of the Bakhtiari with the central government and the British, the paramount khans of the two tribal groups were frequently at odds. On occa-

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sion they supported dissident movements in each other's confederacies. They were never effectively allied. Hostility between the leaders of the Bakhtiari and the Arab tribes of Khuzistan, fostered by British manipulations, led to a formal (but unproductive) alliance among Arab, Qashqai, and Lur (Pusht-i Kuh) tribal leaders in 1910. The Bakhtiari khan Sardar Asad, from a position of national leadership, pressured the government to replace the existing Qashqai ilkhani with another, but the intended result did not materialise. Bakhtiari and Qashqai tribespeople have periodically moved into one another's territories. The Qashqai tribe of Darehshuri particularly, whose summer pastures connect with Bakhtiari lands, used the threat of flight to the protection of Bakhtiari khans as a weapon against pressure from the ilkhani and as an assurance of autonomy.

The Tangistani, Dashtistani, and Dashti tribes of the Persian Gulf coast, to the west of the Qashqai, were frequently allied with them in efforts to fight the British and to control and exploit the trade routes to the Gulf. Finally, there were many other, smaller tribes in Fars that joined forces with Qashqai leaders on various political occasions.

The fifth category of external power is that of institutionalised religion. The Qashqai are Shii Muslims. On a number of occasions, including the Constitutional era, Qashqai khans were in direct contact with ulama from Shiraz and Najaf (in Iraq) concerning national and regional politics. They shared a hatred of foreign interference. In 1918 Qashqai troops were allied with ulama-inspired Shirazis in fighting the British, and in 1946 there were meetings of tribal and religious leaders in protest against government policy and foreign involvement; one meeting was convened by the ilkhani.³⁵ In 1978 Nasir Khan Qashqai, the exiled ilkhani, paid a personal visit to the Ayatullah Khomeyni in France but, while they remained in contact during the early months of the revolutionary government, they later fell out.³⁶ In general, ties of the Qashqai khans with the ulama were politically expedient. They had little use for organised religion in the conduct of internal and most external affairs. They did not rely on persons of religious eminence as advisors or mediators, and they were not devout, practising Muslims.

The final category of external power is that of economic forces. Economic matters have not been neglected in the foregoing discussion, but additional

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factors remain to be considered. Local and wider economic interests were directly connected with regional politics; political figures were wealthy and controlled a major part of the means of production.

Qashqai land was very productive for pastoralism and cultivation, and there was competition for control of access, use and profit. The khans, as allocators of usufruct rights, gained economically from the proceeds of production, and they and other wealthy Qashqai had close ties with the market and were among the regional elite. Urban merchants and middlemen competed for their business and provided additional opportunities for wealth through contracts in animal husbandry and agriculture and in the production of wool, carpets, and opium. Capitalist penetration of the Qashqai economy was facilitated by the khans' activities and directly enhanced their wealth, power and prestige. This, in turn, aided their competition in political arenas.

National and international economic forces pervaded the region. The production of wool, carpets, opium and gum tragacanth was stimulated by foreign commercial interests. The significance of trade routes through Qashqai territory has been noted; by selling 'protection' to commercial transport, by collecting road taxes, and by raiding, some Qashqai (and others) used the routes for economic advantage.

Exclusive and relatively secure use of pastureland facilitated the production and market relations of the Qashqai masses, who could more easily compete in the regional system because of the supportive tribal system.³⁷

Membership in the tribal system facilitated the many economic activities of both wealthy and less wealthy Qashqai and connected them with wider economic and political forces.

Internal Tribal Dynamics

Discussion of 'the Qashqai' as a political force ought more properly to read, 'the Qashqai khans', for they were the power brokers who dealt directly with other powers in the region. Much 'Qashqai history' is therefore a history of the Qashqai khans.³⁸ It is clear, however, that the khans could not have been the political figures they were without the political hierarchy or the support of the Qashqai tribespeople. An account of internal tribal dynamics is therefore essential to the discussion of the formation and operation of the confederacy. How

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the tribal population was organised, and how it articulated with the political hierarchy, should be seen in the context of the particular setting and the external pressures, both of which called for centralised hierarchical leadership. Allegiance to Qashqai leaders and membership in the tribal confederacy had advantages for the Qashqai, and facilitated their interactions with external powers.

The Qashqai were organised into a series of socio-political groups, each of which had one or more leaders. The lowest level of socio-political organisation was the household, whose head represented it in most domains beyond the encampment. The encampment was a flexible, temporary association of households; the oldest, most respected men made some decisions that concerned the unit, but households had considerable independence. The pasture group, a collection of camps in a geographically defined area, was also a flexible arrangement of tents and camps. A sub-tribe (tireh), consisting of one or more pasture groups in winter and summer pastures, was a political group defined largely by kinship ties and by attachment to a headman (kadkhuda). A tribe (taifeh) was a collection of sub-tribes and was headed by a family of khans, one of whom often had the title of kalantar and role of liaison with the ilkhani. The khan families (khavanin) comprised a small, distinct socio-economic class with dynastic, aristocratic characteristics. Finally, the confederacy (il) was a collection of five large and a number of small tribes and was headed by a man of the ruling family, often entitled ilkhani. The chain of political authority was from household head to elder, headman, khan, kalantar and ilkhani.

Each tribe had its own winter and summer pastures, and the khans' major function was allocation of usufruct rights to their associated sub-tribes, through the sub-tribal headman, who in turn allocated pasture rights to member households. Coordination of the migration was not a major function of any Qashqai leader, except when political circumstances warranted it, and then their roles were essential. The khans, often through their headmen, handled general tribal affairs: designation of local leaders, administration of tribal law and justice, resolution of intra-tribal and inter-tribal disputes, conduct of relations with sedentary authorities, tax collection, and certain kinds of economic redistribution. They organised defensive and offensive activities, and attempted to prevent their affiliated groups from raiding when it was not

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politically advisable. The state and foreign powers often judged the strength of tribal leaders by their ability to control raiding by their followers.³⁹ Khans were in charge of diplomatic relations with the ilkhani, with other tribes, and with sedentary and state authorities. Given the political and strategic setting and the many external pressures, a centralised, co-ordinated and effective leadership was essential if the Qashqai were to maintain control of their territory and compete successfully against their neighbours and intruding forces.

The ability of the Qashqai to act as a quasi-independent political entity, as a state within a state, was due to the co-ordinating and mediating efforts of the confederacy leader, the ilkhani. While he served as khan to his Amaleh supporters, his main functions related to external powers and to the administration of the confederacy. An *ilbegi*, usually his brother, often served as his lieutenant, and other close relatives also performed leadership functions, which were informally divided out according to personal skills and interests. Under Ismail Khan Soulat al-Douleh (ilkhani from 1902-33) the Qashqai had some of the main attributes of sovereignty - 'an independent army, an independent economy and independent foreign policy'.⁴⁰ While the 'independence' of these entities can be questioned, the ilkhani did function as the head of a political group which was often beyond the state's control. He depended on the support and loyalty of the tribal khans, and they depended on and profited from his wider leadership functions. That he could and occasionally did act without their consent or knowledge was due to his many external political contacts, his mediatory position, and his membership in the local and national political elite. One of his bases was Shiraz, where he conducted affairs like the non-tribal elite. What differentiated him from the latter, however, was that he could use the tribal support behind him and could call upon his fellow khans and followers. His presence in Shiraz and other cities and settled areas stimulated interaction with powers external to the tribe; his position as tribal co-ordinator was a major factor in the degree of interaction that occurred.

There were limits, however, on the activity of the confederacy and the power of the ilkhani. First, tribal leaders were restricted by the fact that their political activity had consequences for, and generated reactions from, other political powers. As part of the state, the Qashqai were always vul-

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nerable to its instabilities and power struggles. Also, their leaders lacked an adequate understanding of the aims of foreign powers concerning them, and were frequently deceived. Second, the confederacy never functioned as a single, unified entity. The most concerted military effort by 'the Qashqai' involved, at most, 5,000 horsemen (at a time when their total population approached 500,000). Third, tribal khans could act independently, and some directly opposed the ilkhani; this sometimes included members of the ilkhani's family. And fourth, some tribal activities were always separate from the workings of ilkhani leadership, and many continued uninterrupted when the ilkhani was removed from the scene. (Sometimes a de facto ilkhani acted as leader when the official ilkhani was on trips, under house arrest, removed from office, or weak.)

Membership of tribe and confederacy often benefited the Qashqai population,⁴¹ and leaders rarely needed to rule by coercion. Through allegiance and loyalty to tribal leaders, the Qashqai gained relatively secure and protected access to pastureland, which facilitated pastoral and agricultural production and market relations. They profited economically from raids and other actions co-ordinated or supported by their leaders. They were economically assisted by those who were in a position to extract the surplus of others. Relations with external powers were mediated for them. In individual interactions with non-Qashqai they had the advantage of the superior political position and reputation of the Qashqai in the region.

As members of tribe and confederacy, Qashqai households and sub-tribes had certain obligations. An animal tithe of one to three per cent of household herds was collected occasionally by the khans to support their expenses and life-style. When the central government was able to collect taxes from the Qashqai, and when the ilkhani needed revenue for warfare or other reasons, he demanded a tithe of one to three per cent of herds to be collected and transferred to him by the khans and the ilbegi. Tribesmen fought in the khans' and ilkhanis' battles; this was handled through a summons to the headmen, who were each to supply a certain number of warriors, mounted and armed. With the possibility of booty, this was often a privilege rather than a burden. The Amaleh tribe was the ilkhani's standing army, as were the Amaleh sections of the component Qashqai tribes for their respective khans. The khans and ilkhani occasionally relied on additional support

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from their associated sections. Tribespeople also owed labour and gift offerings to the khans and ilkhani on special occasions.

The extraction of surplus from the Qashqai masses by tribal leaders seems not to have been exploitative. The tithe occasionally collected was not burdensome and at any rate was a small proportion of household property. Household economies (based on pastoralism, agriculture, weaving) were not controlled by tribal politics, except that access to pastureland derived from tribal ties and obligations. Matters of animal and land ownership, allocation of labour, production, and exchange were solely in the hands of individual households. The khans and ilkhani were hospitable and generous to their supporters. Poverty-stricken Qashqai were exempt from the tithe, and those in serious economic difficulty could expect some help from tribal leaders. Also exempt from the tithe were those who performed regular services for tribal leaders, such as headmen, tax-collectors, overseers, mediators, and gunmen, as well as descendants of warriors killed in khans' battles. The actions and demands of leaders were checked by the ability of dissatisfied followers to sever their ties. Leaders dissatisfied with tribal followers were also, however, in a position to apply sanctions and punishments. Denial of access to pasture was the strongest sanction, although those removed by one leader could seek land with another who was anxious to increase his following. Allocation of poor pastures and the temporary imposition of high taxes were other sanctions. Khans were supported by mediators, scribes, tax-collectors, overseers and gunmen who enforced tribal law and the policy of the leaders. The khans and ilkhani did not use government forces against tribal members to enforce their rule, as has been the case elsewhere in Iran.⁴²

The wealth of the khans and ilkhani did not derive primarily from their tribal supporters. Other sources were more profitable and kept the leaders from making heavy extractions of wealth from the tribe itself, which would have undermined and weakened its support. (It is true, however, that the khans retained the best pastures and garden locations for themselves.) The ilkhani and some khans were given governorships of territories, which allowed them to acquire private property and to collect government taxes, some of which they held back. Most khans were wealthy landowners, acquiring land from government service, investment of income

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from other economic activities, and confiscation. They extracted part of the yearly production of their share-croppers and tenants, who were usually Persians or Lurs. Khans who organised or sanctioned raids received a share of the booty. Finally, khans who engaged in mediatory functions, especially those who held formal positions and titles, derived additional income from their association with external powers. The ilkhani received large cash and land payments from the state for his administrative functions and for arming and supporting a tribal army. Foreign powers also paid him and other khans to engage in such activities as the protection of trade routes and military aggression against other tribes.

The ilkhani and the khans used their various political positions in their own class and personal interests, in ways that prevented them from being economically dependent on tribal followers. Their political and economic strength was drawn primarily from domains beyond the tribe, but they were able to use the threat of tribal action in these external domains to buttress their regional and national positions.⁴³ Both these features help to explain the enduring political power of the Qashqai confederacy.

NOTES

1. I am indebted to Houman Qashqai for his special insights on historical and contemporary Qashqai leadership. In addition John Perry offered many helpful suggestions on earlier drafts of this chapter. The chapter does not present a chronological history of the Qashqai confederacy: this is available in P. Oberling, *The Qashqā'i Nomads of Fārs* (Mouton, The Hague, 1974). Anthropological field research among the Qashqai was conducted in 1969-71 and 1977, and a brief visit was possible in 1979. For an account of the Qashqai since 1962, see L. Beck, 'Economic transformations among Qashqā'i nomads, 1962-1978', in *MIDCC*, pp. 99-122. The chapter's discussion was greatly assisted by a number of sources, in particular documents in the India Office Library, London, and the following: P. Oberling, *Qashqā'i Nomads*; id., 'British tribal policy in southern Persia 1906-11', *Journal of Asian History*, 4 (1970), pp. 50-79; F. Barth, *Nomads of South Persia* (Allen and Unwin, London, 1961); R. Cottam, *Nationalism in Iran* (Pittsburgh University Press, 1964); Hasan Fasā'ī, *History of Persia under Qājār Rule (Fārsnāmeḥ-i Nāsiri)*, tr. H. Busse (Columbia University Press, New York, 1972); O. Garrod, 'The nomadic tribes of Persia today', *JRCAS*, 33 (1946),

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pp. 32-46; id., 'The Qashqa'i tribe of Fars', *JRCAS*, 33 (1946), pp. 293-306; G. Garthwaite, chapter 10 below; A.K.S. Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant in Persia* (Oxford University Press, 1953); ead., 'Īlāt', *EI*, 2nd ed., 3, pp. 1095-1110; R. Tapper, 'The tribes in eighteenth and nineteenth century Iran', forthcoming in P. Avery and G. Hambly (eds.), *The Afshars, Zands and Qajars*, vol. 7 of the Cambridge History of Iran (Cambridge University Press).

2. W. Irons, 'Political stratification among pastoral nomads' in *PPS*, pp. 362, 372.

3. Tapper, 'The tribes'; Garthwaite, chapter 10 below.

4. L. Helfgott, 'Tribalism as a socioeconomic formation in Iranian history', *IS*, 10 (1977), pp. 54-5.

5. Lambton, 'Ilat', p. 1098; J. Aubin, 'Références pour Lar médiévale', *Journal Asiatique*, 218 (1955), p. 504; Oberling, *Qashqa'i Nomads*, p. 35 and *passim*.

6. Oberling, *Qashqa'i Nomads*; Garrod, 'Qashqa'i', p. 296; G.R. Fazel, 'Economic Organization and Change among the Boir Ahmad: a Nomadic Pastoral Tribe of Southwest Iran', unpublished PhD dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1971, p. 31 (Fazel states that a Boyr Ahmadi was appointed supreme chief of the major Kuhgiluyeh tribes during the reign of Karim Khan Zand; however, the date he gives for this - ca.1796 - comes some years after Karim Khan's death); A.K.S. Lambton, 'The tribal resurgence and the decline of the bureaucracy in eighteenth century Persia', in T. Naff and R. Owen (eds.), *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Islamic History* (Southern Illinois University Press, Carbondale, 1977), p. 111; Fasai, *History of Persia*, p. 160; Malik Mansur Khan, personal interview, 28 Aug. 1979, Tehran; Muhammad Huseyn Khan, personal interview, 29 July 1979, London.

7. P. Oberling, 'The Turkic Peoples of Southern Iran', PhD dissertation, Columbia University, 1960, p. 211; see also J. Perry, *Karim Khan Zand* (University of Chicago Press, 1979); Lambton, 'Tribal resurgence'.

8. D. Brooks, chapter 12 below.

9. Oberling, *Qashqa'i Nomads*, pp. 31, 35; id., 'Turkic Peoples', p. 202.

10. For discussion of this period, see my 'Tribe and state in revolutionary Iran: the return of the Qashqa'i Khans', in F. Kazemi (ed.), *Iranian Revolution in Perspective*, *IS*, 13 (1980), pp. 215-55.

11. X. de Planhol, 'Geography of settlement', in W.B. Fisher (ed.), *The Land of Iran*, vol. 1 of the Cambridge History of Iran (Cambridge University Press, 1968), pp. 409-10.

12. Barth, *Nomads*, pp. 127-30.

13. L. Beck, 'Herd owners and hired shepherds: the Qashqa'i of Iran', *Ethnology*, 19 (1980), pp. 327-51.

14. Control of urban centres and international trade routes was a key factor in the development of the Agqoyunlu

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confederacy: J. Woods, *The Aqquyunlu: Clan, Confederacy, Empire* (Bibliotheca Islamica, Minneapolis and Chicago, 1976), p. 43.

15. See W. Irons, 'Nomadism as a political adaptation', *AE*, 1 (1974), pp. 635-58.

16. J. Perry, 'Forced migration in Iran during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries', *IS*, 8 (1975), pp. 199-215.

17. See chapters 4 (above) and 13 (below).

18. Oberling, *Qashqa'i Nomads*, p. 218.

19. Beck, 'Tribe and state'.

20. Cf. Irons, 'Nomadism'.

21. F. Barth, 'The land use pattern of migratory tribes of South Persia', *Norsk Geografisk Tidsskrift*, 17 (1959), pp. 1-11; id., *Nomads*.

22. For discussion of the amalgamating process, see Garthwaite, chapter 10 below.

23. Oberling, *Qashqa'i Nomads*, p. 39; also Perry, *Karim Khan*, pp. 225, 255-6.

24. Lambton, 'Tribal resurgence', p. 111; Garrod, 'Qashqa'i', p. 296.

25. Fasai, *History*, pp. 208-16.

26. H. Field, *Contributions to the Anthropology of Iran* (Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago, 1939), p. 217.

27. Oberling, *Qashqa'i Nomads*, p. 66.

28. *Ibid.*, p. 101.

29. *Ibid.*, p. 140.

30. See B. Schulze-Holthus, *Daybreak in Iran: a Story of the German Intelligence Services* (Staples Press, London, 1954); Oberling, *Qashqa'i Nomads*, pp. 183-6.

31. Beck, 'Economic transformations'.

32. Barth, *Nomads*, p. 130.

33. P. Oberling, 'The Turkic tribes of southwestern Persia', *Ural-Altäische Jahrbücher*, 35 (1964), p. 178.

34. One explanation often given for the lack of political development among Lur tribes is strife (feuds and fratricides) among tribal leaders, which, in turn, is explained by polygyny. The complex phenomenon of tribal leadership is not adequately explained by either strife or polygyny. The converse - that the reason for harmonious rule and succession to office among Qashqai khans was the absence of polygyny - is also inadequate.

35. Oberling, *Qashqa'i Nomads*, pp. 186, 188.

36. Beck, 'Tribe and state'.

37. Beck, 'Herd owners'.

38. See R. Tapper, review of Oberling's *Qashqa'i Nomads*, *BSOAS*, 40 (1977), pp. 165-6; L. Beck, review of the same, *IS*, 10 (1977), pp. 116-19.

39. E.g. D. Austin Lane, 'Hajji Mirza Hasan-i-Shirazi on the nomad tribes of Fars in the Fars-Nameh-i-Nasiri', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 2 (1923), pp. 213, 217.

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40. Oberling, *Qashqa'i Nomads*, p. 195.

41. Cf. F. Barth, *Principles of Social Organization in Southern Kurdistan* (Jørgensen, Oslo, 1953), pp. 42-3.

42. See P.C. Salzman, 'Inequality and oppression in nomadic society', in *PPS*, pp. 429-46.

43. Helfgott, 'Tribalism', p. 53, makes a similar judgement:

While the Qajar khans collected personal income and property as provincial governors, there is no evidence to indicate that they obtained any significant income from the surplus of tribal wealth. On the contrary, because the Qajar khans relied on their tribe for military support both locally and to pursue their broader political and military aims, they maintained and attempted to strengthen tribal ties.

Chapter 10

TRIBES, CONFEDERATION AND THE STATE: AN HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE BAKHTIARI AND IRAN

Gene R. Garthwaite

Introduction

Bakhtiari history, stretching back to the fourteenth century, tantalises the social historian of Iran. There is a great temptation to assume that the extraordinary continuity in that name can also be found in Bakhtiari political, economic and social organisation. The historian is frustrated further because a narrative of Bakhtiari political history cannot be reconstructed from primary sources until the late nineteenth century, and even then major parts of it are still fragmentary. The social scientist is likewise thwarted in attempting to obtain a detailed account of Bakhtiari social structure. Basic institutions, relationships and values are obscured by the very nature of complex societies, by differences between internal and external perceptions of the Bakhtiari, and by the lack of sources. The basic problem continues to be the absence of detailed information from which generalisations may be drawn - generalisations which, in turn, may prove to be of little value except in specific, concrete instances and which, consequently, risk the charge of being either commonplace or self-evident. Whether the approach is synchronic or diachronic, major analytical problems arise - which should not discourage the attempt.

This chapter explores heuristically a hypothesis, and, using the Bakhtiari and their relationship to the state as illustration, sets out to demonstrate aspects of it. This hypothesis may be useful in looking at other tribal groups in the Zagros and beyond. The hypothesis is: the potential for tribal confederation is directly proportional to the strength of an external stimulus.¹

The nature of tribal socio-economic organisa-

tion - in this case, that of the Bakhtiari - militates against a sui generis formation of tribal confederation. In tribal areas not under the control of an organised state, or when no state structure exists, confederations form only in response to an external stimulus - typically, a need for common defence or an opportunity for expansion or conquest. The confederation's strength is proportional to the strength of the stimulus, and the confederation does not long outlast the existence of the stimulus.

In tribal areas under the control of an organised state - the imposed control of a bureaucracy and army with a supporting ideology - the state itself is the 'external' stimulus. Tribes form confederations to defend and expand interests vis-à-vis the state. The traditional, relatively decentralised state government may seek to utilise the power of tribal confederations for its own purposes of reinforcing internal processes by recognising the confederation or by creating one. As such governments, however, become more centralised, they increasingly regard the existence of tribal confederations as antithetical to their interests. When centralised bureaucracies become strong, they attempt to limit the confederations' power and, because of the state's control of greater resources and its superior organisation, typically succeed in doing so. A corollary of the hypothesis would be: within a modern organised state the potential for tribal confederation is inversely proportional to the degree of bureaucratic organisation.

Periods when a Bakhtiari confederation (or confederations, for example the Haft Lang and Chahar Lang moieties of the eighteenth century) may have existed earlier within a strong traditional state, would include the reigns of Shah Abbas I (1587-1629) and Shah Abbas II (1642-66); documentation supports the hypothesis in that circumstance for the periods of Nadir Shah (1736-47), Karim Khan Zand (1751-79) and Nasir al-Din Shah (1848-96). Periods characterised by weak state structures, or their absence altogether - when smaller competing segments characterised the Bakhtiari - would possibly include pre- and late Safavid times, and can be supported by sources for the years preceding Karim Khan Zand's consolidation of his power, the reigns of the early Qajars, and the decade of World War I. (Ali Mardan Khan's attempt to unite the Bakhtiari in the mid-eighteenth century in order to rule Iran perhaps constitutes a variation of confederation formation for the purpose of expansion.) An example of the

Bakhtiari under a centralised state - again, with the break-up into lesser units but in this instance initiated by the state - is dramatically illustrated by Riza Shah's destruction of the Bakhtiari confederational structure in the early 1930s.

'Tribe'

'Tribe', 'confederation', and 'state' are protean notions, encompassing a whole matrix of alliances and, as analytical categories, resist agreed definitions. As heuristic models each may be conceived as a continuum.

The Bakhtiari tribal continuum begins with the family and ends with the taifeh (tribe) - the family's ultimate extension - which defines the limits of primary economic, social and political activity, organisation and identity.² The form of the taifeh has been more persistent than the confederation and less affected by external developments, for their function derives from basic pastoral and agricultural structures.

The family unit takes on the key and enduring ideological role, forming the basis for everyday activity and giving rise to most demands and conflicts. In addition, the family provides the conceptual basis for the process of group formation at all levels. The nuclear family, which owns the flocks and works together in the agricultural cycle, constitutes the key economic unit. The yield of the flocks and of the land is largely utilised for family consumption; similarly, marketing is a family concern.

Extended or related families come together as an oulad, or tash, approximating a descent group, which functions as a camp (mal) of from three to twelve tents and shares common herding, migration and defence interests. At this level of segmentation, decisions are reached by heads of family.

The tireh, roughly 'sub-tribe', forms the next level, constitutes the maximum group of related camps, and functions primarily during the migration. A tireh is represented by a kadkhuda. Tireh come together to form a taifeh (numbering up to 25,000 individuals), headed by a kalantar appointed from among the group by the khans. Pasture rights derive from membership in the taifeh, which exists as a named group with its own identity and, probably, as an endogamous unit. Even though it may not always act as an entity, the taifeh, indeed even the

Bakhtiari confederation, provides a conceptual framework for organising people politically and attaching them to leaders.

Continuing with the segmentary pyramid, every taifeh belongs to one of eight bab; each bab has a dominant lineage from which khans are chosen. The babs are grouped into the two moieties (il) of the Haft Lang or Chahar Lang, and finally the confederation (also il) of the Bakhtiari after 1867. Today, five babs are found in the Haft Lang (the Duraki, Babadi, Bakhtiarvand (or Bahdarvand), Dinarani, and Janiki) and four in the Chahar Lang (Mamivand, Mamsaleh, Mugui and Kianursi).

The larger the group, the weaker the commitment and the identification with the family level of organisation. The taifeh, composed of autonomous segments, hence a microcosm of the Bakhtiari confederation, constitutes the terminal unit of the 'family's' functional limits, in which internal factors such as herding of flocks, pastures, water, and migration assume primary importance in group formation.

'Confederation'

The confederation of the Bakhtiari (usually il, but also taifeh, buluk or bakhsh³ in colloquial and oral usage) begins with the taifeh and terminates in either the moieties or the whole of the Bakhtiari. The difference between taifeh and confederation is primarily one of function; size and organisation, which may appear as additional variables, derive from function. The confederation has unified taifehs for defence and resolution of internal disputes and for administrative purposes in the state system. The confederation especially rallies the taifehs for defence and expansion against the state, neighbouring tribes, and settled communities, and, on an ideological level, integrates them into the greater cultural system. The confederation is less binding on its members, in terms of economic, social and political activity, loyalty and identity, than even the taifeh, and may even be perceived as exploitative or as a structure whose goals are in basic conflict with those of the taifeh or the lesser units.

The confederalional function is set off from the tribal one (which helps to account for the tribes' negative perceptions of the confederation) by the factors of power base, leadership roles,

potential conflict of interest between the tribes and the confederation, and exacerbation of internal competition for limited resources. Kalantars and khans depend primarily upon internal support as their power base, while confederation leaders, khavanin-i buzurg (the Great Khans), possess an internal base but draw support from the government, from land, and from leaders and groups external to the Bakhtiari.

The khans were usually selected from those born into the chiefly families of the bab. Although one khan was regarded as paramount by his bab, or even others, multiple candidates competed for that position: brothers, cousins (father's brother's sons), and uncles (father's brothers). The two dominant rivalries found among the khans were those of half-brothers (same father) and of nephew against paternal uncle; these particular antagonisms should not be surprising given polygyny and the notion, contradicted in inheritance practice,⁴ of the equality of all sons. Positions of power among Bakhtiari khans were insecure, at least from late Safavid times to the mid-nineteenth century and again from 1882-1936, for there were always rival claimants who acted as an important check against the potential for absolutism by allowing babs and taifehs to transfer support and allegiance to a rival khan.

The khans' power was both personal and vested in their chiefly office: it was based on the benefits they were able to dispense, the respect they may have commanded because of their lineage, and the coercive capabilities within the tribe or confederation provided by armed retainers. Their chiefly functions included maintenance of order and adjudication of disputes; co-ordination of internal tribal affairs such as migration, assignment of pastures, appointment of headmen and agents; collection of tribal levies, taxes and dues; and co-ordination of external relations, including representation of the tribe.

The Great Khans, leaders of the Bakhtiari confederation in the late nineteenth century and after, were members of the ruling Haft Lang lineage of the Duraki from which the ilkhani paramount khans were chosen by the Shah after 1867. They possessed major land holdings in Chahar Mahall; functioned as government officials and military leaders there, in the Bakhtiari, and on campaigns; and represented major Bakhtiari components and after 1867 the whole of them. These Great Khans were part of a tribal/pastoral/nomadic world as well as a non-tribal/agri-

cultural/sedentary one.

They were set apart from the khans of the other babs by differences in degree of wealth, power and function that were compounded by their involvement in state affairs as major landlords, government officials, and representatives of the confederation, and by the support given them by the state. To maintain their many positions they sought ties with Qajar factions, Qashqai khans, the Qavams in Shiraz, Arab sheykhs in Khuzistan, the ulama and the British. Such a range of ties is reflected not only in political alliances and rivalries but in marriage bonds as well.⁵ In the confederation, the Great Khans held executive power, and retained the largest military units within it. Despite military superiority and government support, their power was far from absolute, for it was limited by the internal rivalry among the Duraki khans, and by the ability of the various segments of the Bakhtiari to withhold support or transfer it to a rival within the Duraki lineage or even outside it. Similarly the state could recognise a rival and thus manipulate Bakhtiari politics.⁶

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Bakhtiari confederation leaders, the Great Khans, could have been removed only by a combination of the tribes and the state, thus limiting the tribes' independent action and power. The leaders of the confederation acted as government surrogates in their role as administrators in the collection of taxes and conscripts, and the maintenance of order. This resulted in one form of conflict of interest but, in addition, the tribes were exploited by confederation leaders who sought a broader, external role in the state. Those leaders who sought to form a state from the confederation base had to maintain its cohesion, but also had to appeal to those outside the confederation through an acceptable ideology reinforced by the expectation of meeting economic, social and political wants. Finally, the confederation leaders' external support and internal domination gave them, at times, a monopoly of power so that they could reward and punish individuals or whole taifehs and, despite internal opposition, award pastures, land, or exemptions to external groups in return for their support.

The great confederations commonly associated with Iran today probably date from the nineteenth century (scholars are of course aware of earlier ones such as the Qara-qoyunlu, Qizilbash and Shah-sevan) when the Qajars, who were possibly reviving

a much earlier practice, invested leaders with the title and office of ilkhani (or its equivalent) which gave its holders authority and power to act on behalf of the central government as official administrators of what were thus formally created and recognised by Tehran as autonomous administrative units. This occurred in 1818 for the Qashqai and 1867 for the Bakhtiari.⁷ The Khamseh confederation came into existence during Nasir al-Din Shah's reign, and even though its head never held the title ilkhani he functioned as such. The dates for the first appointment of an ilkhani for the Qajar confederation (possibly early nineteenth century and of special status given its relationship to the ruling dynasty) and the Zafaranlu of Quchan are not yet known. None of the other Kurdish leaders possessed the title nor did the Arab sheykhs who held like office as administrators for their respective areas.

The great confederations in Iran came about as the result of designation, amalgamation, or a combination of these two processes. In designation, the central government possibly sought to centralise or to limit tribal autonomy, when it would select a leader, not necessarily from within the group, as the one responsible for order, taxes and conscripts. The Khamseh, formed by order of the Qajars and directed by the Qavams, a Shiraz merchant-landlord family, are an example of this type.

Confederations also emerged through a process of amalgamation, when a leader forged successively larger and more effective units, relying on a variety of leadership skills and symbols and manipulating the basic kin structures to achieve goals beyond those associated with smaller groups. Over a period of time corporate interests would be identified with the confederation, but would be weaker in comparison with the corporate interests of the smaller units. The Qashqai provide but one successful illustration for this variation; they constitute a Turkic-speaking minority and their migrations take them through thickly-settled agricultural regions close to urban areas; minority status is thus a stimulus factor.

Although this second model was often attempted in Iranian history, most tribal leaders failed because of internal and external rivalries and opposition, especially in times of strong central government. Even with the Qashqai, Shahs elevated and deposed ilkhanis in attempts, however ineffective, to control the confederation. Examples of failure to form such confederations are common in Bakhtiari history up to the mid-nineteenth century. Huseyn

Quli Khan Ilkhani, who succeeded, exemplifies the third process, a combination of designation and amalgamation, in which the central government capitalised on a khan who was in the process of forming a confederation, and, by assisting him with resources and thus retaining a degree of control over him, turned a potential threat to its own advantage.

'State'

The state continuum, to return to the last of our models, starts with a fragmented polity and terminates with a centralised state maintained by a bureaucracy and a standing army, thus claiming a monopoly of power: the modern state in the Weberian sense. Conveniently, this continuum accords roughly with Iranian historical reality.

The eighteenth century (the first period for which a greater number of documents relating to the Bakhtiari may be found) saw the final disintegration of the Safavid state, a resurgence of tribalism, but short-lived confederations, the emergence of other local and provincial groups, and a breakdown of state functions. At the other end of the continuum are the Pahlavis with a centralised state. The Qajars of the nineteenth century are sandwiched in between. (The Zand decades, for the Bakhtiari at least, approximated conditions under the Qajars.⁸)

Pahlavi centralisation contrasts with eighteenth century fragmentation and Qajar decentralisation. The Qajars tolerated and created confederations as autonomous administrative entities, rather than take on the expense and challenge of a standing army and centralised bureaucracy.⁹ Furthermore, an Irano-Shii ideology persisted throughout these three centuries for these three states in the continuum. The Pahlavis, in addition, however, attempted to stress Iran's pre-Islamic and future glory as justification for their centralising policy and as an assurance of loyalty to the dynasty.

Historical Survey

Between the fourteenth century, when the term 'Bakhtiari' (denoting a taifeh that had entered Iran from Syria along with some thirty other such groups in the thirteenth century¹⁰) first appears in sources, and the mid-eighteenth century, the historical record provides only a narrow base for analy-

sis. In summary, the term designates a taifeh of indeterminate size and organisation and a geographic and administrative unit of Luristan. Safavid chronicles identify individuals who functioned as military leaders and civil administrators of Bakhtiari and adjacent regions, and who were, perhaps, Bakhtiari themselves.¹¹ If Chardin's description is assumed to include the Bakhtiari as a Lur component, they may be further identified as pastoral nomads with an economy based on flocks traded in the nearby capital of Isfahan.¹² Iskandar Munshi, in addition, implies that Bakhtiari are not peasants: he refers to rayat (peasants) and Bakhtiari.¹³ Chardin suggests a political structure when he mentions the autonomy of the Lurs, and that they were governed by appointees who functioned as sub-governors, chosen from among themselves by the central government.

Negatively, the few references to the Bakhtiari in the Safavid period suggest that they were (at least as a large Bakhtiari unit until the seventeenth century) outside the major political rivalry network of the Turkic tribes and the Safavids. The Bakhtiari occupied the midpoint of the Safavid power axis in the Zagros, as it extended from Georgia to the Gulf;¹⁴ furthermore, they were strategically located in relation to the capital at Isfahan. Had the Bakhtiari constituted a major confederation, this would have at least been noted in the chronicles. More probably they organised themselves in small groups and tribes, which seldom, except in unusual circumstances, coalesced into larger ones. These small units were administered by Safavid governors through local leaders, who were not necessarily Bakhtiari.

By the end of the seventeenth century, the era when Safavid rule became increasingly decentralised, the Bakhtiari had emerged as an important administrative post. The Tadhkirat al-Muluk (1725), listing the ranks and honours given to Persian amirs, notes that the governor of Bakhtiari follows immediately after the four valis of Arabistan, Luristan-Feyli, Georgia, and Kurdistan. 'After him [i.e. the vali of Kurdistan] comes the ruler of the Bakhtiari il who in former days enjoyed great esteem and respect.'¹⁵ In this same period both Persian and European sources note the Bakhtiari moieties of the Haft Lang and Chahar Lang for the first time,¹⁶ and mid-eighteenth-century sources record the great antipathy between them. The Haft Lang and Chahar Lang may both have constituted confederations that emerged as bureaucratic devices under the decentral-

ised government of the late seventeenth century. The Afghan offensive at the end of the first quarter of the eighteenth century may have temporarily stimulated Bakhtiari unification and even a confederation; the historical record notes the unity of the Haft Lang and Chahar Lang in the ill-fated defence of Isfahan in 1722.¹⁷

In the subsequent Afshar era, the Bakhtiari were peripheral to Nadir Shah's major concerns, except as a threat to his southern flank; consequently he sought to utilise Bakhtiari military units in his eastern campaigns and to resettle large numbers of them in Khurasan. In both instances he worked within the moiety framework of the Haft Lang and Chahar Lang. During this period, with the continued decentralisation of the state and the absence of Haft Lang leaders, the Bakhtiari region too would appear to have been fragmented and taifeh leaders challenged both Nadir Shah and the Haft Lang leadership.

Increased fragmentation - 'tribalism' - persisted in the Bakhtiari until Karim Khan Zand re-established central authority in south-central Iran, when he asserted suzerainty over the Haft Lang through its own leaders, the khans of the Duraki taifeh. Before Karim could succeed, however, he had to establish his own power and destroy that of his Bakhtiari rival, Ali Mardan Chahar Lang. The two of them had established rule in the name of a Safavid pretender, Ismail III. Ali Mardan Khan is one of the infrequent examples of expansion as 'stimulus' in Bakhtiari history - others occurring chiefly in the 1870s and the Constitutional period of the early twentieth century. Ali Mardan, about whom little is known other than his membership in the Kianursi taifeh of the Haft Lang, may have emerged as a leader in the tumultuous period of Nadir Shah. Possibly the Chahar Lang had constituted a confederation, but there was no single Bakhtiari confederation, for Ali Mardan, in a letter to Haft Lang leaders acknowledging the need for unity, indicated contemporary fragmentation in the Bakhtiari and alluded to an earlier, presumably Safavid, harmony and unity.¹⁸

Official Zand documents, corroborating traditional Bakhtiari genealogies and histories, clearly indicate that the Haft Lang was treated as an administrative unit. In the firmans and raqams awarding tuyuls, governorships, exemptions, and admonitions to eighteenth-century Duraki notables, they possessed the titles of sardar, beg, aga, rish-safid, zabit,

and hakim.¹⁹ These documents suggest only the relationship between these Haft Lang leaders and their taifehs, and add little to our knowledge about Bakhtiari commoners, except their organisation into small groups headed by kadkhudas and kalantars, with an interdependence between them and the Duraki khans, who are responsible for good administration. On an ideological basis, these same documents indicate that the Bakhtiari shared the prevailing Irano-Shii ethos. The Bakhtiari supported various Safavid pretenders, or those who upheld Safavid legitimacy, throughout the eighteenth century. They often defied the rulers of the Afshar and Zand eras, including Ali Mardan Khan, but never challenged existing political and religious ideas and institutions by offering new ones.

Few early Qajar documents relating to the Bakhtiari are extant, until about 1840; possibly others have been lost, or their absence indicates that the Duraki khans and the Haft Lang were fragmented and no longer dominant, or even that the Bakhtiari were peripheral to Qajar concerns. The far more numerous documents from between 1840 and 1880, however, reveal a significant number of khans competing among the taifehs and at the level of what was to become the confederation of the whole of the Bakhtiari.

Order, with reassertion of central authority, came about in the mid-nineteenth-century Bakhtiari and adjacent areas to the south (notably the northern edge of Fars and the borders with Kuhgiluyeh and Arabistan) through an alliance between the governors of Isfahan, the central government in Tehran, and Huseyn Quli Khan. Huseyn Quli had been one of the contending Duraki khans, and to outsiders appeared to be a rather unlikely victor. His signal success was due to various factors: his lineage, that of the khans of the largest and certainly the most powerful Haft Lang taifeh; his seniority by age; his political and military skills which enabled him to defeat his most powerful Haft Lang and Chahar Lang rivals; the collaboration and support of his three brothers; his increasingly broad network of social, political and economic ties, including ulama and great merchants; and his vast land holdings in Chahar Mahall to the east and in Arabistan to the south-west. Government support increased and was demonstrated by additional land grants and exemptions, appointments and titles - including nazim of the Bakhtiari in 1864 and then ilkhani of the whole of the Bakhtiari in 1867.²⁰ The general result was good order and

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such an increase in his power that he was feared by elements within his own family and by the provincial and central governments. Nasir al-Din Shah ordered his death, which was brought about by Zill al-Sultan, governor of Isfahan, in 1882.²¹

Although the expected and feared general uprising of the Bakhtiari did not result, the tribes were characterised for the next twelve years by fragmentation, exacerbated by the Zill al-Sultan's fall from power. Three factions emerged: Ilkhani (Huseyn Quli's sons); Hajji Ilkhani (Huseyn Quli's brother's sons); and Ilbegi (Huseyn Quli's half-brother's sons), who formed various combinations in attempts to gain pre-eminence. There was no question but that the office of ilkhani would be filled by candidates from one of these three groups. During Huseyn Quli Khan Ilkhani's rule of some 20-25 years, authority had become even more firmly identified with his descent group; and their wealth had so increased that none of the khans from other lineages could hope to compete. In addition, Ilkhani, Hajji Ilkhani and Ilbegi ties within the Bakhtiari and with all factions of the Qajars were so encompassing that all other Bakhtiari leaders were removed from contention, unless the government imprisoned the Great Khans and confiscated their estates - which did occur in the 1930s under Riza Shah, but which Nasir al-Din Shah shrank from out of fear of Bakhtiari power and because of the inadequacy of his army.

In 1894 an agreement was reached by the Ilkhani and Hajji Ilkhani khans which excluded the Ilbegi khans from power and determined that the positions of ilkhani and ilbegi would be confined to those two factions and would be based on seniority of age.²¹ Within this general framework, tribal, confederational and family disputes (over matters such as the Bakhtiari road (1897), oil agreements (pre-World War I) and the division of government positions following the Constitutional Revolution²³) have continued to be resolved.

Increasingly throughout the nineteenth century the British played a role analagous to the traditional decentralised Qajar state: their various commercial and strategic interests required stability, but they lacked the resources to ensure this directly and sought to obtain order by reinforcing traditional leaders and institutions. The Tehran/Isfahan/Ilkhani and Hajji Ilkhani nexus was reinforced by the London/Government of India/Arabistan/Ilkhani and Hajji Ilkhani connection. (British support was also extended to Sheykh Khazal and, less successfully, to the

Qavams.)

Just as Huseyn Quli Khan Ilkhani had failed to expand Bakhtiari power in the 1870s, so too (although for different reasons) did his sons and nephews fail in the Constitutional period, when the taifehs and Bakhtiari leaders were temporarily united. Both internal divisions and external opposition developed once Muhammad Ali Shah had been removed and Ahmad Shah was installed; the decline of central authority stimulated internal rivalries and ambitions. Moreover, Bakhtiari leaders, for example Hajji Ali Quli Khan Sardar Asad II, lost external support as they became identified with traditional values and came to be regarded as anti-nationalist and anti-constitutionalist; they had no alternative and acceptable ideology to offer to widen their Bakhtiari power, and that base was suspect.

The decade of World War I saw a resurgence of tribalism and fragmentation in the Bakhtiari as the authority and power of the central government collapsed. The British presence too was greatly undermined until the war's end. Furthermore, the senior Ilkhani and Hajji Ilkhani khans had moved to Tehran, leaving affairs in the hands of their sons and grandsons, who constituted a sizable group that not only lacked authority but competed for the same limited resources to maintain themselves and their bastagan (armed and mounted retainers). Order came only with the restoration of power and authority at the centre.

Changes in the traditional Iranian system and the structure of the state began with Riza Shah and were continued by Muhammad Riza Shah. These included a centralisation of power and authority, the emergence of the nation-state, and an expanded role for the state, calling for economic and social progress. Even before the Sardar Sipah was crowned as Riza Shah, the Great Khans (especially Khusrou Khan Sardar Zafar) perceived him and his policies as a threat to their autonomy and power. Their challenge to him failed, however, because it followed essentially traditional lines while he utilised the methods of both the traditional Iranian system and the new nation-state. Tehran successfully identified the 'feudal' Bakhtiari leadership with the decadent past and foreign domination. The new nation-state of Iran need not share authority and power; it had its own army and bureaucracy, and enforced policies that integrated Iranians into the national economy and promoted an 'Iranian' identity through education and new national symbols.

Riza Shah's actual campaign against the Bakhtiari

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was initiated in June 1922 with the 'Shalil Incident', in which the Bakhtiari were provoked into attacking a small Iranian force that was being sent by Riza Khan through the Bakhtiari to Khuzistan. This attack aroused nationalist sentiment in Tehran and enabled Riza Khan to impose an economically crushing indemnity on the Bakhtiari, one which could not be evaded by traditional means.²⁴ In 1921 and 1922 the khans had lost their governorships of Kirman, Yazd and Isfahan. In 1923 Riza Khan withdrew their right to be accompanied by military retainers²⁵ and removed the Chahar Lang from the authority of the ilkhani.²⁶ This was followed by the appointment of non-Bakhtiari governors for the Bakhtiari area itself.²⁷ In 1928 the Anglo-Persian Oil Company was instructed to lease land through the governor of Khuzistan and not from the khans.²⁸ This was an attempt to separate the Bakhtiari from British influence, both economic and political, and to strengthen the position of the central government, which insisted henceforth on its sovereign powers. A delayed revolt occurred in 1929 at Safid Dasht in the eastern Bakhtiari, and following a Bakhtiari defeat three khans were executed.²⁹ In 1933 the positions of ilkhani and ilbegi were abolished; however, Murtaza Quli Khan, the ilkhani at the time, was appointed governor.³⁰ The next year, three important khans were executed, including Jafar Quli Khan Sardar Asad III, Riza Shah's minister of war,³¹ and a number of others were imprisoned.³² In 1937 Bakhtiari territory was divided and placed in two separate administrative districts, Isfahan and Khuzistan, under central government administrators.³³ And in 1938-39, Riza Shah exacted his last due from the khans by forcing them to turn their villages and their oil shares over to the central government. Such policies effectively destroyed the power of the Great Khans, some of whose descendants have continued to play national roles until recently, but decreasingly as Bakhtiari leaders. The actual tribal role of the Duraki khans came to an end after some 200 years.

Despite Pahlavi centralisation, the form and function of the taifeh and levels below have persisted, and have been less affected by external developments, for they derive from basic pastoral and agricultural structures. Some 500,000 Bakhtiari still follow traditional social and economic patterns including the migration.³⁴ Even today the taifeh structure continues to provide the framework for traditional internal, socio-political activities, because the symbolic role of the Great Khans contin-

ues. Despite the state's assumption of their juridical and administrative functions, the taifehs continue to align themselves into one of the Great Khan moieties of either the Ilkhani or the Hajji Ilkhani.³⁵ Pahlavi tribal policy of continuing to treat the Bakhtiari as an administrative unit has possibly resulted in a more precise delineation of internal and external social and physical boundaries, which may have strengthened both Bakhtiari identity as a social unit with a given territory, and the Ilkhani-Hajji Ilkhani framework for social, economic and political interaction.

The state's general economic and political policies, especially over the past decade, have probably had an accelerating impact on change in the Bakhtiari, particularly with the attraction of the oil fields and new industrial centres adjacent to the region, but the impact has probably been less far-reaching than among the Qashqai,³⁶ given the relative isolation of the Bakhtiari. In spite of centralisation and modernisation under the Pahlavis, then, those within the Bakhtiari family-taifeh structure have continued to enjoy a degree of autonomy, because they have been largely peripheral to the nation-state and its economy; those who have left the region permanently, however, have become integrated into contemporary Iran. Even if the new Islamic Republic of Iran were to reverse Pahlavi centralisation, there is little likelihood of the re-emergence of a Bakhtiari confederation. A single confederation would be unlikely if there were a long period of political turmoil and uncertainty, for the taifehs would compete among themselves - at least if this chapter's hypothesis is correct.

NOTES

1. My thanks to my Dartmouth colleague, John Major, for his assistance in focusing and phrasing this hypothesis, and to Lois Beck and Jean-Pierre Digard for comments on an early draft of this chapter.

2. Late-nineteenth-century sources corroborate the essential classification and terminology of Digard's field-work; see J.-P. Digard, 'De la nécessité et des inconvénients, pour un Baxtyâri, d'être Baxtyâri. Communauté, territoire et inégalité chez des pasteurs nomades d'Iran', in *PPS*, pp. 128-9.

3. *Buluk* and *bakhsh* are not found in nineteenth and early twentieth-century sources, and their use today possibly stems from administrative policies established by Tehran in the 1920s and 1930s.

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4. G.R. Garthwaite, 'Two Persian wills of Ḥāj̄j 'Alī Qulī Khān Sardār As'ad', *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 114, 4 (1974), pp. 645-50).
5. G.R. Garthwaite, 'Rivalry and alliances: kinship and the Bakhtiyari Khans', paper presented at MESA meeting, Louisville, November 1975.
6. G.R. Garthwaite, 'The Bakhtiyārī Khans, the government of Iran, and the British, 1846-1915', *IJMES*, 3 (1972), pp. 24-44; id., 'The Bakhtiyārī Īlkhānī: an illusion of unity', *IJMES*, 8 (1977), pp. 145-60.
7. Fasai records:

In that year (1234) [1818] by mediation of Ḥāj̄j Mirzā Rezā Qolī Navā'i, vizier of Fārs, the title 'Īlkhānī' was bestowed upon Jāni Khān-e Qashqā'i, ilbegi of Fārs. His son Moḥammad 'Alī he appointed ilbegi. Up to that year nobody in Fārs had been called by the title 'Īlkhānī'. The head of the tribes in Khorasan used to be called 'Īlkhānī'.

Hasan Fasā'ī, *History of Persia under Qājār Rule (Fārsnāmeḥ-i Nāṣirī)*, tr. H. Busse (Columbia University Press, New York, 1972), p. 160. Cf. firman of Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh, Tehran, Sha'ban 1284/December 1867.
8. J.R. Perry, *Karim Khan Zand* (Chicago University Press, 1979).
9. N. Keddie, 'The Iranian power structure and social change 1800-1969: an overview', *IJMES*, 2 (1971), pp. 3-20.
10. Hamdullah Mustoufī Qazvīnī, *Tārīkh-i Guzīdeh*, ed. 'Abd al-Ḥuseyn Navā'ī (Tehran, 1339/1961), p. 540.
11. Amīr Sharaf Khān Bidlisī, *Sharafnāmeḥ: Tārīkh-i Mufassal-i Kurdistan*, ed. M. 'Abbāsī (Ilmi, Tehran, 1343/1965); J. Chardin, *Travels, etc.* (London, 1686); Iskandar Beg Munshī, *Tārīkh-i 'Alam-Arā-yi 'Abbāsī*, ed. I. Afshār (Amir Kabir, Tehran, 1350/1971); Anon, *Tadhkirat al-Mulūk*, ed. V. Minorsky (Luzac, London, 1943).
12. Chardin, *Travels*, p. 147.
13. Iskandar Beg, *Tarikh*, p. 503.
14. J.R. Perry, 'Forced migration in Iran during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries', *IS*, 8 (1975), p. 212.
15. *Tadhkirat al-Muluk*, p. 44.
16. Jonas Hanway, *The Revolutions of Persia* (London, 1754), p. 238; Father Krusinski, *The History of the Late Revolutions of Persia* (London, 1740), vol. 1, p. 97.
17. Hanway, *Revolutions*, p. 238.
18. G.R. Garthwaite, *Khāns and Shahs: a Documentary Analysis of the Bakhtiyārī in Iran* (Cambridge University Press, forthcoming).
19. Ibid.
20. Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh, firman, Tehran, Sha'ban 1284/December 1867; also, G.R. Garthwaite, 'The Bakhtiyārī Khans as Landlords and Governors', paper presented at MESA meeting, Boston, 1974.

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21. I'timād al-Saltāneh, *Rūznāmah-i Khātirāt-i I'timād al-Saltāneh*, ed. Ī. Afshār (Amir Kabir, Tehran, 1345/1967), p. 197.
22. Garthwaite, 'The Bakhtiari Khans'...
23. Ibid.
24. IOL: Loraine to Curzon, no. 200 of 10 May 1923, LPS/20/32.
25. Great Britain, Gault Report, 1944.
26. Loraine to Curzon, no. 130 of 20 Sept. 1923, FO 416/73.
27. Anglo-Persian Oil Co. Ltd., 'Confidential Newsletter' no. N2/193, Greenhouse to General Manager Abadan, 25 Aug. 1928.
28. Anglo-Persian Oil Co. Ltd., 'Confidential Letter', Jacks to Director in London, 29 Aug. 1928.
29. Gault Report.
30. IOL: 'Persia: Ahwaz Diaries, no. 10 of 1933', Dec. 1933, LPS/28/6.
31. IOL: Hoare to Simon, no. 175 of 7 Apr. 1934, LPS/28/9.
32. Hoare to Simon, no. 581 of 16 Dec. 1933, FO 416/92.
33. IOL: 'Persia: Ahwaz Diaries, no. 3 of 1937', March 1937, LPS/28/6.
34. Digard, 'De la nécessité'.
35. Digard, personal communication.
36. L. Beck, 'Economic transformations among Qashqa'i nomads, 1962-1978', in *MIDCC*, pp. 99-122.

Chapter 11

ON THE BAKHTIARI: COMMENTS ON 'TRIBES, CONFEDERATION AND THE STATE'

Jean-Pierre Digard

As other activities prevented me from participating in the conference and presenting a paper, I am glad of this opportunity to offer some observations on some of the problems that were raised.¹ Although these observations have mostly been suggested by long and most interesting discussions with Gene Garthwaite and by reading his chapter on the Bakhtiari (whom I too am studying), they seem to me to be relevant to the theoretical concerns that have emerged from several other papers as well as the discussions to which they gave place.

On the strictly historical part of Garthwaite's work I will say nothing - the author's competence in this respect is too well known for me to risk questioning it in any way! What poses a problem for me as an anthropologist is rather the interpretation Garthwaite gives to this history. Of course it is almost inevitable that the materials on which we are reflecting - for him, texts from last century concerning the chiefs, for me, contemporary data collected in the field from 'simple' nomads - impel us willy-nilly to orient our research on different lines; but the fact that we belong to disciplines that are traditionally distinct should not in theory lead us to divergent interpretations of the same general social processes. In fact, as will become clear and as Garthwaite has himself stressed, our respective analyses are far from contradictory.

The External ... The opposition between external and internal factors (or stimuli) has, in my view, a value which is much more didactic than heuristic; but let us retain it, since Garthwaite uses it and so as not to complicate the debate from the start. Among the factors in the formation of a Bakhtiari confederation, Garthwaite stresses the 'external

stimulus' (in this case the central state, to whose role we shall return). The importance of such a stimulus is evident, and Garthwaite rightly underlines it; but in so doing he tends to forget or to neglect the 'internal factors' (differences between pastoral and agricultural productivity, division of labour, inequality of access to natural resources, etc.) in the evolution of Bakhtiari tribal society, notably towards forms of class organisation.²

... and the internal. In particular, Garthwaite seems to me to be on quite the wrong track when he justifies putting the emphasis on this external stimulus by the fact that, according to him, Bakhtiari social organisation is inherently constrained from forming a proper confederation, that is (for him), a tribal structure endowed with a more or less centralised and hierarchical political apparatus. I showed several years ago, along with many others, that this was not the case and that we must abandon the myth, which has been decidedly tenacious since The Nuer, that segmentary systems are necessarily acephalous.³ Several other participants in the conference (see, among others, chapter 8) agree with me on this point.

Moreover, how can it be maintained that a segmentary structure is inherently contradictory with a class structure, when, as a matter of fact, these two forms of organisation coexist and 'function' simultaneously in several societies, including the Bakhtiari? Thus, among the latter, the khavanin-i buzurg (Great Khans) would often make use of the lineage structure of tribal society so as to make it serve the interests of the dominant class which they represented (see, for example, the organisation of the Ilkhani and Hajji-Ilkhani basteh). I would go further: it is because they were able to define themselves in relation to this structure (they belonged to the Ahmad-Khusrowi, of the Zarrasvand taifeh, Duraki il, Haft Lang) that the khans could socially legitimate their domination of the other Bakhtiari, whatever the means of coercion they may also have used (i.e., mainly an authentic tribal state, or - as Brooks would say - 'mini-state' apparatus), and whatever the resistance that they often faced within the tribe, expressing a veritable class struggle.

Tribe or Confederation? That said, the presence among the Bakhtiari of a strong dominant class and of the centralised and hierarchical political appa-

ratus that is its emanation, seems to me inadequate to explain the formation and infer the existence of a confederation. Without of course dismissing the thesis of the unifying action of such socio-political structures, there are however at least two reasons not to be content with the type of explanation this can suggest. The first is that an analogous power, with some differences, existed for example in Luristan (the Vali of Khurramabad) without having similar effects: Luristan remains divided into different Lur tribes which have no political unity. The second reason lies in the fact that Bakhtiari political and territorial unity has survived, and survives today, the progressive elimination, begun in the 1930s by the Pahlavis, of the khans and of their corresponding political apparatus. The non-partitioning and inalienability of Bakhtiari territory, the very existence of a circle of social membership as large as that of the tribe (il) - of which all Bakhtiari, despite their other divisions (and contrary to what Brooks says) are very vividly conscious - are the result 'in the last instance' of the constraints of a communal management of natural resources, adapted to the practice of pastoral nomadism in conditions of demographic saturation of a particular mountain environment in the central Zagros. They would in fact appear, in this precise context, as the best guarantees of a system of pasture exploitation at once uniform and flexible, particularly in obtaining, for the small semi-autonomous social units on the lower levels of segmentation (oulad, tash, tireh) the scope for manoeuvre that is indispensable for the spatial readjustments necessitated periodically by variations in the size of flocks and in the state of the vegetation.⁴

In the end, what is at issue here is the very notion and definition of 'confederation'. Iran provides the purest example of a tribal confederation: that of the Khamseh, formed from five tribes - Arab (Arabic-speaking), Aynalu/Inallu, Baharlu and Nafar (all Turkic-speaking) and Basiri (Persian-speaking) - that would have almost no connection if they had not been united, 'federated' to be precise, in the last century by a powerful family of Shiraz merchants, the Qayams, who assumed leadership of the whole group.⁵ From the point of view that interests us here, the Khamseh offers the following features: First, the federated elements are each organised on their own lineage bases as tribes, and independent of each other in terms of descent, real or fictive. Secondly, the unification, at least in the beginning,

was of a strictly political nature, and was instigated, 'from above' one could say, by a dominant group external to the tribes in question, and for reasons that were equally foreign to them.

Far from being so simple, the Bakhtiari case differs from that of the Khamseh in at least three fundamental ways: First, the large social units (taifeh, bab, il, according to place and circumstance) that constitute the Bakhtiari tribe (il), are not so independent from each other in terms of descent as are the five units that form the Khamseh. In the absence of proof of the existence (or the non-existence) of real descent ties linking all members of the Bakhtiari tribe, one finds fictive genealogies that reveal at least an anxiety to translate political affiliation, a posteriori, into terms of descent; further, there exist among the Bakhtiari other institutions (the Ilkhani and Hajji-Ilkhani basteh) that make use of and cut vertically across the lineage segmentation and should be interpreted, not as divisive factors, but on the contrary, in my view, as factors in the unity of the tribe.⁶

Secondly, the constitution of a Bakhtiari tribe and its persistence today - on which I insist - reflect constraints, and give rise to processes, that are different in nature (political, social, economic, etc.) and impossible to separate.

Thirdly, the Bakhtiari political apparatus, even if its role in the formation of the tribe in the present or the recent past has not been negligible, would rather appear to be the result of these constraints and processes; and even if its elaboration has been favoured by external instances or factors, it is unquestionably an emanation of the tribe, which it probably served before dominating;⁷ besides, just as it has outlived the political apparatus of the khans, the Bakhtiari tribe already existed well before it was centralised in the hands of an ilkhani from 1867 ...

Finally, in my view there is no continuum from tribe to confederation. These two terms refer rather to two different but complementary processes of formation of the same corporate groups, the one stressing descent, the other affiliation on political grounds. These two types of process most often act simultaneously in the genesis of the groups that interest us here, whatever their size or the level of segmentation at which they are situated: even if it is not the most widely found case, the former (descent) can intervene on the scale of the largest units (il, taifeh), and the latter (affiliation) on

the most restricted scale (tash and oulad, even families, through an intermediate type of process: adoption). It matters little after all whether one then uses the term 'tribe' or the term 'confederation' to designate, on the largest scale, the integrated result of these two processes; it will, however, be understood that for the Bakhtiari case my own preference is clearly for the term 'tribe', which is more widely accepted and carries fewer misleading connotations.

The External ... again: Tribe and State. When zones of tribal population are under the control of a central state, Garthwaite writes again, it is this state that plays the role of external stimulus; but the tendency to confederation is then inversely proportional to the degree of bureaucratic centralisation of the state. I believe that this degree of centralisation can constitute a useful index for evaluating the number or the intensity of interactions between tribes and the state; but I strongly doubt the value of this notion for explaining the transformations that result from these interactions, as much for the tribes as for the state. For these transformations depend on quite another logic: i.e. on the movement of the dominant relations of production and the fundamental nature of the state that is their expression, whose eventual bureaucratic centralisation is only an effect, or, one might also say, a means. Thus, for example, it is clear that if the Pahlavi bureaucracy worked unceasingly at destroying pastoral nomadism and the tribes, it was not because it was strongly centralised but because the dominant system of production, whose instrument it was (system of production tied mainly to oil revenues and only secondarily to landed revenues), was in contradiction with the traditional system of production of the nomad tribes. Inversely, if the tendency for great tribal concentrations endowed with strongly structured political apparatus was reinforced in the Qajar period, it was not because the state was weakly centralised but because its politics evidently served the interests of the class from which it came itself, that is the tribal aristocracies.⁸ In such conditions, is it really reasonable to relegate the central state to the rank of 'external stimulus'?

These are some of the main questions that Garthwaite's chapter, among others, seems to me to raise. I do not pretend to have resolved them. Garthwaite has at least the merit of having posed

them and having inspired me as an anthropologist to reflect on them, giving proof once more of the necessity if not always the fruitfulness (a reservation that applies only to me) of a dialogue between history and anthropology.

NOTES

1. Translated by the editor.

2. See my 'Histoire et anthropologie des sociétés nomades: le cas d'une tribu d'Iran', *Annales*, 28, 6 (1973), pp. 1423-35; and my 'La dynamique sociale et les facteurs de changement chez les pasteurs nomades', *Production Pastorale et Société*, 3 (1978), pp. 2-9; and chapter 12 below.

3. E. Evans-Pritchard, *The Nuer* (Clarendon, Oxford, 1940). See my 'Histoire et anthropologie'; J. Black, 'Tyranny as a strategy for survival in an "egalitarian" society: Luri facts versus an anthropological mystique', *Man (NS)*, 7 (1972), pp. 614-34; T. Asad, 'Equality in nomadic social systems? Notes towards the dissolution of an anthropological category', *Critique of Anthropology*, 11 (1978), pp. 57-66; PPS.

4. See my 'De la nécessité et des inconvénients, pour un Baxtyāri, d'être Baxtyāri. Communauté, territoire et inégalité chez des pasteurs nomades d'Iran', in PPS, pp. 127-39.

5. F. Barth, *Nomads of South Persia* (Allen and Unwin, London, 1961).

6. Cf. G. Garthwaite, 'The Bakhtiyārī Īlkhānī: an illusion of unity', *IJMES*, 8 (1977), pp. 145-60. There is no space here to demonstrate my argument, but I am preparing a work on the question which I hope will not be too long in appearing.

7. On this point, see my 'Histoire et anthropologie', pp. 1431-2, as well as the very suggestive ideas of M. Godelier, 'Infrastructures, sociétés, histoire', *Dialectiques*, 21 (1977), pp. 41-53, esp. pp. 50-2.

8. See my 'Les nomades et l'état central en Iran: quelques enseignements d'un long passé d'"hostilité réglementée"', *Peuples Méditerranéens/Mediterranean Peoples*, 7 (1979), pp. 37-53.

Chapter 12

THE ENEMY WITHIN: LIMITATIONS ON LEADERSHIP IN THE BAKHTIARI

David Brooks

Then his soul prompted him to slay his brother, and he slew him, and became one of the losers (Kuran, Sura V, The Table: 30).

I have slain a man to the wounding of myself (Genesis, 5: 23).

Nomads, Tribes and the State

The many tribal groups of the Zagros mountain region in western Iran have exhibited a wide range of political forms throughout their long but only partially retrievable history. Not only do these tribal groups differ from each other in the specifics of their political structures, but internally they reveal variations of political form. Some tribal groups have undergone considerable transformations over the past several hundred years, others have not. The emergence and dissolution of tribal emirates, federations and confederations, the decay and disappearance of powerful tribes, the rise and resilience of others, have been familiar features of Iranian history for centuries. Fragmented and scattered remnants of once-dominant groups are still found in the region, reduced now to impoverished echoes of a former power, adding to the social and ethnic complexity of a region better known for larger, still powerful tribal groups such as the Kurds, Lurs, Bakhtiari and Qashqai.

The turbulent dynamism of the tribal history of the Zagros mountains is the product of the continuously variable interplay of complex and often conflicting ecological, economic, political, social and cultural forces. These forces emanate not only from within tribal territory, from the necessarily

flexible adaptations to the mountainous terrain, but from a wider spatial and temporal context. The differential development, the continuous evolution and devolution of political forms among these mountain tribes, can be fully understood only when appreciated as unfolding through time and located in a space which is but part of the wider and more differentiated context of Iran. The tribes have always been a part of, as well as being in varying degrees apart from, the Iranian state. The presence of the Iranian state has always been, as it still is, a problem for the tribal populations of Iran. The specific nature of this 'state presence' differs markedly for different tribal groups and moreover is itself variable historically. Each tribe has its own unique experience of the state, its own history of interaction.

In its turn, the state has also constantly been forced to contend with the presence of these tribes as a permanent feature of its own political life, and likewise this 'tribal presence' has been historically varied in its significance for the state. At times dormant, more often highly volatile, on frequent occasions during the past two hundred years this tribal presence has offered a real or perceived threat to the stability, security or even the continuity of the state. Neither has ever been able to ignore the other with impunity, each has had to interact with and react to the other. Forced to co-exist uneasily, the one rarely able to dominate the other completely, the interaction and mutual reaction between 'tribe' and 'state' has always been problematic for both and each has developed distinctive characteristics arising directly out of the history of this interaction. Hostility, suspicion, fear, and mutually reinforcing misperceptions of each other have tended to dominate tribe-state interactions for centuries.

In their varied attempts to harness, contain, control or crush tribal power, successive dynasties have pursued many different strategies as determined by the political necessities current at the time. The political arena relevant at state level is of course wider and more complex than the political arena of the tribe, and different tribal groups, particularly those close to international borders, have often been embroiled in conflicts emanating from border disagreements with Turkey, Russia, or Iraq. The state has encouraged tribal dissidence in border areas as a strategy of temporary convenience for discouraging aggressive neighbours. Moreover,

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until the establishment of a modern state army under the Pahlavis in the twentieth century, the armed forces of Iran were primarily made up of tribal levies, under their own tribal commanders. Tribal contingents were not expected to fight against their own tribal groups, but were often used to control other tribal groups, thereby exacerbating inter-tribal conflict, another strategy often employed by the state to weaken the tribal power-base within its own borders. Other strategies used in the constant struggle against the threat of tribal power included the forced removal of large numbers of tribesmen and their families to other parts of Iran, the taking of hostages from leading tribal families, the imprisonment and murder of chiefs and the instigation of internal rivalries. Such strategies varied with the political importance of different tribes, but when carried out always had considerable effects on internal power struggles and consequently on leadership roles in the affected tribes. State involvement and interference had the effect of intensifying internal conflict through the selective rewarding and support of particular chiefs against potential rivals.

The rewards the state could confer on tribal chiefs in return for their support were considerable. Tax reliefs, land grants, trade concessions and, in the south particularly, local governorships and tax farming agreements, were only some of the benefits that involvement or co-operation with the state could bring. However, as is common in all forms of interaction between tribe and state in Iran, these one-time supporters and beneficiaries of the state can soon become perceived as a potential threat, and alternative strategies follow, quite logically leading to the elimination of this threat. Viewed from a historical perspective, apparently contrary state policies towards the tribes dissolve into two aspects of a single but flexible policy of control. Enemies transform into friends and allies, and back to enemies, in a social system that to be effective requires to be janus-faced. Tribe-state relations in Iran, from the perspective of both, are necessarily ambiguous. The ambiguity inherent in these relationships allows for room to manoeuvre so long as neither side has the power completely to dominate the other.

Modern Variation on a Traditional Theme

For the tribes, the significance of the state took on a less ambiguous quality with the rise to power of the Pahlavis, and the establishment of a specific 'tribal policy' aimed at the complete control of the tribal groups in Iran and the final elimination of their role in the politics of the state. The nomadic movement of animals and people in the Zagros was to be forcibly stopped, and the economic basis of tribal life, pastoral nomadism, destroyed. Tribal power was to be crushed once and for all, bringing the nomadic sections finally under the control of government. What marks the Pahlavi period (1925-79) as apparently different from the Qajar period of the nineteenth and early twentieth century is the application of a single determined policy of ruthless control over the tribes by an increasingly monolithic and centralised state apparatus set on a path of national integration and modernisation under a strong ruler. The social fabric of the state itself was changing, with no place for politically semi-autonomous and self-governing tribal groups. The rule of government was to be applied uniformly throughout the kingdom. The densely textured and ambiguous relations between tribe and state were reduced, clarified into an unambiguous and determinedly anti-tribal policy whose political nature alone was paramount. The effects on the tribes were devastating.

In 1923, the British Military Attaché in Iran commented informatively on the historical background to the state's perception of the perennial tribal problem and on the Minister of War's new policy:

[Historically] the different tribes have been allowed semi-autonomous privileges, the extent of which has fluctuated in inverse ratio to the powers of the Central Government ... On the whole the tribes have played their part pretty well in Persia's chequered career and the system [of tribal levies] has had immense advantages for the Central regime in reducing expenditure on regular forces to a very low figure. The new policy ... declared by the Central Government being put into practice by the War Minister with the help of the regular army, is a complete break with the traditional policy of the past, and is to establish complete political and military control over all parts of Persia and to effect the disarmament

of the entire civil population. The tribal system of the country forms the greatest obstacle to the fulfillment of this policy.¹

Elaborating on the last observation, he continued:

Many tribes are powerful, both in numbers and armaments and are not always obedient to the orders of the Central Government; they often evade their taxes, are apt to exact tolls from travellers passing through their territory and obey orders of their chiefs alone. Added to this is the fact that most tribal territories are mostly mountainous and devoid of good communications, rendering military operations by regular troops difficult and prolonged in the face of serious tribal opposition.²

The Minister of War concerned was Riza Khan, who two years later was to crown himself Riza Shah Pahlavi. The political perception which formed the basis of Riza Shah's tribal policy, aptly summarised in these observations, was incorporated within the new regime's broader political and economic aims, of forcibly transforming Iran into a modern state. Parochial ethnic and tribal cultural identities and loyalties were attacked, as was the power of the religious establishment. Such measures as forbidding the veil for women and violating national religious sanctuaries provoked intense opposition to Riza Shah on a national level. As far as the tribes were concerned, the ban on tribal dress and military attacks on local religious shrines induced considerable resentment and hatred of the Pahlavi regime. Military conscription was enforced, military and later civil administrators replaced traditional tribal rulers, the tax system was reorganised to increase the revenue due to the state, and tax concessions granted to tribal leaders by previous dynasties were revoked. In some cases enormous claims for unpaid taxes due to the state were enforced, notably against the powerful Bakhtiari leaders in the south. A concerted drive to disarm the tribes was also undertaken, with only partial success.

Resistance to such measures was particularly strong among the very powerful and politically centralised tribes of the southern Zagros, whose leaders Riza Shah was determined to break. Many of the khans were imprisoned, some were murdered and their land holdings removed from them, tribal titles of leadership were abolished, and military rule was

established in the attempt to destroy the tribal political structure. While the power and wealth of these tribal leaders was diminished, and the state penetrated tribal society to an extent not previously encountered, the Pahlavi tribal policy failed to achieve its aim. The tribal system of the country was not successfully broken, although other aspects of the policy, in particular the enforced settlement, had disastrous economic consequences for the bulk of the tribesmen.

Nomadic Responses to State Policies

Throughout the length of the Zagros various and flexible combinations of pastoral nomadism and agriculture have been continuously practised, giving rise to a range of complex and subtly responsive ecological adaptations to a mountainous environment exploitable in its higher slopes primarily by animals, but capable of sustaining dry and irrigated cultivation in the foothills. The variations found range from tribes that are solely pastoral nomadic, with no cultivation at all, though this is in fact rare, to many tribes who are solely cultivators. By no means have all the tribes of the Zagros been exclusively pastoral in orientation, although it is probably accurate to say that their economic basis has been nomadism with their wealth and livelihood dependent on animals, predominantly herds of sheep and goats. It is possible to maintain larger herds of animals by moving to higher and cooler slopes in the summer months, and returning to warmer and lower pastures in the winter when the snows of the upper slopes make grazing impossible. Climatic conditions - changes in temperature rather than just lack of water - underlie the movement between delimited summer and winter pastures along equally delimited migration routes. Such migrations, in spring and back in the autumn, involving thousands of tribesmen and their flocks, are found everywhere in the Zagros. Migration routes differ in length and difficulty, some being a matter of only a few days' travel, a type of transhumance, while others, particularly in the high mountains of the south, require many weeks' travel over several hundred kilometers between summer and winter quarters. Long-range nomadism, transhumance and, for many, forms of semi-nomadic movement between settled villages where they farm, are all found.

Dependence on nomadism thus varies, and the

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enforced settlement programme carried out by Riza Shah, like so much of state interference, had variable effects: economic disaster and ruin for some, a necessary shift towards agriculture for others. The policy was enforced by the army, in the case of the Qashqai in the south and the Lur tribes of Luristan; among the Bakhtiari, tribal leaders mitigated the disaster by directing the settlement to areas best capable of sustaining a settled population, either in winter or summer quarters. Everywhere, however, animal stocks were considerably depleted, and effective utilisation of the entire region was radically disrupted. Resistance to this direct attack on their livelihood was surprisingly small in most tribal areas, many ordinary tribesmen proving vulnerable to the growing might of the army, but, particularly in the more distant and less accessible mountain regions, active opposition continued throughout Riza Shah's reign. In 1941, however, with his enforced abdication and the political weakening of the state, the tribes literally rose, destroyed their settlements and took to the mountains again in large numbers.

Under the increasingly dictatorial rule of Riza Shah's son Muhammad Riza Pahlavi, a wide range of policies was implemented discriminating against the nomadic tribes in particular, especially during the 1960s under the general land reforms. The nationalisation of forests and pastures, the distribution of land, and more general economic and social inducements to settle, such as the building of roads, the provision of social services and agricultural loans, and the bureaucratic penetration of tribal territories, have produced a major swing away from traditional forms of animal husbandry. Major disruption of the tribal modes of ecological adaptation and semi-annual migrations have eroded pastures considerably since the economic boom of the period from 1973, which saw the take-off of the Shah's modernisation and industrialisation programme. The removal of tribal groups from areas to be flooded by huge dams to provide sufficient water for the rapidly expanding cities may well have done irreversible damage to the rich habitat of parts of the Zagros.

The radical changes in the state under both Pahlavi rulers has however failed to destroy the tribal basis of society in the region totally, as was witnessed in 1941 and more recently in the tribal resurgence since the fall of the late Shah in 1979. There have since been demands for tribal autonomy, by the Kurds in particular, and by the Turkmens and

Baluches in the east, and a return to nomadism in the southern Zagros has also been reported.

Structural Resilience

The increasing involvement and interference of the modernizing Iranian state, and a multiplicity of bureaucratic organs of government opening up tribal areas to state control, have by no means had uniform effects. Complex social, economic, cultural, as well as political tribal forces continue to respond with a variety of strategies and a resilience due to the institutionalisation of social forms developed during centuries of constant interaction with an antagonistic state. While (as commented by the Military Attaché quoted earlier) the regime may have thought it was formulating a radically new policy, from the perspective of the tribes this policy was merely more extreme than before, was less ambiguous, and allowed them less room to manoeuvre or manipulate the state to their own advantage. Although the upper levels of tribal leadership were removed, and the political links with their own tribesmen were broken or attenuated, at local levels clear signs of processes of 're-tribalisation' can be observed. Progressive attempts to eliminate and replace traditional local tribal leadership roles were only partially effective. In many places they were circumvented and this form of state interference resulted in the shoring up and politicisation of already decaying lineage leadership roles. The impact of the state on different tribes was as varied in its effects under the Pahlavis as it was under previous dynasties, although of course the context had altered considerably and the nature of the state itself had changed.

Tribal social forms in Iran would appear to be remarkably resilient, capable of responding to external state intrusions in flexible ways while retaining continuity throughout economic and political transformations. This continuity of basic form within tribal organisation itself is precisely one of the features of tribal society that requires explanation. For this a diachronic perspective is essential. Tribal structures exist not only in time, but through the passage of time, the differentiating effects of which, while everywhere inescapable, are at least partially annulled by the dynamic inherent in tribal organisation, its lineage-based structure.

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To illustrate these general remarks about tribe-state relations I shall deal specifically with one tribal group, the Bakhtiari. Bakhtiari political organisation carries the imprint of a long and particularly complex history of interaction with the state, during which they developed a hierarchy of centralised, institutionalised leadership under a paramount leader, the ilkhani; this was destroyed to a great extent under the Pahlavis, but they retain a strong tribal identity grounded on long-range nomadism, migrating over some of the highest reaches of the Zagros mountain range. This process of centralisation of power in the late nineteenth century in the hands of autocratic tribal chiefs, and the subsequent dismantling during the Pahlavi period of the political and administrative structure developed by the Bakhtiari khans to rule their own tribesmen, have produced marked political and economic differentiation within the Bakhtiari polity. The political environment of the numerous Bakhtiari tribes, dominated by their own autocratic khans in the recent past, took on aspects of a 'tribal state' within the nation-state. The impact of the Iranian state on the Bakhtiari tribes thus was not only direct, but to a great extent indirect, mediated through the 'tribal-state-like' administration of the dominant Bakhtiari khans, whom even the Pahlavi shahs maintained in control. This 'mediation' was unusually beneficial during the notorious period of enforced settlement, when the Bakhtiari khans themselves directed the settlement according to the carrying capacity of land suitable for permanent settlement, thus saving their followers from the ravages brought by military enforcement on the Lur tribes to the north of Bakhtiari territory. Some groups were settled in their summer quarters, others in winter areas. In this case, the tribal administration alleviated the impact of the Shah's policy. The tribesmen affected of course viewed the role played by their khans rather differently, as collusion with government, a tribal perception to which I shall refer in more detail below.

The Bakhtiari and the State

Shifting Centres of state Power. Historically the Bakhtiari tribes have had an intense and continuous but varied involvement with the state. During the past 250 years the centre of power in Iran shifted from Isfahan, the Safavid capital until 1722 when it

was sacked by the invading Afghans, briefly to Mashhad in the eastern province of Khurasan under Nadir Afshar, then to Shiraz in the southern province of Fars under the Zand dynasty until the 1780s, and finally north under the Qajar dynasty to Tehran, where it has stayed to the present day. Throughout these shifts of central government, the strategic central location of Bakhtiari territory, close to Isfahan, has been a significant element in the evolution of Bakhtiari tribal organisation.

During the exceptional period of Nadir Shah's rule, when the centre of power shifted from the north-south axis to Khurasan, thousands of Bakhtiari families had been forcibly removed from their territory following a revolt instigated and led by one Ali Murad of the major Chahar Lang branch of the Bakhtiari. Along with these thousands of Bakhtiari in Khurasan, Bakhtiari tribal contingents fought with distinction in Nadir Shah's forces, particularly in the taking of Kandahar. For his role in this military adventure, and his undertaking to maintain peace and control in Bakhtiari territory, one of the Bakhtiari commanders, Ali Salih Beg of the Haft Lang group of Bakhtiari tribes, the major opponents of the Chahar Lang tribes, was rewarded with agricultural land in the rich district of Chahar Mahall in Isfahan province on the edges of tribal territory, and granted the title of khan, the first recorded khan of the Bakhtiari.³ Ali Salih's descendants became the dominant khans of the nineteenth century. In the political chaos following the murder of Nadir Shah (1747) these armed forces and the many Bakhtiari families exiled in Khurasan returned to their tribal territory in the Zagros, under their leader Ali Merdun Khan, also of the Chahar Lang, who made a bid for the vacant throne. In this he was unsuccessful, being killed by the forces of Karim Khan Zand, who did succeed in establishing his own dynasty based on Shiraz.

The theme of Bakhtiari fighting both for and simultaneously against the state is one that continues to the present day. Under Karim Khan Zand, again following a revolt of some sections of the Bakhtiari, several thousand families were moved from their tribal territory, some to the north near Varamin, others to Fasa in the south where they remain to this day. Abdul, son of Ali Salih, was in 1754 appointed by firman as zabit of Chahar Mahall, and in another document of 1780 he is described as Governor of the Haft Lang Bakhtiari.⁴ He also extended his land holdings in Chahar Mahall, further

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consolidating the wealth and expanding power of this group of khans, the leaders of the Duraki tribes of the Haft Lang Bakhtiari.

In the continuing political chaos of the eighteenth century, as the Qajars emerged to dynastic success, they fought the Bakhtiari on two occasions. In 1785 a Bakhtiari force comprising tribesmen from both Haft Lang and Chahar Lang, led by Abdul Khan, routed the Qajars near Isfahan, but was later roundly defeated, Abdul Khan being captured. Shortly thereafter the capital was moved to Tehran.

The eighteenth century has been aptly characterised as one of tribal resurgence⁵ as a result of the political situation at national level. The effects on the tribal populations of the central Zagros were particularly marked and reveal the ramifying effects of the wider political environment, itself highly unstable during this period, and therefore unpredictable. This period is crucial to consider, not only as the beginning of the rise to power of the Duraki khans, but as a time of major economic and ecological disruption in Bakhtiari territory, resulting from the political turbulence. The Safavid period, especially at its height during the reign of Shah Abbas, saw the deforestation of the Bakhtiari foothills to supply timber for Safavid building projects in Isfahan; the ecological effects of this deforestation later worsened on the invasion of the Afghans and of Nadir Shah deep into the Zagros, when there appears (the evidence is not conclusive) to have been large-scale destruction of agriculture and settlements, notably in the central Bazuft region of the Bakhtiari. Raids by Nadir's forces, the crushing of tribal revolts and the removal of thousands of families from the region made agriculture impossible. This appears to have been the period when the Bakhtiari turned increasingly to the long-range pastoral nomadism which has characterised them since. The labour-intensive requirements of agriculture could not be met with the reportedly large numbers of men away in the armies of Nadir, Ali Merdun and the Zands. To judge from the archaeological evidence, as well as the sheer number of ruined settlements dating from the eighteenth century, Bakhtiari territory has been exploited agriculturally everywhere, except in the very highest reaches of the Zagros. The recurrent depopulation of the eighteenth century made pastoral nomadism a more secure response, ecologically as well as politically. Meanwhile the Duraki leaders were expanding their agricultural holdings on the edges of tribal territory

proper, and moving towards positions of provincial landownership in non-tribal areas. The distance grew between them and the bulk of the tribal population who were becoming more nomadic. This divergence of economic interest and widening social distance between khans and the tribesmen has since become a permanent feature of the Bakhtiari system. It arises out of interaction with the state, tribal leaders being drawn increasingly into a political arena dominated by more diversified and non-tribal issues. It is from the eighteenth century that the nomads began to perceive and experience the move of the khans in effect into the state itself, resulting in the typically negative relationship that developed between the dominating Duraki khans and the tribesmen.

Bakhtiari Ecology and the State. Continuous geographical proximity to the shifting centres of state authority thus inevitably embroiled the Bakhtiari directly in the political as well as economic life of the state, in different ways and with different implications for them under successive dynasties. At no time could any ruler have the luxury of ignoring the presence of the Bakhtiari, while for their part the Bakhtiari rarely avoided attracting the unwelcome, usually antagonistic attentions of the state. Each came to constitute for the other at best a perpetual irritant, at worst an implacable enemy.

Although almost always relatively close to the various capital cities, Bakhtiari territory, being almost entirely mountainous, was not easily accessible to invading government forces. This has prevented total control and domination by successive Iranian dynasties. Settlement makes for greater vulnerability, and the earliest settlements of powerful tribal chiefs in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were typically in almost impregnable fortresses (galeh), which could withstand military bombardment as well as more common tribal raiding parties.

Bakhtiari territory comprises approximately 75,000 square kilometers of the central Zagros, roughly between the cities of Isfahan and Ahwaz. Six chains of mountains run the length of this region, rising to about 4,500 metres at Zardeh Kuh in the centre of Bakhtiari tribal territory. All except the very poorest Bakhtiari have during this century practised a dual economy, varied combinations of cultivation, usually of unirrigated wheat and barley,

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with long-range nomadism, herding sheep and goats between winter pastures on the western foothills of the Zagros in Khuzistan and summer pastures in the eastern slopes of the mountain chain in Isfahan province. The migrations of people and animals occur in the spring and back along the same difficult routes in the autumn. These periods of movement, crossing rivers and climbing over snowfields and mountain passes up to 3,500 metres, constitute for the Bakhtiari the height of involvement with fellow-tribesmen and with their nomadic roots, the dynamic source of their cultural identity and of their values and many of their distinctive tribal institutions. The strongly developed Bakhtiari sense of unique identity, their tribal self-image, is rooted in their ecological adaptation to this extremely harsh mountain habitat.

The Bakhtiari number approximately 300,000 people. While proportions are difficult to establish and vary through time, perhaps as much as one half of the Bakhtiari population was to some degree nomadic in the 1960s. The escalating modernisation programme during the boom years of the 1970s undoubtedly produced a considerable increase in the numbers of settled Bakhtiari. The foothills of the Zagros in both winter and summer pasture areas are now heavily populated, with Bakhtiari settled in hundreds of small lineage-based hamlets of between three and 30 households, as well as many larger tribal villages with populations of several thousands, particularly in the fertile Fireydun and Chahar Mahal regions in Isfahan province. Small market towns have also developed in both winter and summer areas.

While circumstances vary a great deal, few Bakhtiari nomads now live permanently in their goat-hair tents, but rather move between settled villages, practising some cultivation in summer and winter villages and moving with their flocks and living in tents only during migrations. Others have one area of permanent settlement either in summer or winter quarters and move and live in tents for only one season. The Bakhtiari thus balance two economic modes in different proportions, allowing for a flexible and fluid ecological response to an environment in which animals die, climate is unpredictable, and crop yields for all but the very wealthy are low and also unpredictable.

The ecology of the Bakhtiari is such that their migrations between pastures take place exclusively within Bakhtiari-controlled territory, and keep them at maximum ecological and social distance from gov-

ernment. Their nomadism was thus a way of evading state interference and military invasions of their territory. In this they differ from other groups such as the powerful Qashqai to the south, whose migrations brought them through areas not tribally controlled and thus made them vulnerable to government forces, from which they suffered under Riza Pahlavi. For the Bakhtiari, particularly this century, state interference and administrative penetration have occurred in either summer or winter quarters, when they are either settled in villages or at least less mobile. An antagonistic state was thus a factor in inducing Bakhtiari to adopt pastoral nomadism as a means of escaping state authority, while for the Qashqai an antagonistic state could prevent movement and attack the economic basis of their society. This perhaps explains why it was the Qashqai who fought the Pahlavi forces more bitterly. The differing political response from these two powerful groups to state pressure is a result of ecological differences between them.

State Administrative Structure and the Bakhtiari. Bakhtiari experience of the state has been particularly diverse as a consequence not only of the geographical location and ecology of their territory, but of the administrative structure of Iran. Bakhtiari territory lies within four provinces: primarily in the two important provinces of Khuzistan (formerly Arabistan) and Isfahan, more peripherally in Fars and Luristan.

The summer pastures of the Bakhtiari lie exclusively within Isfahan province. Here the bulk of the animal products such as lambs, wool and ghee are sold after completion of the spring migration. The winter quarters of the tribes lie however in Khuzistan province, where pastoral products are also sold and winter provisions are bought. The Bakhtiari are thus involved economically in two quite different market systems, as well as two different provincial administrations, at different times of the year. The rhythms of their ecological adaptation necessarily bring them into contact with strikingly different economies in the agriculturally rich province of Isfahan in summer and in the more arid, less fertile plains of Khuzistan in winter. Different supply and demand mechanisms operated in these provinces, affecting price structures of both agricultural and pastoral produce. The effects of this dual involvement in different market systems were particularly important during Qajar rule in the

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nineteenth century, where state power was markedly different in the provinces concerned. Under the Pahlavis these differences were merged within a more uniform centralised system, and more recently within an economy increasingly dominated by the Shah's industrialisation and modernisation drive. The oil-fields of Khuzistan have provided potential employment for Bakhtiari labour since early this century, and in the 1970s some Bakhtiari found jobs at the Russian-built steel mill close to their summer quarters.

The northern part of Bakhtiari territory, inhabited by Chahar Lang tribes, was in the nineteenth century under the administrative control of Luristan, while the southernmost reaches of Bakhtiari country paid taxes to the Governor of Fars.

The network of economic, political and social ties of those Bakhtiari tribes whose territories partially lay within the administrative control of Luristan or Fars was different from those whose summer quarters lay in Isfahan province and winter quarters in Khuzistan. Thus different Bakhtiari tribes had very different types of involvement with the state, particularly at the provincial level. Typically in the nineteenth century, when Isfahan and Arabistan provinces were governed by powerful Qajar princes, Bakhtiari leaders were on occasion closely allied with one prince while locked in deadly political struggle with the other. Frequent changes in the personal political fortunes of the Qajar provincial governors could be beneficial or disastrous for Bakhtiari leaders, depending on the nature of their involvement with these governors. The political arena in which the Bakhtiari found themselves was not only diverse but inherently unstable, subject as it was to political forces quite outside the local tribal context, making the tribal chiefs vulnerable to political power struggles originating within the administration itself, and logically compelling the Bakhtiari leaders towards the source of these political forces, the capital, as a political move necessary to curb these provincial intrusions on their own tribal power.

While subject to provincial instability, the Bakhtiari themselves contributed considerably to it. A provincial governor who was unable to control the Bakhtiari when faced with tribal raiding or inter-tribal conflict, or who had difficulty extracting tribal taxes, soon found his position threatened from the capital. The Bakhtiari in turn naturally resisted attempts to destroy their independence, and where possible avoided paying taxes to provincial

authorities not strong enough to enforce it. Mutual vulnerability characterised relations between tribal chiefs and provincial governors, each manoeuvring to take advantage of this. The Bakhtiari and the state were inextricably linked at the local provincial level under the Qajars, in two provinces, forming two diverse but connected local political universes dominated by a continuously shifting and fluid balance of power involving each in the other's differently constituted arena. Political survival at this level, where interaction was at its most varied and intense, impelled the Bakhtiari leaders increasingly out of the tribal context, the basis of their power and onto the level of the state. As mentioned above in an economic context, again arising out of involvement with state representatives, the Bakhtiari leadership found itself becoming distanced from the tribesmen. Those who could not move out but retained close links to their tribal base were swallowed up in this political escalation. The most successful tribal leaders, the political survivors, were the ones who most successfully interacted with government, who entered the non-tribal political arena, and who inevitably became increasingly identified with the state.

The Social Environment of the Bakhtiari. The non-Bakhtiari populations with whom the Bakhtiari regularly interact are as diverse as the other elements which make up the Bakhtiari interaction with the state. This diversity marks out the Bakhtiari as having rather different circumstances to confront than do the other tribal groups of the Zagros. The configuration of elements making up the total environment, changing in their relative significance throughout the last several hundred years, is the basis of the variations of political form developed within the Bakhtiari.

In the rich and fertile province of Isfahan, the non-Bakhtiari population consists of a non-tribal Persian peasantry, with some Turkish-speaking villagers and the scattered remnants of once sizable Georgian and Armenian communities. In the nineteenth century, with the centralisation of the Bakhtiari polity under the successful and dominating Duraki khans of the Haft Lang Bakhtiari, the leaders came to acquire vast agricultural holdings, particularly in the Chahar Mahall region. They became major landlords in the region, which not only made them immensely wealthy but brought them into direct political conflict with the other major landlord of

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the region, the powerful Qajar prince Zill al-Sultan, Governor of Isfahan, who was himself in conflict with his father, the Shah.

To the north of Bakhtiari tribal territory live the nomadic tribal Lurs, ethnically of the same group as the Bakhtiari. The Lurs never developed the centralised and hierarchical political structure which emerged in the Bakhtiari, and at no time ever threatened the Bakhtiari, although their raids troubled those sections of the Bakhtiari on their borders. The frontier with these decentralised Lurs was the scene, particularly during the nineteenth century, of much local inter-tribal fighting, in which the Bakhtiari became embroiled.

To the south, Bakhtiari territory borders on two different types of tribal groups. In the south-east, the summer pasture area of some of the Bakhtiari is bordered by the very powerful Turkish-speaking Qashqai confederation, the major tribal power in Fars. Mutual raiding and enmity have always existed in this area, causing the downfall of more than one Bakhtiari leader, and making agriculture relatively unsafe. Inter-tribal fighting here involved the Bakhtiari in the political problems of Fars, of which the Qajar governors of Fars complained in Tehran, often causing the regime concern over possible Bakhtiari expansion. In Bakhtiari winter quarters in the south-west, they have as neighbours another tribal group, the Kuhgilu Lurs, who had one of the worst reputations of all the tribes of the Zagros for lawlessness and ferocity. This border area, along which runs a major Bakhtiari migration route, has been the scene of constant and fierce inter-tribal conflict between the Kuhgilu and sections of the Bakhtiari. From the state point of view, however, what was important was the trade route between Khuzistan and Isfahan provinces that passes through this area, ostensibly under the control and protection of the Bakhtiari khans. The insecurity caused by inter-tribal fighting and the raiding of passing caravans, which on occasion in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century halted trade entirely, brought the Bakhtiari into real disfavour. This isolated border area in fact provided the location for a disastrous confrontation between Bakhtiari forces and a regiment of the Persian army in 1921, which brought on the Bakhtiari leaders the wrath of Riza Khan, then Minister of War, with demands for very large indemnities.

In the west, in Khuzistan, furthest from the capital, the bulk of the population was Arabic-

speaking and ethnically quite distinct. The powerful Sheykh of Muhammarah was the key figure in the province, and was semi-autonomous in the nineteenth century. Here too the dominant Duraki khans acquired considerable property, especially near the cities of Dizful and Shushtar in the plains, as well as in the foothills near the smaller town of Behbahan, an administrative centre of the Kuhgilu. These property holdings lay outside Bakhtiari territory proper and repeatedly brought the khans into military conflict with the Sheykh of Muhammarah and his Arab tribesmen.

To summarise, the social environment of the Bakhtiari comprised, on the northern and southern borders, tribal groups, some with centralised power structures, others with non-centralised lineage systems under local leaders, producing endemic inter-tribal rivalries. On the more settled western and eastern borders, neighbouring groups were non-tribal peasants of diverse ethnic composition, who farmed land owned by nationally powerful figures, and with whom the Bakhtiari traded in a symbiotic relationship typical of all the pastoral economies of the Zagros. The major provincial market centres on which the Bakhtiari depended were Isfahan itself for summer quarters and Dizful, Shushtar and Ahwaz in the winter areas.

The Bakhtiari were thus drawn unavoidably into a multiplicity of diverse economic and political arenas, involving other tribal groups, non-tribal groups, different ethnic divisions and powerful provincial landowners and governors, with all the competing economic and political interests that this implies, cross-cutting the four major provinces of south-west Iran. The Bakhtiari were quite literally in the centre of nineteenth-century Iran's most dissident and troublesome area. This unique central position, with interaction on all fronts, kept them in the attention of the regime, in one context or another, more or less all the time. Not surprisingly, therefore, the Bakhtiari won a reputation at national level as the most troublesome tribal group in the realm, a reputation in which their tribal power reached legendary proportions, and which the Bakhtiari khans used to propel themselves into the national arena, albeit for a brief period, during the Constitutional revolution. Under the Pahlavis they paid dearly for this reputation, the creation of a history of interaction in which a tribal political strategy, necessary for survival in the diverse contexts from which the Bakhtiari could not

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escape, was to project an image of power, independence and tribal ferocity which was based on the mobility of pastoral nomadism. The show of aggression, the mythological manipulation of apparent power, has been part of Bakhtiari strategy for centuries, but with the exception of their reported role in the taking of Kandahar in 1738, they have rarely if ever taken on the armed forces of the state with the real success of other tribal groups such as the Qashqai and more particularly the Kurds in the north. The complex involvement of the Bakhtiari with the state would appear at least partially to have domesticated the Bakhtiari tribes politically, though failing to eliminate the pastoral nomadic economic bases of a still thriving tribal society.

European Powers and the Bakhtiari

Since the middle of the nineteenth century the Bakhtiari have had particularly close associations with the British, who had trade interests in the south of Iran and who financed an improved trade route through Bakhtiari territory from Khuzistan to Isfahan, building bridges and caravanserais on what became known as the Lynch road, after the British company which helped finance this route. This trade route brought considerable wealth to the Duraki khans, who rose to power under their leader Huseyn Quli Khan (appointed by the regime as ilkhani or paramount leader of all the Bakhtiari in 1867) and remained the dominant khans from that time. The economic and political importance of the Bakhtiari was transformed however by the discovery of oil in the Khuzistan foothills in 1908, and in fact, until the effective take-over by Riza Pahlavi, the Bakhtiari leaders interacted more directly with the British than with the Iranian state on many occasions. Tribal lands were ceded to the British for oil exploration and building, the khans receiving payment, though the tribes concerned were not compensated by them for the loss of their land. The Bakhtiari khans were share-holders in the first oil company formed. Henceforth the political arena in which the Bakhtiari leaders effectively found themselves was an international one in which the British and the Iranian states often had conflicting interests in the Bakhtiari area. While the British required political stability to make possible the effective exploitation of oil, such local stability did not suit the troubled Qajar regime, which could see a stable and united Bakhtiari only as a

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real threat to its own shaky security.

Of all the tribes of the south, the Bakhtiari have had the most intense and long-term interaction with the British. Anticipating what since the 1960s has become a world-wide issue, the Bakhtiari khans used oil as a political weapon against the British from the time of its discovery, threatening the Oil Companies with the disruption of their early exploitation, setting their tribes to attack the new pipelines, blowing up oil installations, escalating their financial demands as well as demanding political protection from the Iranian government. The Bakhtiari again became the focus of conflicting international political forces, which inevitably had ramifying effects on the leaders and indirectly on their relations with their own tribesmen, who received little economic benefit from oil and reaped all the political problems that the growing aspirations of their leaders brought them. The social worlds of khans and tribesmen were increasingly separated and their relations more tense, precisely at the time when control of these tribesmen became crucial to the British to maintain the flow of oil out of the region.

The British also found increased internal differences within the growing families of Bakhtiari khans, making them difficult to control, just as these internal conflicts within the body of khans fomented dissent within the Bakhtiari tribes, who were coming to see their relationship with the khans as one of oppression. The problem of controlling the Bakhtiari khans was the subject of a mistakenly optimistic memorandum sent in 1916 by Marling, then British Minister in Tehran, to the Foreign Office in London:

Although by no means the largest tribe in Persia, the Bakhtiari are probably the most important tribal unit in the Empire, despite family quarrels they have been taught the value of unity by the considerable role they played in late years, and still play in Persian politics, thanks to our support.⁶

The notorious inability of the Bakhtiari khans to unite to overcome increasing internal differences, even when ruthlessly attacked, imprisoned and murdered during Riza Shah's reign, has been documented in detail.⁷ Marling's miscalculation about the effects of British support for Bakhtiari stability is shown up by Major-General Frazer, serving in Iran

during the Second World War, when he states, with perhaps ungenerous exasperation, 'I am getting to the point of cursing Reza Shah for being such a soft old mutt as to leave any Bakhtiari Khan alive. They just can not stop quarrelling.'⁸ As we have seen in other contexts, such internal dissension is in fact the consequence of the multi-faceted involvement with 'state' politics, a product of the growing differentiation of the khans' economic circumstances in the twentieth century, with pastoral wealth and tribal taxes, agricultural holdings, urban property, governorships, income from the muleteer trade passing through their territory, and oil royalties, on which they frequently raised loans from the British. With the progression of the twentieth century the khans became an integral, and occasionally a dominating part of the state itself.

This last point is important from the perspective of the Bakhtiari tribesmen, who came to see their own khans as oppressive representatives of the state, and, except on a very selective and sporadic basis, saw none of the benefits of having their own chiefs in positions of national power. Unusually for the tribes of the Zagros, the Bakhtiari in the 1960s would repeatedly state their hatred for their own khans, by whom they felt consistently used and abused. They considered the khans, unlike those of the Qashqai to the south, to be 'city people' (*shahri*), no longer tribal or even Bakhtiari at all. The modern khans were contrasted with those of the nineteenth century as having betrayed their tribal identity, no longer attempting to help their own tribes as those in the past had done even when serving their own interests. This loathing of the Bakhtiari for their khans has however been reported by many observers this century. One of the many political officers protecting British interests in Bakhtiari territory, in a report on conditions within the Bakhtiari submitted to the British Embassy in Tehran in 1921, quotes several of his British predecessors:

In 1908, Col. Wilson wrote, 'The Khans are tolerated as a disagreeable necessity and feared and obeyed in proportion to their strength.' In 1911, the vice consul at Ahwaz wrote, 'While the personal loyalty of the tribesmen to their chiefs is despicable, it is still not for a moment to be assumed that they would in consequence, acquiesce with any outside power, which by attempting to remove their

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lightly esteemed chiefs, would threaten the present form of independence enjoyed by the tribe as a whole.' The most striking feature [since 1917, four years previously] is the increase in ill feeling to the Khans ... True the ill feeling among the tribesmen towards their chiefs is of such long standing as to be characterized as symptomatic.⁹

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The chiefs to whom the above report refers are the Duraki khans who rose to power over all the dozens of different tribes of the Bakhtiari after considerable bloodshed. No Bakhtiari apart from the groups making up the Duraki had particular love for the emergence of the Duraki khans. What marks the particular type of hierarchical leadership of the Bakhtiari tribes, is that to produce this centralised monopoly of power, the Duraki khans first had to wipe out all internal opposition and bring the leaders of each of the constituent tribes under their control. They faced problems similar to those experienced, on a larger scale, by government. Under the nomadic conditions that primarily prevailed in the nineteenth century, Duraki central control could only be partial, particularly over the tribal groups whose territories lay high in the mountains, most distant from Duraki territory, and particularly as one of the prerequisites for the exercise of power was to have a secure economic base, and that only agriculture could bring. Animal wealth is hazardous and precarious given the regional ecology.

Tribal power in the hands of the Duraki, and the elaborate administration they developed to handle the problems of control from the middle of the nineteenth century onwards, were based on the agricultural land holdings acquired first during the reign of Nadir Shah in the Chahar Mahall, and later in the plains of Khuzistan. Just as the Bakhtiari have faced shifting centres of state power, the tribesmen within their own geographical area experienced the annual shift in Duraki centres of power between summer and winter pastures.

There have been marked variations therefore within the Bakhtiari in the extent of control achieved by the Duraki khans. The Duraki groups were ruled directly, but the other major tribal groups, the Chahar Lang tribes, those of the Bakhtiarwand Babadi Bab and Aurek Haft Lang,¹⁰ were ruled in-

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directly through their own local chiefs, who had been defeated and were now partially and resentfully under the control of the Duraki. The latter managed to monopolise interaction with government and with the British. The political sphere of the dominating khans was the nation-state, that of the defeated leaders of the other Bakhtiari groups a much more parochial tribal or at most provincial arena.

For most Bakhtiari, the Duraki khans, although themselves fraught with internal dissension, thus not only became identified with the state but were in fact part of it. The increasing polarisation between khans and tribes, and the internal divisions among the khans, resulted in a necessary division of political labour between those khans who were in the end exclusively occupied with economic and political affairs outside the tribal context, in particular as city-based provincial governors during the last 15 years of the Qajar dynasty, and those usually junior khans delegated by the ilkhani to administer the extensive tribal region on his behalf. These junior khans, in their more restricted local arena, were more closely associated with the tribesmen, and used this association as a basis from which to rebel and intrigue against their own relatives. Inevitably such internal divisions, intensified by the differentiating effects of time, were seized upon, not only by the Pahlavi regime but by the tribesmen themselves. A particularly interesting example of this occurred in 1921, when a Bakhtiari Soviet was formed by several younger discontented khans, who had a published manifesto aimed at establishing more socialist relations within the Bakhtiari and curtailing the oppressive power of the Tehran-based khans.¹¹ One of the founder-members of the short-lived social experiment, later murdered by Riza Shah, was the father of the recent Prime Minister, Dr Shapur Bakhtiar, himself the victim in 1980 of an assassination attempt by reputed representatives of the new Islamic Republic.

The state strategy of murdering tribal leaders runs like a bloody thread throughout the history of the Bakhtiari since at least the sixteenth century. Such murders might be carried out directly by state officials, or by rival Bakhtiari instigated either from the centre in Tehran or through provincial representatives of the state. This twin bloody thread of Bakhtiari, allied with government, murdering rival Bakhtiari, was one crucial and pernicious effect of the intensity of Bakhtiari relations with the state in the variety of circumstances and con-

texts elaborated earlier. Such internal violence at all levels of Bakhtiari tribal organisation reached a degree not found in other tribal groups, constituting an enemy within their own ranks more dangerous and immediate than the distant external enemy, the state. The Bakhtiari are as suspicious and cautious in their relations with each other as they are with outsiders.

The intensification of their interaction and involvement in the national economic and political arena, made it politically expedient for the dominant Bakhtiari to operate within the 'state' taken in its broadest sense. In the twentieth century there has been a quite bewildering series of contexts and conflicting situations in which Bakhtiari are found to be on all sides. The two World Wars saw some Bakhtiari co-operating with the Germans, others with the British; in the 1920s there were pro-Russians and anti-Russians; others worked with the Arabs of Khuzistan against fellow-Bakhtiari. More important, during the Pahlavi period many of the khans worked within the state in government capacities, in a period when the tensions between the Bakhtiari and the Pahlavis saw the murder of several khans in 1934, including the already mentioned father of Dr Shapur Bakhtiar and the Bakhtiari Minister of War, and the imprisonment of many more, while the late Shah took a Bakhtiari, Soraya, as his second wife, and founded the infamous SAVAK under General Teymur Bakhtiar, who was himself later exiled on the instigation of the Shah and murdered in 1970. The very success of the dominant Bakhtiari khans in emerging onto the national scene also led to disaster for many individual khans, with imprisonment, torture, exile and death the all-too-common fate. The Bakhtiari tribes also paid the penalty for this success by leaders they saw as oppressive.

Their deeply ambivalent experience of the state, and of their own 'state-like' leaders, is evocatively expressed in popular Bakhtiari songs in the region. Their rich oral culture sings not only of the delights of the nomadic life, but of clashes with the state, of tribal heroes killed in battles caused by the khans against Iranian armed forces. These songs provide the Bakhtiari with a continuously articulated and culturally powerful memory of heroic deaths in their struggles against the state and the khans who betrayed the tribes. Through these songs the history of Bakhtiari relations with the state, their tribal and independent identity, are brought provocatively into the present, energising the

present, only partially by nostalgia, with the shed blood and glories of their past. Significantly, few khans are remembered in this way, with the exception of two renegade khans who, at least in their youth, led the tribesmen against the military oppressions of the Pahlavis and of their senior leaders co-operating with the state, and thus provided the content for two of the best-loved Bakhtiari ballads. These commemorate the activities of Ali Merdun Khan of the Chahar Lang section, murdered in 1934 on the Shah's orders, and Abul-Qasim Khan of the opposing Haft Lang section, who on several different occasions between 1942 and 1950 led tribal rebellions in the style of the great nineteenth-century ilkhani Huseyn Quli Khan, a style that shows signs of recurring at local levels in the current Islamic Republic. Local tribalism proves to be remarkably resilient, surviving not only external enemies but, at least for the Bakhtiari, the equally dangerous internal enemy as well.

Conclusion

While this chapter has concentrated on an attempt to unravel the widest relevant economic, social and political relations in which the Bakhtiari participated, detailed discussion of their specific effects on internal tribal political structure is required and will be the subject of a later publication. What is clear, however, is that for the Bakhtiari tribes, relations with the nation-state have been monopolised by the dominant Duraki khans since the middle of the nineteenth century. In the bloody rise of the original ilkhan, and the subsequent consolidation of centralised power by his descendants, these khans became patrons to local-level leaders, the kalantars, able to reward them with access to the wider political arena of a modernising state and a range of economic resources not available within the Bakhtiari mountains. The khans allowed the kalantars selective access to the widest range of economic resources in return for their support. For administrative purposes such as maintaining peace and extracting taxes on both agricultural and animal produce, the khans worked through these kalantars in conjunction with their own representatives, sent to each tribe to ensure the collection of revenue. These representatives were members of the khan family, or members of the tribe from which the khans sprang, the Zarraswand of the Haft Lang section. The khans main-

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tained a treasury for administrative expenses, and themselves received state stipends as governors of the tribal area under their jurisdiction. This administration came to constitute a 'state within a state', albeit of a tribal nature. It was this Bakhtiari 'tribal state' with which most Bakhtiari interacted, rather than with the nation-state. Bakhtiari tribal leaders thus came to be seen as part of the nation-state's administrative apparatus, and in this sense were simultaneously part of the 'external stimulus' of the state.

An analytic distinction between external and internal factors, with the external factor being held to be primarily responsible for the development of centralised tribal systems of a confederative type, would appear to be of dubious value. The forces that produced this centralisation of power and hierarchical structure come from a single socio-economic universe for which the polarisation into 'tribe and state' or 'internal and external' is perhaps not the most useful framework for analysis. The Bakhtiari, within such analytic categories, become both 'tribe' and 'state', internal and external, which is not only confusing but makes problematic the choice of what is external or internal to what.

The dialogue between historians and anthropologists, with the different source material and theoretical orientations utilised by each, promises to be mutually beneficial in helping to develop more useful analytic categories. From my own reading of the historical sources, combined with anthropological fieldwork, I would characterise the Bakhtiari as less a confederation in structure than a 'failed state', limited by its own inability to overcome the tribal basis of its own administration. This now decayed 'failed state' within the nation-state produced the inequalities found within the Bakhtiari tribal structure, with the variations in political organisation and types of leadership still prevailing. Political history is carried into the present internal tensions, an understanding of which demands a diachronic analysis utilising all the historical documentation available.

NOTES

1. My emphasis. IOL: Persia: Printed Correspondence 1923-25: Encl. 1 in File 481 of 3 Oct. 1923, LPS/10/3151.
2. Ibid.

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3. G. Garthwaite, 'The Bakhtiyārī Khans as Landlords and Governors', paper presented at MESA meeting, Boston, 1974, p. 4 and Doc. 1.

4. Ibid., p. 6 and Docs. 3 and 4.

5. A.K.S. Lambton, 'The tribal resurgence and the decline of the bureaucracy in eighteenth century Persia', in T. Naff and R. Owen (eds.), *Studies in Eighteenth Century Islamic History* (Southern Illinois University Press, Carbondale, 1977).

6. My emphasis. IOL: Persia Confidential Paper 10710: 1916; LPS/18, C. 154.

7. G. Garthwaite, 'The Bakhtiyārī Īlkhānī: an illusion of unity', *IJMES*, 8 (1977), pp. 145-60.

8. Fraser to Gault, Isfahan, 19 July 1944, FO 799/20, File 997/5/z/22.

9. Encl. Major Noel Report, Isfahan, 12 May 1921, FO 371/6405.

10. In chapter 10 above, Garthwaite gives a somewhat different discussion of the history of the Bakhtiari, including a schematic breakdown of tribal political divisions.

11. FO 248/1279, 1920. FO 371/6407, E. 13435/2/34, Oct. 1921 includes a manifesto of this group, which called itself the 'Bakhtiari Star'. FO 371/7805, E.4742/6/34, 1921.

Chapter 13

KURDISH TRIBES AND THE STATE OF IRAN: THE CASE OF SIMKO'S REVOLT

Martin van Bruinessen

Their pretext is independence and their war cry is 'Ashirat', the Kurdish equivalent for Bolsheviki¹ (An American eye-witness on Simko's Kurds)

Introduction

Kurdish tribes (ashiret) have on several occasions played important roles in Iran's politics, both internal and foreign. The Kurds constitute one of Iran's major ethnic groups, even though only a minority of all Kurds (some 3.5 millions out of an estimated 14 millions) live within the borders of Iran.² During the past centuries the state of Iran has dealt directly and overtly with only a small fraction of the important Kurdish tribes. Covert contact with Kurdish tribes across the political border has, however, always been an ingredient of Iran's foreign politics. The most recent and probably best-known instance of this was Iran's massive support to the Kurdish insurgents in Iraq in the late 1960s and early 1970s which ended so dramatically in 1975.

Iran was, however, not the only state, nor the most important one, to have an impact on the Kurdish tribes and on the political process in Kurdistan. Since the early sixteenth century most of Kurdistan had been incorporated in the Ottoman Empire, while during the past century and a half the impact of the great Powers can hardly be overestimated. The social and political organisation of Kurdistan, the very nature of the Kurdish tribes, underwent great changes as a result of contacts with all these states. The impact of the Kurdish tribes on these states was less dramatic: the Kurds themselves have always been quite marginal to their interests. The

main threat that the Kurds posed to the states in which they lived was that of secession and/or collaboration with rival powers. (The term 'bolsheviki' in the quotation at the beginning of this chapter, although nonsensical, appealed to ever-present apprehensions). It was especially in connection with Kurdish nationalism and aspirations for independence that Kurdish tribes affected the state - in more than one sense: the centralising and authoritarian tendencies of Kemalist Turkey and Pahlavi Iran were strengthened in reaction to Kurdish separatism.

This chapter consists of two parts. In the first some general observations are made on the evolution of the social and political organisation of Kurdistan since 1800 under the impact of the states mentioned. These general remarks are then illustrated by a more detailed study of a case where Kurdish tribes challenged the Iranian state: the rebellion led by Simko in the 1920s.

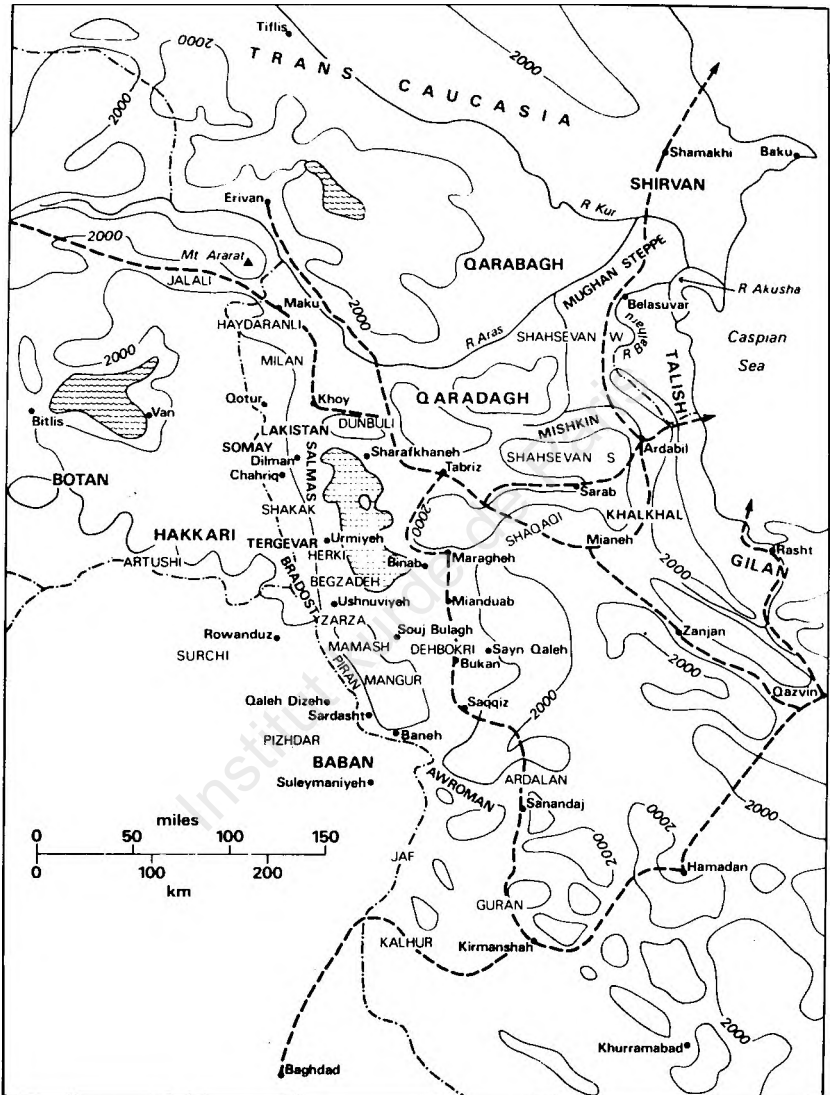
Kurdish Tribes between Powerful States

Kurdistan has for millennia been not just a frontier area, but a buffer between two or more empires. Unlike Afghanistan, however, it has never been politically distinct, but has been partitioned between two empires, the Ottoman and the Iranian, for almost five centuries. Nevertheless, the natural conditions are such that these, like previous conquerors, could establish only a very tenuous suzerainty over Kurdistan. Direct rule could only rarely be maintained, and usually some form of indirect rule through local chieftains was practised, as it still is in some parts. This contact with well-developed states, stretching over many centuries, could not but have profound effects on the social organisation of Kurdistan.

When the Ottomans incorporated most of Kurdistan (c. 1515) there existed several emirates, state-like units of varying size and organisational complexity, some of which were quite ancient. Their political system more or less resembled that of the Qaraqoyunlu and Aqqoyunlu Turkman confederation-states, with which they had been in relations of alliance and/or vassalage. The Ottoman conquest did not result in the destruction, but in the preservation of the emirates and consolidation of the ruler (mir)'s position within each emirate. Around 1800 some of these emirates still existed. Their internal organisation by that time seems to have been much influenced by

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MAP 7: Sketch-map of Kurdistan and north-western Iran to show places mentioned in chapters 13 and 14



that of the Ottoman state.³ The two emirates in Iranian Kurdistan on which some information is available, Ardalan and Guran, both seem to have differed considerably from those under Ottoman suzerainty: for instance, the ruling stratum was largely non-tribal. It is tempting to think that this represents differences in organisation and policies of the Ottoman and Iranian states. There are, however, other factors at work that may be equally important: natural conditions, population density, the ratio of settled and nomadic population, etc.

The presence of more than one strong state in the vicinity also had its specific effects on the political process in Kurdistan. For instance, it gave the local chieftains more leverage in dealing with the suzerain state: they could threaten to switch loyalties (or actually do so). Moreover, the local rivals of these chieftains were not dependent on popular support if they desired to replace them but could attempt to invoke the aid of the rival state. In several emirates, the ruling families were thus split in 'pro-Turkish' and 'pro-Iranian' branches.⁴ The nineteenth century witnessed, for obvious reasons, the emergence of 'pro-British' and 'pro-Russian' wings in Kurdistan's ruling circles. By the second half of the century Russia and Britain had become the most significant powers in the environment. The actions of the leading Kurds were strongly influenced by their perception that those states were stronger than the Ottoman and the Iranian, and that both intended to acquire control of Kurdistan. Moreover, the emergence of Kurdish nationalism received a firm boost from the political and military advances these powers made, and, of course, from the news of Greek and Slav independence, due to the powers' support. Most Kurdish nationalists of the period 1880-1930 envisaged an independent state, under British and/or Russian protection. To this day, the nature of the Kurdish nationalist movement is strongly influenced by the presence of the successors of these rival powers, the USA and the USSR, and the generally perceived need to enlist their support.⁵

Emirate, Confederacy, Tribe

It is especially during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries that great changes in the social and political organisation of Kurdistan took place, as central control by the Ottoman and Iranian states became

increasingly effective. The consequence of the elaboration and refining of the administrative networks of the encompassing states was that the highly complex indigenous forms of political organisation (the emirates) gave way to simpler ones.

The basic organisational pattern of the emirates had been the same as that of many Middle Eastern states - the most obvious parallels being the Turkman confederation-states. The ruler belonged to a chiefly lineage that usually claimed prestigious descent different from that of the powerful tribes of the emirate. There was no set rule of succession, only certain minimum requirements of descent (belonging to the ruling lineage), intelligence, courage, etc. The actual selection of a successor usually involved fierce competition within the ruling lineage and numerous intrigues by internal and external interested powers. The ruler was surrounded by a court consisting of leading military men (tribal chieftains) and civilian officials and scholars. There was a standing army or armed retinue drawn from different tribes of the emirate as well as from outside. The loyalty of this retinue was ideally to the ruler alone, but they constituted only a small fraction of the total military strength of the emirate. The bulk of the army consisted of tribesmen, led by their own chieftains, who could mobilise them in case of need. The tribesmen, usually nomadic or semi-nomadic, constituted in fact a military 'caste' that dominated a lower stratum of cultivators and artisans: non-tribal Kurds, Christians, Jews. Not all tribes were equally closely bound to the emirate. The permanent core was organised in a number of confederacies, typically two, each again under a chiefly lineage unrelated to the component tribes. In none of the cases that I studied more closely could I ascertain whether these confederacies had already been in existence prior to the emirate. Legend suggests so for some, but it seems to me that in at least several cases the emirate itself was the raison d'être of the confederacies.

It was the organisation of the tribes into confederacies more or less balancing each other that made the mir's (divide and) rule possible. The chieftains of these confederacies were the mir's advisers and counsellors, and in many cases the real makers of policy. Each of the component tribes also had its own chieftain, but these appear to have been of the primus inter pares type, and rarely played important political roles.

In emirates that had more than one urban centre

the mir kept the most important town as his own residence and capital, and appointed governors, usually from among his close relatives, to the other towns and surrounding districts. These governors took care of military and financial affairs and the most important judicial cases; other affairs were left to the chieftains of tribes or subtribes. As yet, I have found few data about the division of revenue between tribal chieftains, governors, the mir and the central government. Most probably this showed great fluctuations, as the actual balance of power between these authorities changed frequently.

Not all tribes belonged to one emirate or the other. There were probably always (and certainly around 1800) groups that managed to maintain a delicate independence, by balancing emirates against each other: nomadic tribes whose migration routes passed through more than one emirate, semi-nomadic (transhumant) tribes living at the periphery of the emirates. These tribes belonged, as it were, to the frontier of the emirates. The political processes there replicated, on a lower, less complicated level, those of the empires' frontiers, i.e. those in and between the emirates.

The distinction made here between 'confederacy' and 'tribe' is one of degree rather than of kind. Kurdish usage does not make the same distinction: both may be called ashiret or taifeh, and the same terms may even be applied to sections of tribes. The Kurdish tribes are political associations consisting of at least one descent group (but usually several) with a number of other people who have attached themselves to it. Quite different degrees of complexity are possible and do or did in fact occur in Kurdistan: tribes consisting of one or two lineages, tribes consisting of a number of (named) associations of lineages, tribes consisting of associations of associations of lineages, etc. Size and degree of complexity form a continuum, and it is largely a matter of choice where one finds the term 'confederacy' more appropriate than 'tribe'. A confederacy, as I use the term, is a large-scale association, less integrated than a tribe, and with less clearly defined boundaries. It is a political association of tribes that previously had an independent existence and that retain a separate identity. Individual persons are referred to by the name of their tribe rather than that of their confederacy. When there is a tendency to invent a common ancestor this suggests increasing integration and I would use the term 'tribe' rather than 'confederacy'.

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In confederacies and tribes there are chieftains at several levels of segmentation: confederacy, tribe, lineage, extended family, household - there may be one or more intermediate levels between the tribe and the maximal lineage: I shall speak of 'sub-tribes'. In confederacies and large tribes the chieftains generally belonged to separate chiefly lineages not closely related to the commoners and had an armed retinue ('praetorian guard') to enforce their rule, whereas in smaller tribes the chieftain was (is) usually related to the commoners and ruled by consent rather than by coercion. In different historical periods it was chieftains of different levels of segmentation that played the most significant political parts. In recent times, for instance, several former confederacies have continued to exist, if only in name. The paramount chieftain enjoys respect but has no political functions any more. Real political power is in the hands of the chiefs of tribes or, frequently, sub-tribes - who were much less important two centuries ago. This change is connected less with economic changes than with changes in the political environment, i.e. the central state, as will be discussed below.

Kurdish Tribes and the Ottoman State

In the first half of the nineteenth century the Ottoman and Iranian governments, in their drive for administrative reform, abolished the remaining Kurdish emirates. These reforms were the result of European pressure, as the Kurds realised only too well. The destruction of the last great emirate, Botan, and the capture of its ruler Bedir Khan Beg (1847), was the immediate result of British intervention with the Porte - Bedir Khan Beg was responsible for the massacre of some of his Nestorian subjects, and the British demanded his punishment.⁷

The dissolution of the emirates resulted in chaos and lawlessness. Tribal conflicts, no longer checked by the emirs, proliferated. Not only the emirates as such, also most of the tribal confederations fell apart. Ambitious chieftains attempted to usurp as much as possible of the power formerly belonging to the emirs - which involved a lot of raiding, feuding and warfare. Many leaders of the 'chief' type had to cede to 'brigands'.⁸ Contemporary reports all mention the absence of physical security. The state was as yet too weak to restore law and order. The most that provincial governors

could do was to send punitive raids, or support one chieftain against others and occasionally back him with military support. They did not have the authority to negotiate or impose a solution in the many tribal conflicts.

In this Hobbesian situation there remained one type of 'traditional' authority who could restore some kind of order: the sheykh. Sheykhs are 'holy men', usually associated with a sufi or dervish order. Many have reputations for piety, wisdom and miraculous powers that earn them wide respect. Many people had (and have) a special relationship with a particular sheykh whom they visit(ed) periodically - sometimes just a courtesy visit, but more often with the intention of receiving a protective amulet, a cure for barrenness or disease, advice in spiritual or worldly matters, mediation in a conflict. Sheykhs are generally not associated with any particular tribe (although an entire tribe may consider themselves the followers of one and the same sheykh), so that they are not party to any conflicts between tribes. This and the wide respect some of them enjoyed made them the only persons remaining that could resolve such conflicts - as go-betweens, counsellors, mediators, notaries and guarantors of the agreements reached. The successful resolution of tribal conflicts in turn increased their prestige and political influence. Gradually some sheykhs took over a part of the role of the former emirs. After a few decades of chaos and insecurity, from ca. 1860 we find sheykhs as the most influential political leaders all over Kurdistan. It is not accidental that most of the Kurdish national revolts (until, say, 1950) were led by sheykhs: these were virtually the only leaders that could make a number of tribes act in concert. Another factor that contributed to the increasing political influence of these primarily religious leaders was European missionary activity, which resulted in anti-Christian feeling and a stressing of the Muslim identity of the Kurds. Sheykhs not only resolved conflicts: precisely because their political power derived from their ability to do so, they also needed conflicts if they wished to increase their power. Some ambitious sheykhs therefore even provoked conflicts.⁹

Gradually, and not without reversals, the Ottoman state and its twentieth-century successors brought Kurdistan under closer central control, breaking the power of the great tribal chieftains and sheykhs. This process is usually assumed to be one of detribalisation. This assumption should how-

ever be qualified; in some respects one might even speak of re-tribalisation. It was not simply that indirect rule (through Kurdish chieftains) was replaced with direct rule (through appointed, generally non-Kurdish, officials). Rather, the delegation of power and authority that is implicit in indirect rule took place on ever lower levels of (tribal) organisation, and accordingly less power was delegated. Two centuries ago provincial governors dealt with the Kurds largely through the mirs and interfered but little in the internal affairs of the emirates. Later the administrative network was refined, and governors at the sub-provincial level dealt with the chieftains of large tribes or confederations, or with sheykhs. Further refining of the administrative network was accompanied by the breaking of many big tribal chieftains' power and the splitting up of large tribes. It is now the chieftains of lower levels that can consolidate their position and derive some power from the lower-rank officials who deal with the Kurdish population through them.

The tribes did not disappear, but changed character. Emirates, confederacies and large, complex tribes gradually gave way to smaller and simpler tribes, ever more closely resembling descent groups. The chieftains tend to be kinsmen of their fellow-tribesmen and to have less despotic powers. Because there remain only a few sheykhs and widely respected chieftains who might contain feuding, tribal conflicts are many. Blood feuds are endemic, especially in Turkish Kurdistan, where many sheykhs and great chieftains were forcibly removed. In some respects Kurdish social organisation seems to have become more tribal: segmentary opposition and alliance are more in evidence, and the same may be true for kinship ideology. As a result of state interference, the Kurdish tribes have experienced a development that resembles the evolutionary sequence that is often assumed¹⁰ but in reverse order!

This is not to deny that real de-tribalisation occurs, both autonomously and as a consequence of deliberate policies of the state. Deportations, labour migration, education, land reform, alienating chieftains from their tribes, introduction of mechanised agriculture, etc.: the processes are well-known. I wish only to stress here that state intervention does not necessarily mean de-tribalisation, and that tribal organisation such as is now found (especially in Turkish Kurdistan) owes much to the indirect rule that is still informally practised.

This general trend of 'devolution' of the tribes was sometimes reversed if only for a short time. The years around the First World War were such a period. The Ottoman Empire collapsed, as did the Qajar dynasty, and it took some years before new central regimes were sufficiently well-organised to reassert strong central control. In this period several Kurdish confederacies regained their former unity and even drew neighbouring tribes into their orbit. It is the most recent period in Kurdish history in which a process of confederation took place, and probably the only period for which it is relatively well-documented. Several of the reviving confederacies even reached the newspaper headlines, mainly for their association with Kurdish nationalism: the Heverkan (east of Mardin, Turkey), the Jalali (around Mt. Ararat), the Pizhdar (east of Qaleh Dizeh, Iraq) and the Shakak, who are the subject of the case-study below.

In this period the organisation of the Heverkan and the Shakak confederacies, and probably also of the Jalali, differed at a few points from the usual pattern as sketched above (and as illustrated by Barth's somewhat idealised description of the Jaf confederacy¹¹). There was not one but several chiefly lineages competing for paramount leadership, and each of them was associated with a specific component tribe of the confederacy. This seems to me an indication of the recent (re-)constitution of the confederacies. Their growth and integration went together with the victory of one of the chiefly lineages.

The component tribes maintained their own identity. Each inhabited a well-defined territory and owned or had rights in well-defined pasturelands. Leadership in these tribes seems more permanent than in the confederacies. They were by and large marriage isolates - though not the minimal ones, given the strong preference for father's brother's daughter marriage. These component tribes could be quite heterogeneous, as in the case of the Heverkan where some were Muslim, some Yezidi, and where even militant Christians were considered on a par with the Kurdish tribes. Not all of these tribes had equal political status within the confederacy: there were 'central' tribes, which dominated the confederacy, politically and militarily, and more marginal 'client' or 'vassal' tribes that had joined it because of its success or had been subjected by it. The latter were the first to break away in times of adversity.

In periods of relative quiet it was virtually impossible for ambitious chieftains to rise to or maintain a position of effective paramount leadership of such large confederacies, unless supported by a strong central state. Prestigious descent, lavish hospitality, wisdom, readiness to help his subjects (characteristics of the 'chief' type of chieftain) might be necessary to make a chieftain respected, but were rarely sufficient to guarantee him general recognition as a paramount ruler. In such periods there were several competitors for paramount leadership over the confederacy, each recognised by some of the tribesmen only. Within the component tribes there were also several aspirant chieftains, each of whom allied himself with one of the competitors at the confederate level. Thus resulted a factional system of the 'chequer-board' type, in which the relevant units were sections of the component tribes.

At times of weak government, however, such as the period 1915-1930, the rival chieftains could indulge in the kind of military activities that increased their hold over the tribes - the 'brigand' aspect of the chieftain. These included raiding caravans or towns, or villages of neighbouring tribes - an excellent means of reinforcing the unity of one's own tribe; but apparently raids against villages or camp groups of one's own tribe were equally important. These raids were directed mainly against the 'non-tribal' subjects of a rival chieftain and the client (sub-)tribes that recognised his authority. There was usually little killing and destruction in these raids; only the animals were driven away and movable property taken, and both might later be partially restored. These raids were carried out by the chieftain's retinue, tough warriors of diverse origins (sometimes even including non-Kurds), who had cut all previous social ties ('they were ready to kill their own parents if the chieftain ordered them to'); they lived with and at the expense of the chieftain, to whom alone they were loyal. In more peaceful times these retainers performed the related task of collecting the tithe for the chieftain and of enforcing the labour corvée from the 'non-tribal' subjects. If a number of raids were successful, villages and tribal sections would switch their loyalties to the raiding chieftain both out of fear and because the most courageous and cunning chieftain is thought to be the best.¹²

'Brigand' and 'chief' are not necessarily different types of chieftains; they are rather comple-

mentary aspects of the ideal chieftain. Scions of old, established tribal dynasties may act as brigands as well as any parvenu that challenges them. It is largely external political factors that determine which aspect will prevail.

It should be stressed, however, that even the most successful 'brigand' chieftains did not rise to power by the above means alone. They supplemented them with the method employed by chieftains of all types and in all periods: political alliances with outside powers. These outside powers might include other tribes or confederacies (it is significant that the great chieftains of the Shakak and the Heverkan acquired a large following among other tribes before they completely dominated the 'central' tribes of their own confederations), as well as urban merchants, but the most significant powers were of course the states. Even when the state had no effective control a chieftain might derive much power from it - as long as it was not entirely absent and could in theory apply the ultimate sanction of violence. The state might recognise a chieftain as the one and only paramount leader of his tribe or confederation in exchange for promises of 'loyalty'. If the Ottoman Sultan (who was also widely accepted as the Caliph) recognised a chieftain, this in itself was already effective. Frequently, however, recognition by the state was substantiated with significant gifts and by increasing the coercive powers of the recognised chieftain.

Two examples may serve to illustrate this. First, in 1891 Sultan Abdülhamid established tribal militias (the Hamidiye) in the eastern provinces of the Ottoman Empire. He appointed tribal chieftains as commanders of cavalry regiments, 800-1,000 strong, recruited from their own tribes. These Hamidiye were armed by the state, enjoyed tax exemption, and received salaries when on active duty. However much they raided the civil population, they were never punished. The appointed commanders achieved despotic powers over their tribes. After the Young Turk coup d'état, the Hamidiye units were disbanded, but later the Young Turks reconstituted tribal militias along the same lines, that were to take part actively in the Great War.

Secondly, the British in Iraq delegated extraordinary powers, if only for a short time, to those chieftains whom they recognised as paramount. Some of them were appointed as district governors, with authority over locally recruited gendarmes. Understandably, the latter were often used as a private

retinue.

The rivals of the chosen chieftains were thus forced into the position of 'bandits' or 'collaborators' with a rival state. This was often sufficient reason for the government to send troops to assist in their elimination.

From the last decades of the nineteenth century on, many chieftains thought it useful to establish contacts with Russia and/or Britain. These powers, though despised, were seen as more powerful (and therefore more useful allies) than the Sultan or the Shah. The British seem to have remained non-committal until the Great War, but Russia several times invited leading Kurds, made them many promises and distributed much money and other presents among chieftains,¹³ which strengthened the latter's positions.

Tribes and Non-Tribal Population

It should not be assumed that at any period in the past all Kurds were 'tribal'. There have always been large numbers of Kurdish 'non-tribal' cultivators (variously called kurmanj, guran, rayat, misken), with no autonomous social organisation beyond shallow lineages. The tribesmen that dominate(d) and exploit(ed) them superimpose(d) their own organisational structure on theirs. Thus a kurmanj living on land controlled by the Shakak confederacy might identify himself with a particular tribe or sub-tribe of that confederacy, and even feel antagonism towards kurmanj living with rival Shakak sections. They might play a part, though mainly as victims, in feuds between sub-tribes, but no one would consider them Shakak proper. The tribesmen were a military elite, usually (but not necessarily) nomadic or transhumant pastoralists. The term ashir or ashiret is often used not to denote any particular tribe, but the tribesmen as a sort of military caste. Several nineteenth-century travellers¹⁴ observed that the terms ashiret and sipahi - the latter referred to the traditional Ottoman military class, the feudal cavalry - were used interchangeably in Kurdistan.

Since many nomadic tribesmen have settled and taken up agriculture the difference between tribal and 'non-tribal' Kurds has become less obvious. It is however still recognised by the Kurds themselves, and is frequently reflected in the control of land. Tribesmen generally own some land; informants from several Kurdish tribes in Iran claimed not to know of any fellow-tribesman who is not at least a

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khurdeh-malik (small landowner). 'Non-tribal' Kurds, on the other hand, were usually tenants, share-croppers or landless agricultural labourers. Rayats who received title to land under the Iranian Land Reform have not, as yet, been accepted as equal to the tribesmen, in spite of the fact that they differ very little from the sedentary tribesmen.

Although within any one tribe a rather strict caste-like division was maintained between the tribesmen and their non-tribal subjects, there appears at times to have been a significant mobility between the two strata. The rapid growth shown by some tribes at times of prosperity (increased by 200 per cent within a five to ten year period are not rare) was only possible by the incorporation of 'non-tribal' elements from elsewhere. The reverse process, detribalisation, could result from conquest by another tribe, or from impoverishment followed by settlement.

Until quite recently, the Kurds (tribal and non-tribal) were not the only inhabitants of these lands, but they shared them with other ethnic groups, Christians (Armenians and Syriac-speaking Jacobites and Nestorians) and Jews. Most craftsmen and many urban merchants belonged to these ethnic groups. The majority of the Christians were, however, cultivators, often more prosperous than the non-tribal Kurds because they possessed a more sophisticated technology. At most places they were dominated politically and exploited economically by the Kurdish tribesmen, though not everywhere. In the Hakkari district of central Kurdistan there were large communities of Nestorians that were called 'tribal' (the term referred to their militancy and independence rather than to their social organisation) and dominated the local 'non-tribal' Kurds.

The nature of the relations between the Kurds and the local Christians and Jews varied widely from time to time and from place to place. There was, however, a marked deterioration during the nineteenth century as the European powers increased their missionary efforts among the Christians of Kurdistan. Both Christians and Kurds perceived the activity of the missionaries as a preparation for more direct interference by the Powers. The Christians, feeling they had powerful protectors, began to resist the traditional exploitation and oppression by Kurdish chieftains. Many Kurds, understandably, felt threatened by the growing control of the European powers over the Ottoman and Iranian governments, by the increasing missionary activity in Kurdistan, and by the resulting militancy of the local Christians; they directed their anger against the latter. This

increasing antagonism was to make the Kurds receptive to the pan-Islamist propaganda of Sultan Abdülhamid (1876-1908), and to lead to several massacres of Christians.¹⁵

Pan-Islamism and Kurdish Nationalism

The loyalties of Kurdish tribesmen are embedded in a system of segmentary alliance and opposition. In the period under consideration, however, there appeared two important ideologies that appealed to wider loyalties than the tribal ones: pan-Islamism and Kurdish nationalism. There is a certain similarity between the pan-Islamic and Kurdish nationalist movements on the one hand and the states on the other, in their relations with the Kurdish tribes and chieftains. For the chieftains these movements offered the same ideological and material sources of power as the state. The movements, on the other hand, needed the tribes to give them military strength, but they found them as unstable a basis as the states did. This is especially true of the nationalist movement: tribal division has always been its main weakness.

The pan-Islamic movement was closely linked to the Ottoman state or more precisely to the Sultan-Caliph. It became influential in Kurdistan for at least three reasons: first, the European powers and their perceived support for the Christians in Kurdistan excited Kurdish anxieties. The 'Christian threat' made Muslim solidarity appear necessary for defensive reasons. Moreover, pan-Islamism was to give the Kurdish tribesmen a licence to loot Christian property. Secondly, it was in the interest of the sheykhs, the most influential leaders in Kurdistan, to strengthen Islamic sentiment (legitimation!). They were its most fervent propagandists. Thirdly, Sultan Abdülhamid, the initiator of the movement, was perceived by the Kurdish chieftains as their protector against the state bureaucracy that desired to break their powers. The pan-Islamic propaganda was so effective that in 1914-15 almost all Kurds (including those of Iran) responded to the call for jihad - including many of those who had received money from the Russians.¹⁶

Kurdish nationalism developed partly as a reaction to and imitation of Armenian nationalism and (later) the Young Turk movement. Both the British and the Russians stimulated this nationalism, which they intended to use against the Ottoman state.

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The first serious attempt to establish an independent Kurdish state was made in 1880 by Ubeydullah, a sheykh of great influence in the districts south-east of Lake Van. With an army recruited from the many tribes under his influence, he invaded Iranian Azarbayjan, where many of the local tribes joined him.¹⁷ The sheykh had the tacit support of Sultan Abdülhamid who approved of the idea of a Kurdish vassal state on formerly Iranian territory, and intended to use the sheykh against the Armenian revolutionaries. Not deeming the Sultan's support sufficient, Ubeydullah also wrote letters to the British government to inform them of his intentions.¹⁸ He failed, but the ideal of an independent Kurdish state remained. It was embraced by many chieftains, if only because it seemed to promise them more personal freedom and power.

During the Great War, pan-Islamic sentiment proved stronger than Kurdish national feeling,¹⁹ and there were no serious attempts to separate Kurdish territory from the Ottoman Empire. After the Ottoman defeat, however, nationalism spread very rapidly all across Kurdistan. There was a general awareness of president Wilson's 'fourteen points' (which included the principle of self-determination; Lenin's and Stalin's ideas on the same subject were as yet not influential) and of British plans for a Kurdish buffer-state between Turkey and Mesopotamia. As an independent Kurdish state became feasible, many sheykhs and tribal chieftains suddenly became nationalists and revolted. The difference between such national rebellions and the more traditional type of a chieftain's yaghigiri was not a sharp one, as may be shown by the case of Simko's rebellion, the most important of the type to occur in Iranian Kurdistan.

Simko and the Shakak Confederacy

Simko rose to paramount leadership of the Shakak, the second largest Kurdish confederacy in Iran - only the Kalhur, living west of Kirmanshah, exceed them in numbers. The Shakak inhabit(ed) the mountainous districts of Somay and Bradost, west of Salmas and Urmiyeh. Around 1920 they numbered some 2000 households, non-tribal subjects not included.

There are no statistics on the neighbouring tribes for that period, but figures from the late 1960s give an indication of the relative strengths of the tribes as they may have been in Simko's

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time:20

Shakak	4400 households	Mamash	950
Milan	2030	Zarza	750
Mangur	1500	Piran	650
Herki	1350	Begzadeh	500
Jalali	1135	Haydaranli	300

It should be noted, however, that most of these tribes have sections living across the border which are not included in these figures. Notably the Herki and the Haydaranli are stronger than these figures suggest.

By 1920 those Shakak who remained fully nomadic were already a minority. They used khaliseh (crown lands) summer-pastures in the Tergevar and Dasht-i Bil districts, and spent the winters in the plains of Salmas and Urmiyeh. Most were transhumant, spending the winter in mountain villages. The Shakak dominated a kurmanj population ('non-tribal' Kurdish cultivators) three times more numerous than themselves and had a similar parasitic/symbiotic relationship with the Christians in their midst. Many of the latter were quite rich; they were not only cultivators and craftsmen but also pastoralists, several of them each owning something like 1000 sheep and 40 horse. These went together with the Shakak flocks in summer to the yaylag, accompanied by one or more members of the family, while the other men remained in the village to cultivate.²¹ Additional income was generated by raiding: the Shakak had one of the worst reputations as robbers and raiders (now: as smugglers). Some authors even claimed that this, and not animal husbandry, was their chief occupation. It seems that their raids were directed not so much at trading caravans as against the settled population of the plains and valleys: Christian Assyrians (Nestorians or converts to one of the European or American churches) and Shiite Azaris. They did not take loot indiscriminately, however; Nikitine found, in fact, that the poor population of the plains had a rather favourable opinion of Jafar Agha (Simko's elder brother, responsible for much of the bad reputation of his tribe), for 'souvent, après avoir dépouillé un richard, il distribuait une partie du butin aux miséreux'.²²

The Shakak consist of numerous tribes of quite unequal size and status: the lists I found add up to 25, of which nine occur in most.²³ Three of these are generally mentioned as the central, politically

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dominant tribes: Avdovi, Mamedi (or Mamdoi) and Kardar. The others appear more peripheral, joining the tribes mentioned when these were led by a great chieftain, but otherwise keeping a low profile. Some were apparently in a dependent position as 'client' tribes. Thus Ghilan wrote about the strong Henareh sub-tribe:

tribu...dans une espèce de vassalité à l'égard des Chéqqaq, car leur chef doit être accepté par l'Agha de ces derniers..... Ils n'aiment pas la guerre, sont surtout marchands et éleveurs de bétail; mais les Chéqqaq les poussent dans leurs guerres, et occasionnent d'ailleurs contre eux des représailles des tribus qu'ils lésaient.²⁴

When Blau visited the area in 1857, the Henareh were still considered a fully separate tribe, neighbour to the Shakak; in all recent lists they are mentioned as a component tribe of the Shakak with no apparent lower status. Similarly the Mamedi, who were a leading Shakak tribe by the turn of the century, were in 1857 an independent nomadic tribe.²⁵ This means that the Shakak grew into the present confederation in the second half of the nineteenth century, a period when many other confederations were in decay.

One factor that made this growth possible and contributed to the rise of powerful chieftains here is immediately apparent from a study of local history: frontier warfare. Somay used to be administered by a Kurdish dynasty on behalf of the Ottomans, and it was the Iranian government that actively encouraged the Shakak (who then lived further south) to conquer these districts, which took them from 1841 to 1893.²⁶ As a reward, and later also in vain attempts to restrain the Shakak from raiding Iranian territory, the Iranian government appointed Shakak chieftains as governors of the frontier districts.

There are two chiefly lineages (called Pisaqa) among the Shakak, associated with the Avdovi and Kardar tribes respectively. The former family claimed descent from Kurdish chieftains who had participated in Saladin's military campaigns.²⁷ Between these two families there was always competition for leadership of the entire confederation. Most of the time each controlled only part of the Shakak.

In order to put the events into their proper context a few short remarks on political developments in the area during Simko's time should be made.

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In 1906 Ottoman troops invaded Iranian Azarbayjan and occupied a significant part of the Kurdish-inhabited districts of that province. They remained present, though not in full control, until 1911, when they were expelled by the Russians. The latter had in 1909 invaded the province and occupied Tabriz which was then, together with Rasht, the last bastion of the Constitutionals. They stationed infantry and cossacks in Tabriz, Khoy, Dilman and Urmiyeh. Until the outbreak of the Great War these managed to keep a measure of law and order. During the war, Azarbayjan was occupied in turn by the Turks (January 1915), the Russians (1916-17) and the Turks again (1918). In late 1914 the Nestorians of Hakkari, fearing genocide, fled to Urmiyeh and Salmas, seeking Russian protection. Many of them were to help the Russians as advance scouts when these invaded central Kurdistan and often took private revenge on the Muslim population. Christian-Muslim relations deteriorated badly during the war.²⁸

After the 1918 armistice Britain was in control of present Iraq with the exception of its mountainous north-east. The Kemalists (Turkish nationalist followers of Mustafa Kemal, the future Atatürk) were soon active all over Turkey. They had important centres at Rowanduz (which the British considered theirs) and at Van, and attempted to mobilise the Kurds against the British. The latter did the same: they made many promises with respect to the establishment of an independent Kurdistan, which was to serve as a buffer between Turkey and Iraq.

Meanwhile Iran's post-war government was very weak and torn by internal struggles among the political elite and by secessionist movements in Gilan and Azarbayjan. The Anglo-Iranian treaty signed by the Tehran government in 1919 provoked a wave of popular protest. In 1920 the middle classes of Tabriz revolted. Some other Azarbayjani towns followed suit, and for several months an independent republic (Azadistan) existed there.²⁹ It was Riza Khan who, after his coup d'état of 1921, succeeded in eliminating all centrifugal tendencies (including that of the Kurds) and in reintegrating Iran. By 1923, Kemalist Turkey was also internationally accepted. The possibility of an independent Kurdistan seemed lost, or at least receded into an unclear and probably distant future.

Around the turn of the century at least three chieftains were competing for paramount leadership of the Shakak. The strongest was probably Ali Agha of the Avdovi Pisaqas; his sons (or grandsons? the

sources are contradictory) Jafar Agha and Ismail Agha, nicknamed Simko, made themselves quite a reputation as daring warriors and bold raiders. The second chieftain was Umar Agha, who led the Mamedi tribe (according to some sources he was an uncle of Simko, but there is much confusion), and the third was Mustafa Agha (later succeeded by his brother Ismail) of the Kardar Pishaqas who had also some other tribes and sub-tribes under his control. There was a high turnover of chieftains during those years. Another section of Avdovi Pishaqas, led by Ali's brother Yusuf, living further south, was dispersed when Ali rose to power at Yusuf's expense, and many of them were subsequently killed by the rival Kardars. Umar Agha of the Mamedi was killed by Iranian officials in 1902, and Mustafa Agha by his Avdovi rivals in 1906. Around the same time Jafar Agha, who had held official titles but continued to irritate the government of Azarbayjan by his raids on Urmiyeh, Salmas and Khoy, was invited to Tabriz by the Iranian heir apparent and treacherously killed.³⁰

Maybe it was this disappearance of most other experienced chieftains that made Simko's rapid rise possible. However, he was a clever and opportunist politician who knew with whom to ally himself and when. As a young man he had assisted his brother Jafar in his raids, and he was to continue raiding throughout his career, thus attracting many roughs into his retinue. In the Constitutional Revolution Simko turned against the Constitutionals (urban Azaris) and, without being invited, took 300 horsemen to join the forces of Iqbal al-Saltaneh, governor of Maku, against the anjuman of Khoy. As a reward Simko was made sub-governor of Qotur district. In spite of his continuing raids the central government confirmed the appointment.³¹

Neither the Turks nor the Russians occupied the Shakak lands before the Great War; Simko's contacts with both were mainly indirect. Prior to 1913 he appears to have co-operated with pro-Ottoman, anti-Russian Azarbayjanis, but in 1913 he delivered one of these, who had sought refuge with him, to the Russians in an attempt to gain their goodwill.³² He was apparently successful, for in that same year a Russian observer noticed that two chieftains who had previously been clients of Ismail Agha of the Kardar Pishaqas (Simko's main rival) swore, under Russian pressure, fidelity to him.³³ By that time Simko was in regular contact with Kurdish nationalist circles. Nationalist and private ambitions went together in

him and cannot be separated. He had married a sister of Sheykh Sayyid Taha, grandson and successor of the famous Sheykh Ubeydullah.³⁴ This was a conventional marriage, for the sayyid was the most influential man across the border, besides being a leading nationalist. Simko and Sayyid Taha were to cooperate much in the following decade. Another of Simko's contacts was Abd al-Razzaq Bedirkhan of the famous nationalist family descending from the mirs of Botan. Sayyid Taha, Abd al-Razzaq and Simko's brother Jafar had previously been invited to Russia, whence they had returned with 'generous gifts and encouraging messages that stimulated their imaginations and ambitions'.³⁵ Abd al-Razzaq started publishing a monthly Kurdish newspaper in Urmiyeh in 1912. After some time, however, the Russians banished him from Urmiyeh, and according to one historian it was Simko who took over the responsibility for the paper until it stopped publication in 1914.³⁶

During the war Simko stood aloof from the real fighting, trying to keep all doors open, while expanding his control of the frontier districts. The Russians once arrested him and sent him to prison in Tiflis but, expecting to achieve more with the carrot than the stick, they let him return to Azarbayjan on the condition that he lived in the town of Khoys and remained 'loyal'.³⁷ When the troops of the Russian general Baratoff were called back from central Kurdistan after the Revolution, Simko managed to capture many of their arms, including field-guns. From other parts of Kurdistan too arms started flowing towards Simko, who had by then already a wide reputation as a nationalist leader. These arms were either left behind by departing Russians or had belonged to the Kurdish militias that had fought on the Turkish side.

Simko was not the only one to arm himself, however. The Nestorian Assyrians (the local ones, but especially the refugees from Hakkari, who were more militant) were quite well-armed too, and they were reinforced by equally well-armed Armenians from Anatolia. The departing Russians, unable to protect them any longer, left many arms behind and stimulated them to organise in fighting units. According to Arfa³⁸ a French military mission had also brought arms for the Assyrians to defend themselves against the Turks. The Assyrians had desires similar to Simko's: the establishment of an independent state, in Urmiyeh and Salmas. The local Muslim population (Azaris in the plains and Kurds in the mountains) were hardly pleased, and the Iranian gov-

ernment even less so. Famine and mutual depredations, in which the departing Russians had no small share, led to increased bitterness between Christians and Muslims. It was especially the Azaris and the 'non-tribal' Kurds that suffered, for the Christians were better armed. During riots in Urmiyeh (February 1918) the Christians got the upper hand and took control of the entire town. The Iranian government was incapable of restoring order. The governor of Tabriz, Mukht-i Shams, then approached Simko. At his instigation Simko invited Mar Shimun, the religious and secular leader of the Nestorians, for talks on a proposed alliance, and had him treacherously killed (March 1918).³⁹

Simko's men took no part, however, in the subsequent fighting between the invading Turkish armies and the Armenians and Nestorians, whom the British then attempted to mould into a force capable of stopping the Turkish advance. Only when most of the Nestorians - lacking strong leadership after the death of their leader - fled in panic from Urmiyeh did his men join Turkish soldiers in their pursuit, killing many (June or July 1918). Turkish soldiers and irregular bands of Kurds (sent, some claim, by Simko and Sayyid Taha) entered the town and plundered what was left.⁴⁰

The Armistice brought an end to the Turkish presence in Azarbayjan, and no strong government was left. The Iranian government appointed new governors at Tabriz and Urmiyeh, but these did not succeed in establishing control of western Azarbayjan. The only authority with a strong power base was Simko, whose private retinue had been reinforced with several hundred Ottoman soldiers, many of them Kurds, either simply deserters or people with nationalist motivations; others, mercenaries attracted by the high pay (!) and the fact that Simko gave them wives. With their field-guns (some of them taken from the Russians) and machine-guns, they were to prove more than a match for the ill-trained government troops of Azarbayjan.

The government had for some time no way of subjecting Simko, who continued more boldly than ever to raid the plains. The governor of Urmiyeh, Sardar-i Fatih, visited Simko in his stronghold at Chahriq (south-west of Dilman) and attempted to win him over by peaceful means, but Simko apparently saw this as further proof of weakness, and even expanded the areas where he took the tribute ('loot' in the Iranian perception, 'taxation' in his own) necessary to maintain his army. Some time later the

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governor of Tabriz, Mukarram al-Mulk, had recourse to modern technology and sent Simko a bomb-parcel that had been made to look like a box of sweets. Its explosion killed a younger brother of Simko and several of his retainers but failed to hurt the person for whom it was intended.⁴¹

Simko's Rebellion against the Central Government

Meanwhile Simko was busily preparing for the establishment of independence. In February 1919 there was a meeting of most important chieftains of Iranian Kurdistan, at which the proposal for an open insurrection against the Iranian government was discussed. It was decided to postpone the rising until it had become clear what the attitude of the Powers was going to be.⁴² Sayyid Taha, who had joined Simko and closely co-operated with him (without however forgetting his own private interests) visited Baghdad in May 1919 in order to obtain British support for an independent Kurdish state. Simko himself addressed the Civil Commissioner (A.T. Wilson) by letter with similar requests. Neither received a definite commitment. According to Armenian sources⁴³ Simko and Sayyid Taha were at the same time in touch with the Turkish nationalists at Van, who wished to employ them for resisting the proposed repatriation of Armenians to eastern Anatolia and therefore promised help. In the following years the two Kurdish chieftains were to remain in contact with both the British and the Turkish nationalists.

Without waiting for the other chieftains to declare themselves in open rebellion, Simko took the town of Dilman, looted Khoy, laid siege to Urmiyeh and massacred part of the (Azari) population of the Lakistan district (north-west of Dilman) that refused to recognise his authority and pay taxes. Those who escaped were pursued as far as Sharafkhaneh on the northern shore of Lake Urmiyeh. During the autumn of 1919 then Simko's Kurds kept these districts north of the lake under occupation.⁴⁴ Tabriz had however a new military commander, Intisar, who efficiently mobilised and co-ordinated whatever troops he could find (gendarmerie, cossacks, irregular Azari cavalry). Led by Filipov, a Russian cossack officer who had just arrived from Tehran, these troops managed to repel Simko's Kurds and to inflict heavy losses upon them. Simko was forced to take refuge in his mountain stronghold at Chahriq; many of his partisans deserted him (including several of

the former Ottoman soldiers). For reasons which are unclear,⁴⁵ however, instead of following up their initial success and forcing Simko to surrender unconditionally, Filipov and Intisar entered negotiations with him. As a result of the negotiations, Simko promised to return the loot taken from Lakistan, to send off his Turkish soldiers and to surrender all his arms to the state.

None of these promises was fully executed, and the whole affair ultimately strengthened Simko's standing among the Kurds: he could apparently act against the state with impunity. During 1920 he re-established his control of the plains of Urmiyeh and Salmas and the southern part of Khoy district. In Urmiyeh he appointed men of his own choice as governors: at first Arshad al-Mulk, a local man, later Teymur Agha, a Kurdish chieftain from Kuhnehshahr. His men raided a vast area, mainly to acquire firearms and finance his future exploits. One day they took thousands of the inhabitants of Urmiyeh, people of all walks of life, hostage in a garden near the city, demanding 40,000 rifles and a similar quantity of gold liras for their release.⁴⁶ The villages were similarly 'taxed'. Gendarmerie troops sent from Tabriz to relieve the area were defeated by the Kurds and pushed back behind Sharafkhaneh (March 1921). Simko proved the strongest again, and thereby attracted many new followers.

Other victories over government troops during that year resulted in further increases. In March 1921 his forces were still described as '1000 horse and 500 foot, with a Turkish flag'; in a summer campaign they were already estimated at 4000, in the autumn of 1921 at 7000, while in his last great campaign, in the summer of 1922, 10,000 men are said to have participated.⁴⁷ Each of these estimates is rather rough and - except the last - includes only a part of what Simko could mobilise. The increase is nevertheless clear. Simko's authority was recognised by a growing number of tribes.

Early in 1920 there had been several meetings of a 'Council of Kurdish chiefs' presided over by Simko, which were attended not only by chieftains of some of the biggest tribes of Azarbayjan (Herki, Begzadeh, Haydaranli, Shakak), but also by chieftains of the Artushi confederacy and other tribes of Hakkari. It was said that in 1921 Simko appointed a certain Ahmad Khan as the paramount chieftain of the Herki, and that this was generally accepted by this powerful tribe.⁴⁸

By the middle of 1921 the area under Simko's

authority included all Iranian territory west of Lake Urmieh and from there south as far as Baneh and Sardasht, as well as the north-western districts of Iraq, where the British and the Kemalists were still competing for control. Besides the entire Shakak confederacy and the Herki tribe, also the Mamash, Mangur, Dehbokri, Piran, Zarza, Gewrik, Feyzullabegi, Pizhdar and the minor tribes around Baneh had joined Simko.⁴⁹ In October 1921 Simko's troops entered the town of Souj Bulagh (Mahabad), which had until that date been held by government troops. 200 of the gendarmarie garrison were killed, another 150 wounded. It may be illustrative of the motivation and attitude of many of Simko's men that they sacked the town upon capturing it - in spite of the fact that the inhabitants of Souj Bulagh, unlike those of Urmieh and Dilman, were mainly Kurds.

Other Kurdish nationalists later severely rebuked Simko for this pillage. Why sow discord among the Kurds and thus serve the interests of their enemies? In answer to such accusations from a Kurdish notable from Suleymaniyeh Simko said that first, the gendarmarie had forced him to offer battle inside the town, and thereafter he had not been able to restrain his men who were used to follow up battle with plunder; and that secondly, he had his doubts about the attitude towards himself of the Dehbokri and the Mangur tribes that lived immediately around Souj Bulagh.⁵⁰

Souj Bulagh naturally became the capital. Simko did not take residence there himself, however, but appointed a loyal chieftain, Hamzeh Agha of the Mamash, as governor. The Azari towns of Mianduab, Maragheh and Binab sent letters of submission to Souj Bulagh.⁵¹

Further military successes against government troops that year added to Simko's standing among the Kurds, and swelled the number of his followers. By July 1922 his territory reached its greatest extension: it stretched as far east and south as Sain Qaleh (Shahin Dezh) and Saqqiz. Moreover, Simko was in permanent communication with tribes further south: he had influence in Mariwan and Awroman, and even tribes as far south as Luristan were to rise in support of his revolt.⁵² Similarly, many Kurdish chieftains in Turkey and Iraq had established friendly relations with him. There were no concrete plans for united action, but it could never harm to have relations with a climber such as Simko. Rumours started to circulate that the Iranian government was

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going to grant the Kurds autonomy because it could not subdue them.⁵³

Those rumours were to prove unfounded, however. Since the coup d'état of February 1921 Riza Khan had devoted his energies to the building of a modern, disciplined, coherent national army. His efforts were soon to bear fruit. During 1921 and even in early 1922 Simko had been able to inflict repeated defeats on the motley troops (irregulars, cossacks, gendarmerie) sent against him, capturing many of their arms. In August 1922 however, a well-coordinated campaign by the reorganised army brought him to heel.⁵⁴ His followers dispersed, leaving him nothing but a small band of loyal men. He had to escape into Turkey, and from there to Iraq. Edmonds, who interviewed him on his arrival in Iraq, observed that he was especially bitter against the Turks and the British. The former had always promised him assistance but they too had now turned their armies against him, and the latter had passively allowed him to be crushed in spite of his usefulness to them.⁵⁵

As a refugee in Iraq, Simko did not remain idle but immediately started attempting to strengthen old ties and establish new ones with Kurdish chieftains there, in preparation for return to Iran. He approached his old ally Sayyid Taha (who was now used by the British to get the Turks out of Rowanduz and had lost interest in further adventures in Iran), and also Sheykh Mahmud of Suleymaniyeh (the most influential nationalist leader of southern Kurdistan who showed equally little interest in Simko's problems), and many others. He even tried to appease the Assyrian refugees, who had been brought to Iraq by the British, and who still thought of return to Urmiyeh and Salmas. He was shown much respect wherever he went, but no one was ready to help him. In 1923 he went to Turkey, to solicit Turkish support - but equally in vain. In 1924 Riza Khan pardoned him, and he returned to Iran. In 1926 he made a last abortive attempt to regain the virtual independence he had once held, and besieged the town of Dilman, assisted by sections of the Herki and Begzadeh tribes. Again he had to flee to Iraq. In 1929 the Iranian government invited him back again, offering him the governorship of Ushnuviyeh. A few days after his arrival he was killed in an ambush set up by the same government.⁵⁶

The Organisation of Simko's Forces

The most serious weakness of Simko's movement was the absence of any kind of formal organisation. There was just the network of Simko's private relations, no party to organise the followers, no formal government or war council. The major towns, Urmiyeh and Souj Bulagh, were administered by governors appointed by Simko who were both tribal chieftains unrelated to the inhabitants of the towns and simply took over the offices of the previous Tabriz-appointed governors. There was no systematic and equitable taxation; Simko's treasury was filled by indiscriminate looting, although the latter aspect may be severely exaggerated in the sources, most of which are inimical to him.

The army always fluctuated in size, as tribal armies do. The more or less permanent nucleus consisted of the chieftains' retinues, more precisely those of Simko himself and of Amr Khan, head of the Kardar section of the Shakak. In 1918 Simko's retinue included several hundred former soldiers of the Ottoman army, well-armed and trained by German instructors. In 1921-22 Simko was said to have a large Turkish contingent which, so the Iranians and British suspected, had been put at his disposal by the Ankara government,⁵⁷ though proof of these suspicions was never found. Most probably there were Kurdish nationalists from Turkish Kurdistan among his retinue too: among the Kurds of Turkey I heard many accounts of local men who had gone east to join Simko. Even this central core, however, was not really permanent. Many of the Ottoman soldiers with Simko had surrendered when they were promised amnesty during the 1919 campaign by Intisar and Filipov. Other retainers also came and went according to Simko's fortunes, motivated more by pay and loot than by nationalist sentiment or personal loyalty. Whereas by July 1922 consistent success had swollen his forces to some 10,000, after the first reverses they dwindled, and within a few days no more than a thousand loyal followers remained.⁵⁸

A strong retinue appears to be a necessary condition for any chieftain who embarks upon an expansive political career. Once his strength is perceived, many others may join who are not, and do not become retainers. They are not fed by the chieftain, and it is well nigh unavoidable that they compensate themselves for their military services by plunder. This is not to say that retainers do not engage in pillage but rather that the chieftain has the other

tribesmen even less under control.

In Simko's raids and battles against government troops not only his retainers but many other tribesmen took part. These were primarily Shakak, and especially from the Avdovi, Mamedi and Kardar component tribes. At times of Simko's good fortune, chieftains of other tribes also joined, with their retainers and with common tribesmen. It was especially the Herki tribe that contributed many men: the Herki and the Mamash proved to be Simko's most loyal allies. Others joined later and deserted earlier. At times of adversity even the closest allies left Simko. Thus Amr Khan, the head of the Kardar Pisaqas and therefore Simko's main potential rival among the Shakak, who had on many occasions acted as Simko's plenipotentiary, in 1922 attempted to desert him. He contacted the government through a local sheykh as intermediary and demanded amnesty, in exchange for which he promised obedience to the government and willingness to fight against Simko.⁵⁹

Even though after his defeat Simko lost his actual power, the capacity to mobilise large numbers of men, he continued to enjoy wide respect among the tribes. Immediately upon his last return to Iran many chieftains of the Shakak confederacy and the Herki, Surchi, and other tribes came to pay him their respects, accompanied by large retinues.⁶⁰

Simko not only sought support among the tribes; he also attempted to ally himself with foreign powers. Repeatedly he tried to elicit British support, usually through chieftains who had better relations with the British than he had himself: Sayyid Taha, or Babakr Agha of the Pizhdar.⁶¹ He had little if any success. At the same time he was in communication with the Soviet authorities in the Caucasus and with the Kemalists at Van. Some of his letters to the former were apparently intercepted,⁶² while British and Iranian authorities were convinced that the Kemalists had put troops at his disposal, as already mentioned. None of these foreign powers came to his support when he most needed it. In early phases of his career, however, his association with state authorities (the Iranians, who made him a governor of Qotur; the Russians and Ottomans who recognised him during the occupation) had strengthened his position among the Kurds. Such relations with neighbouring states have - it has been said before - always been present in the politics of Kurdistan, and they continued to influence Kurdish nationalism in its later phases as well. They may well be considered part and parcel of Kurdish tribal politics.

The large confederacy of tribes that was Simko's movement continued to exist as long as the tribes were kept mobilised. One of the factors that did mobilise them was nationalism. The rapidity with which Simko's support dwindled in times of adversity, however, suggests that for the majority of his followers nationalism was at best an additional motive. As usual among tribes, mobilisation should have some more concrete and immediate object and there should be reasonable chances of attaining it, be it a military victory (over a rival tribe or government troops) or simply plunder. The frequent raiding associated with Simko's rebellion, which many contemporary and later nationalists held against him, was not simply accidental to it: it probably was a necessary condition for keeping the tribes mobilised and thus together. When mobilisation ended - in this case because most tribesmen judged the chances of further success very small and therefore gave up - the unity immediately broke down.

I would guess that the same happened to many large confederacies in the past: a combination of internal and external factors mobilised the tribes and made them confederate themselves. When these stimuli disappeared or when the costs of confederating became too high, the confederacy fell apart, and little remained beyond its name and sometimes a respected (but not obeyed) chiefly lineage. Mobilisation cannot be sustained indefinitely. Maintaining the unity once achieved requires some definite form of organisation, which is, however, beyond tribal politics. In the past the emirates to some extent provided such an organisational structure, while at the same time institutionalising a measure of mobilisation of the tribes through their division into rival confederacies. In later phases of Kurdish history the nationalist movement, usually in the form of political parties, provided a more lasting organisational framework. The nationalist movement continued however to rely heavily on tribal support, and often tribal chieftains came partially to dominate it, thus making it into an extension of tribal politics. This was a serious weakness that contributed to the rapid collapse of several movements in spite of the party framework.

The Kurdish republic of Mahabad, which existed for almost a year in 1946, is a case in point. It was led by a political party, the Democratic Party of Kurdistan (DPK), but the tribes had the decisive power. (In fact, the DPK was born when an earlier nationalist organisation, the Society for Kurdish

Revival (Komala-i Zhianewe-i Kurd, or Komala), consisting of young urban middle class, broadened its base to include the tribes. Most founding members of the DPK belonged to the tribal ruling families.) The Shakak again played a significant part, under the leadership of the above-mentioned Amr Khan who, some time after Simko's death, had become the paramount chieftain. The government of the republic never took any important decision without first conferring with Amr Khan. It made him one of the three generals of the republic's army, which consisted mainly of tribal irregulars. When the tide turned, however, and the central government seemed willing and capable of bringing the semi-independent Kurdish republic back under central control, Amr Khan sought contact with it and pledged his loyalty, virtually deserting the Mahabad republic.⁶³ Several other tribal chieftains actively turned against the DPK and the Mahabad government, which they perceived as more serious threats to their traditional powers than the central government. Tribalism contributed as much as the campaign by the Iranian army to the fall of the Mahabad republic. Nationalist leaders are, of course, aware of the unstable basis tribal support gives them. They are as yet, however, unable to do without it.

Postscript

The recent revolution in Iran has once again brought the Kurds to the front pages of the newspapers. During the turbulent year of 1978 the situation in Kurdistan was not much different from that in other parts of Iran. In 1979, however, strong demands for autonomy were put forward and it soon became evident that these demands were supported by almost all segments of Kurdish society. As the gendarmerie and the police had well-nigh disappeared, and the army - reduced in numbers as a result of desertion - had withdrawn to the major bases, central control was weak and for some time a situation of virtual autonomy existed. Traditional leaders (mainly tribal chieftains) and local or regional political organizations (revolutionary city councils, parties, associations of workers, peasant unions) took over the role of the central authorities.

The role of the tribes is less in evidence than in the past; the Kurdish protagonists are the DPK, its more radical rival the Komala and the charismatic urban mullah Izz al-Din Huseyni. The

latter plays a part similar to the peace-making and unifying role sheykhs used to play in tribal society, but he can hardly be considered a representative of the traditional order. He enjoys the confidence of most of the rural population including many tribesmen, but his particular blend of nationalism with socialism and Islam endears him to the radical leftists in Komala as well.

Tribal chieftains did and do attempt to regain the power and influence they lost during the preceding decades, but the effects of urbanisation, education and land reform cannot easily be undone, and they have succeeded partially and temporarily at best.

The Shakak changed less than most other tribes; they are among the staunchest upholders of tribal values. After Amr Khan's death Simko's son Tahir Khan succeeded in climbing to paramount position within the confederacy, and in the spring and summer of 1979 his father's days seemed revived; he reigned as an independent lord. In July however, trouble arose when the central government remanned gendarmerie posts near the Turkish border. Tribesmen (Shakak, Herki and other local tribes) laid siege to one gendarmerie base and occupied several posts, upon which army units were sent into the area. In the ensuing fights the tribes found themselves obliged to ask support from the DPK, which had by then built up a standing, well-trained guerrilla army. With united forces they beat off the army, forcing some units even to take refuge on Turkish territory. The whole affair (as DPK secretary-general Qasimlu claimed⁶⁴) elevated the standing of the DPK among the tribesmen at the expense of the traditional chiefs, convincing them of the superiority of party organisation over the tribal one. However that may be, later in the year Tahir Khan and other tribal chieftains were to turn away from the DPK, several even actively against it. On the other hand, a young leading member of Mamedi (a component tribe of the Shakak) is a member of the central committee of the DPK. Many young Shakak - not only from the Mamedi - seem to be taking sides with the DPK rather than with Tahir Khan.

In several parts of Kurdistan, tribal chieftains, like former landlords all over Iran, attempted to take back by force the land they had lost in the Shah's land reform to usually non-tribal peasants. Leftist groups, consisting of village teachers, engineers, young mullahs and students, organised the non-tribal peasants in peasant unions, which in

several places successfully beat off the landlords' first offensive. These peasant unions, together with groups of urban leftists, united to form the Komala.

The other important political organisation, the DPK (Iran), which was established in 1945 and played a central role in the Mahabad republic of 1946, has since the late 1960s left its purely nationalist stand and moved towards the left. Its programme not only poses the demand for national and cultural rights, including autonomy, but also contains anti-'feudal' points, the principle of fully equal rights for men and women, and separation of state and religion. It calls for a policy of economic development resembling the state socialist model of, for instance, Iraq. The DPK is by far the strongest political organisation of Kurdistan. It enjoys mass support in towns as well as villages, especially in the areas of Mahabad, Bukan, Baneh.

The DPK's relation with the tribes is more ambiguous than the Komala's. It is reluctant to alienate the tribes; it wishes to reduce the chieftain's powers further but at the same time still feels it cannot afford an all-out confrontation and even needs the tribes' support. As a result of this reluctant attitude, in some places the traditional authorities have managed to bring the local party branch under their control. In the Central Committee too, some members still either belong to or have close relations with the tribal 'milieu'. Nevertheless, during summer 1979 when chieftains around Mahabad started to collect traditional dues (*dahudo*, 'two out of ten') from the mainly non-tribal peasantry, the party intervened. In the increasing number of conflicts between (ex-)landlords and peasantry, the former sought - and found - support with central authorities (army, revolutionary guards) and turned, with these, against the Komala and the DPK. The Kurdish national cause and the cause of the peasantry against their oppressors became closely associated.

As early as March (1979) the first fights broke out between Kurdish nationalists and representatives of the new Islamic Republic (in this case the military at Sanandaj). Long and troublesome negotiations led to an uneasy truce. Similar events followed each other almost monthly. In August another incident provided the immediate cause for large-scale military operations against the Kurds. The army took all towns of Kurdistan, not without bloodshed. The Kurds did not put up a serious defence of the

towns but took to the mountains. The DPK had several thousand well-armed guerrilla-fighters, whom they had trained in the previous months. Komala and the followers of Izz al-Din Huseyni were less well-armed (unlike the DPK, they had not been able to lay hands on army arsenals), but in the mountains they too were a force to be reckoned with. After two months these guerrilla forces, having established a united command, were able to force the government back to the negotiating table. The negotiations have been interrupted several times as the truce was broken or the umpteenth deadlock was reached. Sometimes quite serious fights occurred again. It appears that 'feudal' elements, who would rather not see autonomy reached under the leadership of the anti-'feudal' organisations, actively attempt to sabotage the negotiations by provoking fights. To all appearances, it will take a long time before a solution to the Kurdish problem is reached that will be satisfactory to a majority of those concerned.

NOTES

1. Augusta Gudhart, 'The blood of the martyrs', *Atlantic Monthly*, 130 (1922), p. 116. *Ashiret* is the term most commonly used for 'tribe'.

2. In the Iranian census of 1956, 5.6% of the respondents gave Kurdish as their native tongue, and this figure has been quoted ever since. A large number of speakers of dialects classified as 'Luri and Bakhtiari' (the Laki dialects), however, consider themselves Kurds and sympathise with Kurdish national aspirations, which is why I include them among the Kurds.

3. Two Kurdish emirates under Ottoman suzerainty, Bitlis (around 1650 AD) and Baban (as of 1820) are described in detail and analysed in my *Agha, Shaikh and State. On the Social and Political Organization of Kurdistan* (PhD dissertation, Utrecht, 1978), pp. 194-215.

4. For the Baban emirate this is nicely illustrated in C.J. Rich's diary, *Narrative of a Residence in Koordistan ...* (Duncan, London, 1836), vol. 1, passim. Some time after Rich's visit in 1820 the ruling Mir, Mahmud Pasha, an unwilling vassal of Baghdad, did in fact switch loyalties and submit to the Iranian Heir Apparent Abbas Mirza, thereby precipitating a war between the two empires.

5. Mullah Mustafa Barzani, who among recent contemporary Kurdish leaders was the one most representative of the tribal milieu, was in contact with both powers as early as 1946. He spent 11 years (1947-58) in exile in USSR, and in the Kurdish war in Iraq in spite of all vicissitudes remained in contact

and received Soviet support until 1972, when he received definite promises of substantial aid from America. Before that date he had on many occasions attempted to elicit American support, even declaring his willingness to join the USA as the 51st state.

6. For instance, the Bilbasi confederacy in the emirate of Bitlis had, according to the Sharafnameh, come from the Hakkari district before the emirate was established; Amīr Sharaf Khān Bidlisī, *Sharafnāmeḥ: Tārīkh-i Mufasssal-i Kurd-istān*, ed. M. 'Abbāsī (Ilmi, Tehran, (1957) 1343/1965).

7. For these events and the situation in Botan after the collapse of the emirate, see van Bruinessen, *Agha*, pp.222-

8. Missionary activity in central Kurdistan is excellently described in J. Joseph, *The Nestorians and their Muslim Neighbours* (Princeton University Press, 1961).

8. See chapter 1 above.

9. The tale of Suto and Tato is a highly amusing but true account of how a shrewd sheykh manipulated conflict between two rival chieftains and thereby appropriated part of their power as well as their property, B. Nikitine and E.B. Soane, 'The tale of Suto and Tato. Kurdish text with translation and notes', *BSOAS*, 3, 1 (1923), pp. 69-106. For an extensive discussion of the political role of sheykhs in Kurdistan, see van Bruinessen, *Agha*, pp. 277-96, 313-37.

10. E.g. M. Sahlins, *Tribesmen* (Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, 1966).

11. F. Barth, *Principles of Social Organization in Southern Kurdistan* (Jørgensen, Oslo, 1953).

12. The career of a chieftain who applied these methods with great success, Hajo of the Heverkan confederacy (flor. ca. 1920-30) is described in some detail in van Bruinessen, *Agha*, pp. 110-16.

13. B. Nikitine, *Īrānī ki man shinākhtam* (tr. from French) (Ma'rifat, Tehran, 1329/1951), p. 229; W. Eagleton, Jr., *The Kurdish Republic of 1946* (Oxford University Press, 1963), p. 7.

14. E.g. Rich, *Narrative*, p. 88; C. Sandreczki, *Reise nach Mosul und durch Kurdistan nach Urmia* (Steinkopf, Stuttgart, 1857), vol. 2, p. 263.

15. In 1843 and 1846, Nestorians of central Kurdistan; in 1895-6, Armenians; in 1915, Armenians, followed by all Christian groups.

16. Nikitine, *Irani*, pp. 229-36; id., *Les Kurdes, Etude Sociologique et Historique* (Klincksieck, Paris, 1956), pp. 216-23.

17. Joseph, *Nestorians*, pp. 107-13; W. Jwaideh, 'The Kurdish Nationalist Movement: its Origins and Development', unpublished PhD dissertation, Syracuse University, 1960, pp. 212-39; van Bruinessen, *Agha*, pp. 328-9.

18. Joseph, *Nestorians*, p. 109f.

19. A telling passage in the memoirs of the Kurdish

nationalist Zinar Silopi (pseudonym of Cemilpaşazade Qadri Beg) relates to his failure to find willing ears for his propaganda among Kurdish officers, due to the prevailing pan-Islamic feeling; Z. Silopi, *Doza Kürdüstan* (Stewr, Beyrouth, 1969), pp. 38-39; partially translated in van Bruinessen, *Agha*, p. 360.

20. H. Arfa, *The Kurds. An Historical and Political Study* (Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 48; M.J. Mashkür, *Nazarī bi tārīkh-i Āzarbāyjān va āsār-i bāstānī van jam'iat-shināsī-yi ān* (Anjuman-i Asar-i Milli, Tehran, 1349/1971), p. 190; A. Dihqān, *Sarzamīn-i Zardasht. Ouzā'-i tabī'ī, slāsī, iqtisādī, farhangī, ijtimā'ī va tārīkhī-yi Rizā'īyeh* (Ibn Sina, Tehran, 1348/1969), p. 60.

21. Ghilan, 'Les Kurdes persans et l'invasion ottomane', *Revue du Monde Musulman*, 5 (1908), pp. 7, 10, 14.

22. Nikitine, *Les Kurdes*, p. 79.

23. Lists in Ghilan, 'Les Kurdes', *passim*; Mashkur, *Nazari*, p. 190; Dihqan, *Sarzamin*, p. 60; V. Minorsky, 'Shakak' *EI*, 1st ed., 4, 1, p. 290; *Central Asian Review* 7 (1959), p. 179 (after *Sovremenniy Iran*); and in Prof. Wolfgang Rudolph's fieldnotes, which he kindly showed me.

24. Ghilan, 'Les Kurdes', p. 14.

25. O. Blau, 'Die Stämme des nordöstlichen Kurdistan', *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, 12 (1858), p. 593.

26. V. Minorsky, 'Somai', *EI*, 1st ed., 4, 2, p. 482; Ghilan, 'Les Kurdes', p. 10-13.

27. A. Sharifi, *Ashāyir-i Shakāk va sharh-i zindigī-yi ānhā bi rahbarī-yi Ismā'īl Āghā Simko* (Sayyidiyan, Mahabad, 1348/1970), pp. 10-11.

28. A.C. Wratislaw, *A Consul in the East* (Blackwoods, Edinburgh and London, 1924), pp. 213-14, 229-32; W.E.D. Allen and P. Muratoff, *Caucasian Battlefields. A History of the Wars on the Turco-Caucasian Border 1818-1921* (Cambridge University Press, 1953); A. Kasravi, *Tārīkh-i hijdah sāleh-yi Āzarbāyjān* (Amir Kabir, Tehran, 4th impression, 1346/1968); Joseph, *Nestorians*.

29. Kasravi, *Tarikh*; Y.P. Benab, 'Tabriz in perspective: a historical analysis of the current struggle of Iranian peoples', *RIPEH/Review of Iranian Political Economy & History*, 2, 2 (1978), pp. 1-42.

30. Ghilan, 'Les Kurdes', pp. 7-9, 14; other accounts of Jafar Agha's killing in Wratislaw, *Consul*, pp. 207-9; Nikitine, *Les Kurdes*, p. 79; Sharifi, *Ashayir*, p. 12.

31. Ghilan, 'Les Kurdes', pp. 7, 9n.; M. Aghasi, *Tārīkh-i Khoy* (Faculty of Arts, Tabriz, 1350/1971), pp. 312-3. A possible reason why Simko may have attacked the Constitution-
alists voluntarily is the fact that the latter saw the Turkish invasion of 1906, in which many Kurds took part, as directed against themselves and in support of the Shah. 'Anti-Kurdish sentiment flared, and there was rioting against members of the

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Sunni sect', R. Cottam, *Nationalism in Iran* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 1964), pp. 68-9.

32. Kasravi, *Tarikh*, pp. 454-5.

33. These were Teymur Jang and Muhammad Sharif Agha of the village of Somay. See L.W. Adamec (comp.), *Historical Gazetteer of Iran, Part I. Tehran and Northwestern Iran* (Akademische Druck und Verlagsanstalt, Graz, 1976), entry 'Somay', quoting Voyenni Sbornik.

34. Sharifi, *Ashayir*, p. 17.

35. Eagleston, *Republic*, p. 7.

36. J. Khaznadar, *Rūznāmah-nigārī dar Kurdistān*, tr. (from Kurdish) by A. Sharifi (privately published, Mahabad, 1357/1978), p. 5. This was not Simko's only involvement in Kurdish publishing. Later in his career, in 1921, he had a bilingual newspaper of a Kurdish nationalist nature published in Urmīyeh: this was called *Kurd dar sāl-i 1340*, and was edited by Mullah Muhammad Tarjani of Mahabad, see M. Tamaddun, *Tārīkh-i Riḏā'īyeh* (Islamiyeh, Tehran, 1350/1971), p. 371, quoted in A. Sharifi, *Shūrishhā-yi Kurdān-i Mukrī dar dourān-i saltānat-i adūmān-i Pahlavī* (Shafaq, Tabriz, 1357/1978), p. 6. *Oriente Moderno*, 1, 9 (15 February 1922), p. 548, mentions a paper *Il Kurdistan independente*, published in Souj Bulagh, which is probably the same paper.

37. Kasravi, *Tarikh*, p. 829; Aghasi, *Tarikh*, pp. 352-3; Sharifi, *Ashayir*, pp. 18-19.

38. H. Arfa, *Under Five Shahs* (Murray, London, 1964), p. 122.

39. Kasravi, *Tarikh*, p. 734-50, 829; Arfa, *Kurds*, pp.

50-54; Joseph, *Nestorians*, pp. 138-44; Aghasi, *Tarikh*, pp.

384-8; F.G. Coan, *Yesterdays in Persia and Kurdistan* (Saunders, Claremont, Col., 1939), pp. 264-70.

40. *ibid.*, pp. 270-2.

41. Kasravi, *Tarikh*, pp. 830-2; Sharifi, *Ashayir*, pp. 19-20, 30-6; M. Bambad, *Sharḥ-i ḥāl-i rijāl-i Īrān* (Zawar, Tehran, 1347/1968), vol. 1, p. 136; Jwaideh, 'Nationalist Movement', p. 401-2.

42. *Précis of Affairs in Southern Kurdistan during the Great War* (Government Press, Baghdad, 1919), p. 14; Jwaideh, 'Nationalist Movement', p. 403.

43. FO 371/1919; No. 58/89585/512. A later denial of this by Simko himself (in a letter to the British Consul-General at Tabriz) is enclosed in FO 371/1919: W 34/88614/7972. For the rumours about the repatriation of the Nestorians and their effects, see also Jwaideh, 'Nationalist Movement', pp. 413-15.

44. Kasravi, *Tarikh*, pp. 839-41, 851-2; Arfa, *Kurds*, p. 57.

45. See Kasravi's rather unsatisfactory explanation (old-fashioned and corrupt politics on the part of Azarbayjan's Governor, Eyn al-Douleh), *Tarikh*, pp. 854f.; the similar one in Aghasi (implicating Prime Minister Vusuq al-Douleh), *Tarikh*, pp. 440-4; and Sharifi's suggestion of British pressure, *Ashayir*,

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pp. 47-8.

46. Dihqan, *Sarzamin*, pp. 574-6.

47. These estimates are given in FO 371/1921: E 6185/100/93; Arfa, *Kurds*, p. 58; FO 371/1921: E 13470/100/93; and Arfa, *Shahs*, p. 136, respectively.

48. FO 371/1920: E 15670/11/44; 1921: E 13470/100/93.

49. Arfa, *Kurds*, p. 59.

50. FO 371/1922: E 2402/96/65.

51. FO 371/1921: E 13470/100/93.

52. FO 371/1922: E 8437/6/34; A.J. Toynbee, *Survey of International Affairs 1925, Part I, The Islamic World since the Peace Settlement*, (Oxford University Press, 1927) p. 539; Jwaideh, 'Nationalist Movement', p. 410.

53. Toynbee, *Survey*, pp. 538-9.

54. The military campaigns of 1921 and 1922 are described in detail in Arfa, *Shahs*, pp. 118-41; id., *Kurds*, pp. 58-63; Dihqan, *Sarzamin*, pp. 585-94; and in the report by the British military attaché at Tehran enclosed in FO 371/1922: E 12242/1076/34.

55. C.J. Edmonds, *Kurds, Turks, and Arabs. Politics, Travel and Research in North-Eastern Iraq 1919-1925* (Oxford University Press, 1957) pp. 305-7.

56. On Simko's last years, see Jwaideh, 'Nationalist Movement', pp. 410-13; Arfa, *Kurds*, p. 63. On his killing, A.M. Hamilton, *Road Through Kurdistan* (Faber and Faber, London, 1937), pp. 162-4; Sharifi, *Ashayir*, pp. 64-71.

57. FO 371/1922: E 8437/6/34.

58. Arfa, *Shahs*, p. 141.

59. Aghasi, *Tarikh*, pp. 457-8. Simko was, however, informed and put Amr Khan under surveillance at Chahriq. After Simko's defeat the government arrested Amr Khan and imprisoned him for several years.

60. Sharifi, *Ashayir*, pp. 64-5.

61. The following is an excerpt from a letter sent by Simko to Babakr Agha, in which he asks him to demand British support on his behalf: 'I am aware that my reputation is one of treachery and deceit in dealing with Governments and I therefore address you who have a standing credit in the eyes of the British Government upon the following matter: my recent actions and all my actions have no hostile intention with respect to the British Government. On the contrary, I have a sincere desire to be on friendly terms with that Government on my behalf for the purpose of arranging some mutual understanding' (enclosed in FO 371/1921: E 11773/43/93).

62. Claimed by Aghasi, *Tarikh* p. 458, and, in a different version, by Sharifi, *Ashayir*, p. 59. I have found no further confirmation of these claims.

63. Eagleton, *Republic*, pp. 109-10.

64. Personal interview, 8 Aug. 1979. Unfortunately I have not been able to check this information with the Shakak themselves.

Chapter 14

NOMADS AND COMMISSARS IN THE MUGHAN STEPPE: THE SHAHSEVAN TRIBES IN THE GREAT GAME

Richard Tapper

Introduction

The substance of this chapter is a discussion of the role of a particular group of tribes in the Great Game, the policies pursued by the states concerned, and the effects of those policies on the social organisation of the tribes.¹

Russia's Caucasian frontier with Iran was in many ways as important an arena of the nineteenth-century Great Game as British India's frontier with Afghanistan. Both were of considerable strategic importance and crossed by major Asian trade routes. The main differences were in the nature of the terrain and the population. While the mountain ranges of the North West Frontier of India were of marginal agricultural value, rugged, remote and defensible, Transcaucasia included some of the most fertile agricultural lands of the area and for this reason, as well as its comparative accessibility, could not provide so remote and defensible a refuge where tribal populations could remain politically autonomous from competing states and empires.

The frontier established by Russia with Iran in the early nineteenth century cut most of the Shahsevan nomad tribes of Iran off from their winter pastures. For some time they were permitted limited access to these pastures, but they failed to observe the limitations. Shahsevan disorder during the latter part of the century was used by both Iran and Russia to political advantage, and was an important factor in Great Power rivalry in Iran. Iranian government policy to the tribes varied from virtual abdication of authority to predatory expeditions and an attempt in 1860 at wholesale settlement - perhaps the first such case in Iran. This typically twentieth-century measure provoked one British con-

sular official to an illuminating and surprisingly modern assessment of the role of nomad tribes within the state.

Russian policy led inevitably to complete closure of the frontier to the nomads in the 1880s, and a subsequent redistribution of pastures within Iran. From this period dates the complex system of grazing rights that distinguishes Shahsevan social organisation today. Also over the period, marked as it was by escalating economic and political pressures on the nomads, descent as a source of political legitimacy gave ground to more material factors: wealth and manpower.

The Russian Annexation of Mughan

Eastern Transcaucasia has always offered a highly favourable environment for both pastoral and agricultural activities. High mountains, with abundant summer pasturages, command the vast and fertile Shirvan, Qarabagh and Mughan plains of the lower Aras and Kur rivers, which at once provide correspondingly extensive winter grazing and invite the construction of large-scale irrigation works. These plains were a favourite wintering place of conquerors, while not surprisingly the whole area was long the object of intense struggle between powerful nations. The Safavids gained control at the beginning of the sixteenth century, but had difficulty keeping it from the Russians and various Caucasian powers, and when the dynasty crumbled in the early eighteenth century the area was divided briefly between Ottomans and Russians. After a further eighty years of Iranian hegemony, during which two further conquerors had themselves crowned in Mughan (Nadir Afshar in 1736 and Aqa Muhammad Qajar in 1796), it was Russia that managed to annex most of the area for good.

The area is also a natural cross-roads, and trade and travel between Russia and Iran and between Anatolia and Central Asia passed through or close by. From Safavid times, travellers and merchants from Europe commonly journeyed overland through Russia, took ship on the Caspian and landed at Shirvan to halt awhile at the growing trade centre of Shamakhi before crossing the Kur to pass via Mughan and Ardabil into central Iran and beyond to India.

In the early eighteenth century, under the last Safavid monarchs, the tribal population of Mughan was heterogeneous: there were comparatively indige-

nous groups of Kurdish origins (Shaqaqi and Mughanlu) and more or less recently arrived immigrants from various of the Turkman Qizilbash tribes: groups of Afshar, Takalu, and particularly sections of the great composite Qizilbash confederacy of Shamlu (Ajirlu, Inanlu, Begdilu). Many of these groups were now known by the additional name of 'Shahsevan', but there was not yet any single unified tribe of this name; the traditional story, of the creation of a Shahsevan tribe a century earlier by Shah Abbas the Great, is a fiction for which Sir John Malcolm must bear the blame.²

These tribes underwent drastic upheavals in the years 1725-30, when their territory was occupied and divided between the Ottomans and Russians. The Shaqaqi, Afshar and Inanlu tribes remained in the area controlled by the Ottomans, while other Shahsevan and Mughanlu groups fled north and submitted to the Russians. When Tahmasp Quli Beg Afshar, later to become Nadir Shah, restored Iranian hegemony in Azarbayjan in 1730, he removed to Khurasan those tribes that had supported the Ottomans. The Shahsevan and Mughanlu remained subject to the Russians until the latter withdrew from the area in 1732. Soon after, Nadir Shah appears to have united the Shahsevan, the Mughanlu and other remaining tribes of Mughan and Ardabil, into a confederation with the name of Shahsevan, under the leadership of Badr Khan Sarikhanbeglu, one of his captains and probably of Afshar origins himself.

During the next fifty years or so, Badr Khan and his family consolidated their control of the tribes in this corner of Azarbayjan, though quarrels broke out among Badr Khan's descendants, who divided the tribes and the territory into two: the Ardabil division was the more powerful, having control of the town of Ardabil, where Shahsevan khans were governors until 1808, while many of their tribesmen began to settle in villages near the town; their opponents in the Mishkin division remained nomadic. Both branches, through their chiefs, became involved in the complex network of alliance, hostility and intrigue that characterised the khanates of Azarbayjan and Transcaucasia in the later eighteenth century. At this period, and during the two Russo-Iranian wars of the early nineteenth century, the Ardabil Shahsevan were among the firm supporters of the Qajars, while the Shahsevan chiefs of Mishkin, largely through traditional opposition to their cousins at Ardabil, ultimately sided with the Russians.

By the Treaty of Gulistan in 1813, the Russians acquired (among other territories) the greater and better part of the Mughan steppe and the neighbouring khanate of Talish, under whose jurisdiction much of the steppe remained. Iranian tribes of north-east Azarbaijan were permitted to cross the new Russian frontier to continue wintering in their traditional quarters, on two conditions: that they continue payment of pasture-dues to the Talish khan, and that nomadic Russian subjects from Talish be permitted to enter Iran during the summer months as they had done before. After the second Russian war, however, the situation altered. The Treaty of Turkmanchay (1828) confirmed the transfer of Mughan and Talish to the Russians, who set about consolidating their fertile territorial gains in Transcaucasia. Settlers were brought in, particularly groups of rich sectarians and various emigrant Polish and German communities. Many Russian nomadic groups were settled in Mughan along the banks of the Aras, Kur and Akusha; others remained semi-nomadic but were given settled bases, while, to reduce their dependance on mountain pastures in Iran, their pastoralism was converted from ovine to bovine, and they were encouraged to exploit the Mughan steppe pasturages more intensively.³

Most tribes indigenous to Iranian Azarbaijan had co-operated with the Russians during Count Paskevich's occupation of the province in 1827-28. Article 15 of the Turkmanchay Treaty granted them an amnesty and allowed them one year in which to migrate, if they chose, to Russian territory to settle there as Russian subjects. Numerous groups, from various parts of the province, did move north over the frontier, and several villages in districts bordering Russian Mughan were completely or partly settled by Shahsevan tribesmen at this time.⁴

After the Turkmanchay Treaty was signed, the Iranian government asked the Russian Administration of the Caucasus to permit the Shahsevan nomads to continue their migrations to Mughan as before, offering the annual sum of 2,000 silver roubles (700 toman or £350), formerly paid as pasture-dues to the Talish khans. In 1831 a preliminary contract concerning this was drawn up at Tiflis between Paskevich and an Iranian envoy, specifying conditions by which the migration should proceed and the pasture-dues be paid. One article laid down that the Shahsevan nomads should use only that part of the steppe which had formerly belonged to the Talish khanate, specifically excluding the part attached to Shirvan; the latter, comprising much of the territory along the

southern banks of the Aras and Kur rivers, was reserved for the use of the Russian nomads and village-based flocks. A copy of this contract was sent to Tehran for ratification, pending which the Shahsevan were allowed to pasture their flocks in Mughan free of charge. It seems, however, that the first instalment of the pasture-dues was not paid until 1847.⁵

Meanwhile Russian colonisation of the steppe proceeded apace. From the beginning, however, the new agricultural efforts suffered from raiding by the Shahsevan, who destroyed crops, stole animals and plundered villages. Some of the Iranian nomads had been used to crossing the Kur and Aras and wintering in the Qarabagh and Shirvan steppes, and many of them now continued to do so, but they fell foul of the local nomads for whom these pastures had been set aside by the Russian authorities, and both there and on the southern banks of the rivers there was continual bloodshed. In the course of time, the division of Mughan into the Shirvan and Talish sectors lapsed, and the whole territory south of the Kur and Aras was abandoned to the Shahsevan in winter.⁶

Such was the situation in Russian Mughan in the middle of the last century. Before relating measures taken by both Russian and Iranian authorities to deal with it, something must be said of affairs in Iranian Azarbayjan, and of the social organisation of the Shahsevan tribes at the time.

Azarbayjan and the Shahsevan in the Mid-nineteenth Century

After the Treaty of Turkmanchay, Azarbayjan continued to be, politically at least, the most important province of Iran. It was the chief recruiting ground for the Qajar armies, if not also the chief supplier of agricultural produce, and Tabriz, second city of the country and usually the seat of the Heir Apparent, was the main emporium of the rapidly expanding trade from Russia and the West. Russia was naturally the paramount foreign influence in the political and economic affairs of the province, though the British often managed to exert some pressure through their consular officials in Tabriz.

'The picture of the land revenue system and administration of the early Qajars is one of decay, maladministration, oppression and insecurity.'⁷ These proliferated in Azarbayjan throughout the nineteenth century, when the resources of the province

were steadily drained away by a succession of officials of all ranks who came simply to make their fortunes. Their salaries were commonly paid by revenue drafts, whether on Crown Land or privately owned land, and much of the Crown Land was sold to the officials and others such as wealthy merchants and thus became private land. The landowning classes thus increasingly included government officials, merchants and tribal chiefs, who squeezed the cultivating peasants for what they could contribute. The tribal chiefs, at least among the Shahsevan, also leased their pastures at steeply rising rentals. The burden of taxation and other dues was passed on, in the case of the nomads, by the chiefs and tax-collectors, who as a rule demanded cash payments from the ordinary tribesmen. Members of the chiefly families had no employment other than occasional military service, and raiding expeditions were their characteristic preoccupation. The basic husbandry practised by the ordinary nomad herdsman was much as in the present century, and much the same kind of production rate could be maintained, but higher costs and heavy impositions probably meant a much lower standard of consumption. Social relations generally were characterised by widening gulfs between the landowning (non-productive) chiefs and the hard-pressed pastoralists, between predatory officials and their victims, between nomads and villagers.

While the Russians colonised and settled their new Transcaucasian territories, they were not interested in the annexation of Iranian Azarbayjan. They put pressure on the Iranians to settle their frontier tribes, but in fact both sides had much to gain from keeping groups like the Shahsevan nomadic. Iran relied on the nomads' pastoral produce, and on their role as frontier guards, while the Russians not only gained considerably themselves from the Shahsevan contribution to the economy of the Mughan settlers, but were also able to put to good political use their tally of the settlers' complaints of Shahsevan raiding. The officials and diplomats concerned were well aware of these factors in the situation. The Russians pressed for settlement of the nomads, knowing the Iranians would not be keen, while British agents were advising against such a policy. So the officials took half-measures, and often succeeded only in lining their pockets and further antagonising the nomads.

Shahsevan territory in north-east Azarbayjan covered the districts of Mishkin and Ardabil and

others, all under the Governor resident at Ardabil. Travellers who passed through the region in the 1830s and 1840s commented on the fertility and comparative prosperity of the Mishkin district, which was well-cultivated and populous though it contained no town of any size. The district of Ardabil itself, on the other hand, was in a wretched condition, depopulated and depressed not only through plague and cholera, but also through the exactions of the officials who were based there.⁸

These differences were also reflected in a comparison of the two Shahsevan tribal confederations. After their chief Nazar Ali Khan was deposed from the governorship of Ardabil in 1808, the power of the Ardabil tribes declined, many of them settled and others appear to have joined the Mishkin tribes, who now, despite the disloyalty of their chiefs in the Russian wars, had become the more numerous and wealthy.

In the period 1828-84, the Shahsevan nomad population probably ranged between six and twelve thousand families. The leaders of the two confederations (el) were officially constituted as elbegi (paramount chief) in 1839 following Russian complaints about the tribes. Each of the forty-odd tribes (taifa) had its own chief (beg); elbegis and begs were appointed by and responsible to the Governor at Ardabil, usually a Qajar prince. Elbegis had almost unlimited powers over the tribesmen: they collected taxes and military levies, they held court and could sentence offenders to fines, corporal punishment, imprisonment, confiscation of property and even death; they profited substantially when deciding cases of theft, and no appeal against their judgments was possible. The chiefs of individual tribes had lesser duties and kept order within their own tribes, assisted by elected elders (aq-sagal) of camp communities (oba). The cash collected annually from the nomads was said to total two or three times the official amount which reached the Treasury. Governors, chiefs and tax-collectors all took their legitimate percentages, while the elbegis also extorted a whole range of customary and irregular dues, such as tribute in camels, sheep, felt, butter, and cash for household 'expenses' and for 'presents' for government officials. The pasture-due for Mughan continued to be collected by the elbegis long after the Russians had ceased receiving it.

Members of the elbegi dynasties and those half-dozen tribes which could claim common descent with them from Badr Khan's ancestor Yunsur Pasha, were

classed as 'nobles' (begzada), the rest were 'commoners' (rayat, hampa). To judge from the earliest records mentioning individual tribes, the nobles' dominance over the commoner tribes at this time depended partly on their descent claims and partly on the delegation of authority to them by the elbegi, though probably they also had some degree of control over the pastures. Each noble tribe consisted of two 'classes': the ruling lineage with their small suite of attendants (noukar) constituted the begzada, who did no work, paid no tax, held rights in land, and in many tribes amounted to over half the population; the rest of the tribe were hampa, a retinue of 'workers' and peasants, who had no control over pasture or farmland, but tended the flocks, paid the taxes, and cultivated the farmlands owned by the begzada. In addition, each commoner tribe was subordinated to one of the noble chiefs, and its own chief or members of his family joined the latter's suite, to be counted as begzada. There is little information on the nature of political and territorial organisation within these tribal groups, but it was probably echoed in that of the dominant tribes later in the century, described below.

Certain important differences of organisation distinguished the noble tribes from the commoners. Each noble lineage formed the nucleus of its own tribe, which it dominated not only by delegated authority and by control of pasture, but also through its superior descent - the name of each noble tribe was that of the chiefly lineage's ancestor. None of the workers or the commoner tribes, however strong, could take over the leadership of a noble tribe: they were bound by moral ties to the chiefly lineage but not to individual chiefs. There was no formal rule of chiefly succession other than patrilineal descent from a former chief, and commoners would follow whichever candidate offered greater economic and political advantage. The noble lineages could and did experience fission, and when this occurred the worker and commoner following divided accordingly, each new noble tribe continuing to be dominated by a noble lineage.

The chiefly lineages in the commoner tribes had no such moral claims to legitimacy. Very few commoner tribes bore an ancestral name or even had an ideology of common descent. All lineages of the tribe could identify with the tribal name equally, and were equally eligible to lead. The authority of the chiefly lineage thus depended largely on the support of the nobles and the elbegi, and it could

not afford to be weakened by fission, which might allow another lineage to take over the whole tribe.

This account of Shahsevan social organisation in the mid-nineteenth century is based mainly on reports by two Russian officials who had dealings with the tribes. I.A. Ogranovich, who was first appointed Frontier Commissar for the Shahsevan at Belasuvar in 1869, wrote various articles on them, while E. Krebel, Russian Consul-General in Tabriz from 1877, wrote a report which was used extensively in the studies of Gustav Radde, German naturalist, and Vl. Markov, Russian official, both of whom visited the Shahsevan themselves in the 1880s and collected further information.⁹ They give considerable detail on domestic and economic activities, making clear the extent to which the nomads were involved in market exchange in Russian territory.¹⁰

In its general features, Shahsevan pastoral life probably changed little before the mid-nineteenth century. However, the Russian observers, while praising the tribesmen for their courage and hospitality and the high 'moral standards' of their women, inveigh against their overriding preoccupation with raiding and lawlessness. They make no attempt to assess how far Shahsevan behaviour and institutions in the latter half of the century were affected directly or indirectly by the Russian presence in Mughan.

The old hierarchy of groups and authority was already breaking down, and a new structure emerging, partly as a result of internal contradictions and partly as a response to the series of drastic changes in the economic and political environment which began with the Russian advent in Mughan. In particular, there was a radical change in economic conditions - in the availability of pasturage and markets.

Though there is no information on the nature of pasture ownership before the Russian acquisition of Mughan, it is clear that this event, and its immediate consequences in restricting Shahsevan winter pastures, brought about violent changes in patterns of economic and political organisation. Briefly, the available pastures fell into the hands of the chiefs of individual tribes (noble or commoner) who leased them at rapidly increasing rentals to their followers, over whom they thus gained an unprecedented degree of power. As the pastures become more and more restricted, so the division widened between owners and tenants. The elbegis lost the monopoly of authority. The Ardabil branch of the dynasty was

already assimilated to the administration and urban life, and had lost touch with the tribes, while the Mishkin elbegis either could not or would not control the most recalcitrant brigands and were unacceptable to the Russians. The noble tribes meanwhile were weakened through rivalries within the chiefly lineages, and though they continued to control their own workers, many of them were now diminished in numbers and had lost their following of commoner tribes. One noble tribe in each division, however, continued to dominate the rest: Polatlu in Ardabil, Qojabeglu in Mishkin. The half dozen or so larger and wealthier commoner tribes now declared their independence of the nobles and collected their own followings of weaker tribes. The weaker commoner (and noble) chiefs, if only to secure their control of their own workers, sought the support of a dominant tribe. By the time of the frontier closure in 1884, the original stratification of the tribes into nobles and commoners had broken down, and a new one was emerging, based no longer on descent claims but rather on size, material resources and territorial and transactional relations.

Troubles Begin

To try to keep the Shahsevan nomads away from the settled colonists and the Russian nomads in Mughan, in 1849 the Russian authorities took steps to give precise definition to the tract which the Iranian nomads were to be allowed to use. A distance of up to 7 km. was left between the nomadic tract and the banks of the Aras, Kur, Akusha and Balharu, and this riverside strip was reserved for the use of the settlers there and their cattle. In addition the Shahsevan were shown places on the rivers at which their flocks might drink, and tracks along which they should lead them there.¹¹ These last provisions were absolutely necessary because, although Mughan had been widely irrigated centuries before, now there was no surface water at all within the central part of the steppe, other than a number of salt lakes. The provisions were not, however, enough to satisfy the Shahsevan, who had been accustomed to camping by the rivers and to using pastures within easy reach of the banks, and did not regard the waterless central part of the steppe as usable grazing. They crossed the newly marked boundaries as before, with the result that in late 1849 and again the following year Russian authorities attempted to

prevent them from wintering in Mughan at all, and the nomads lost large numbers of their animals.¹²

In any case, the 1849 measures had little permanent effect. According to Ogranovich, the Shahsevan chiefs quickly divided the tract into pastures (qishlaq), marking off the boundaries, and then leased these pastures to their followers and others. The distribution of pastures by written permits took place before the annual migration to Mughan, and the chiefs made sure that no unauthorised persons used them. Poorer nomads, unable to afford the chiefs' fees, came and rented pastures from Russian subjects, nomad and settled; some joined the Russian nomads, contracting marriages or serving as shepherds or servants, in return for access to pasture. The Russians complained that the Shahsevan would lease all their pastures, then cross the boundary and seize the lands of Russian subjects on the river banks, which they would then lease out also, both to Russian subjects and to Iranian nomads brought in from as far as Urmiyeh, Khoy and Hamadan. In the latter half of the century, over two million head of animals (camels, horses, sheep and goats) were brought to Mughan annually. As the pastures became more crowded, so the rents rose, from between five and ten toman initially to about 40 toman by 1860.¹³

Meanwhile forceful measures were also being taken by the Iranian authorities. For a year or so after Muhammad Shah's death in September 1848, lawlessness reigned in north-east Azarbaijan as elsewhere in the province. His young successor Nasir al-Din Shah sent Abbas Quli Javanshir to govern the districts of Ardabil, Mishkin and Qaradagh, with particular instructions to free the frontiers of his province from robbers and highwaymen. He left the capital in summer 1849, and on his way met Hamzeh Mirza Hishmat al-Douleh, who was going to Tabriz to take up his appointment as Governor-General of Azarbaijan. In Zanjan they were warned that the Hajjikhajalu and Damirchilu tribes, both of the Mishkin division of the Shahsevan, had been fighting and that several people had been killed, so, as they approached north-east Azarbaijan, they sent to various Shahsevan and Qaradaghi chiefs, bidding them collect forces and bring the Hajjikhajalu in submission; which they apparently did successfully. The Governors proceeded together to Tabriz, and then towards the end of the year Abbas Quli Khan left for Qaradagh and Mishkin, where he took several Shahsevan chiefs prisoner. It was reported that his severe but necessary punishments had 'produced a

salutary effect' in those districts, which were now in a 'tolerably quiet state'.¹⁴ In fact, the Shahsevan, who had just been prevented from crossing the Russian frontier into Mughan, and were now experiencing an unusually severe winter, were no doubt shocked into submission by this unprecedented three-fold attack.

In spring 1851, after the second winter in which the Russians tried to stop the Shahsevan from wintering in Mughan, Nasir al-Din Shah's great Minister, Mirza Taqi Khan the Amir Kabir, was reported to be contemplating removal of the Shahsevan southwards out of Azarbayjan. Hamzeh Mirza was sent to Ardabil and Mishkin in the summer, to adopt 'measures for preventing the Shahsevan tribes from wintering on the Russian side of Mughan'. All he in fact achieved, it seems, was to trick a number of important Shahsevan chiefs into visiting him, whereupon he threw them into chains and sent them to jail in Tabriz. In 1852, however, a Commissar was appointed over the Shahsevan, to deal with the Russians and introduce order on the frontier - though the Russians complained that he had neither the power nor the authority necessary for satisfying their claims against the tribesmen.¹⁵

During this time Iran continued to pay the pasture-due of 2,000 roubles. Soon the Russians became involved in a war with Turkey, and through their envoy in Tehran endeavoured to win Iranian support. In 1853 the Amir Kabir's successor as Prime Minister, Mirza Aqa Khan Nuri, who was anxious to rid Iran of foreign political influences, took advantage of the Russian predicament to refuse payment of the Mughan dues, claiming on behalf of the Shahsevan that the grass had been burnt by Russian subjects before the nomads' arrival, while the Russians claimed that the Shahsevan had themselves fired the pastures. Later Mirza Aqa Khan swung back to a pro-Russian position, and in 1856 the Iranian Government paid the outstanding pasture-dues - but after that year the payments ceased for good.¹⁶

Meanwhile Mirza Aqa Khan was intriguing against the British, who in December 1855 withdrew their Mission from Tehran. During the following year Russian complaints of Shahsevan depredations in Mughan and Talish increased rapidly, but Russo-Iranian diplomatic relations were so cordial that nothing was done about investigating them.¹⁷

In 1856-57 Iran sent a military expedition to capture Herat, in defiance of treaty undertakings to the British in India, whereupon the British

invaded Iranian territory in the Gulf area. After the Treaty of Paris, ratified in spring 1857, the British envoy returned to Iran; Nasir al-Din Shah dismissed Mirza Aqa Khan and took over direct control of the Government and foreign affairs. Relations with the British were now favoured, principally since they appeared more able to supply the financial aid of which Iran was increasingly in need, while relations with Russia entered a decidedly cooler phase.

An Attempt at Settlement

On the Azarbayjan frontier the Russians now began to demand satisfaction of the claims which they had to date merely stored up. Between 1857 and 1860 both sides sent a series of delegates to negotiate with each other, to investigate and settle the claims - which included Iranian counter-claims of inroads by plunderers from the Russian side of the frontier. The Russians complained, however, that their counterparts were not properly equipped for their duties, while the Iranians for their part reported that the Russian delegates were late in arriving at the rendezvous, and when they did arrive, acted in a peremptory and overbearing manner, refused to listen to reason or compromise, and in fact were not interested so much in satisfying claims as in embarrassing the Iranian Government.¹⁸

As relations between Iran and Britain further improved at the end of the 1850s, the Russians adopted a harder line, particularly concerning Shahsevan affairs. In early 1860 the Governor of Azarbayjan, Sardar Aziz Khan, Sardar-i Kull, himself went to Ardabil to be in closer contact with his Commissar for the Shahsevan, and to hasten settlement of Russian claims. No Russian officer had yet appeared by the time the tribes left Mughan in May, but a mixed Commission met in the summer and settled some important claims. The Sardar-i Kull remained at Ardabil until July, being occupied in providing for the settlement of large numbers of Shahsevan nomads, in that district and in Mishkin, to keep them from causing trouble on the frontier. He planned to prevent them from wintering in either Russian or Iranian Mughan, arrested several Shahsevan chiefs on charges of theft and murder, and disposed of them with utmost cruelty. In addition he accumulated a great deal of the nomads' wealth in extortions and confiscations. The Shahsevan cannot have retained much, for the winter of 1859 had been one of the

severest known, 'when there was snow in Mughan for over a month and the river Kur was frozen, and all their property was lost'.¹⁹ Meanwhile, Sardar Aziz Khan and other officials in Azarbayjan were reported to be indulging in such speculations that food prices had risen in mid-1860 to five or more times their 1857 levels, and much of the population was starving. The British Consul-General Keith Abbott remonstrated with the Sardar, with the result that by the end of the year the former close British-Iranian relations in Tabriz were completely reversed, and Abbott was virtually ostracised.²⁰

The events of 1860, marking a significant point in Shahsevan history, are not mentioned in Russian accounts of frontier incidents; presumably because the Sardar's measures to settle the Shahsevan were undertaken at Russian instigation. However, Abbott's reports to Tehran, this year and in 1861, are highly illuminating and deserve to be quoted at some length.

On 13 June 1860, Abbott commented that the Sardar's settlement policy,

supposing it to be successfully carried out, is questionable, for although the Tribe may possibly be induced through fear to relinquish their nomadic habits and in time to turn their attention to agriculture, so great and sudden a change in their circumstances would occasion much distress among them - their usefulness as a pastoral tribe would cease and their old haunts in Persian Moghan becoming deserted would probably fall into the hands of that division of the community which belongs to Russia - an event which would hardly fail to become a source of disquiet to the Persian Government.

Abbott did not believe any such change would last long; the nomads would return as soon as possible to their former way of life.²¹

When the Sardar returned to Tabriz in July, he boasted of having settled 15,000 families of nomads. Abbott was thoroughly sceptical both of the numbers and of the permanence of the supposed 'establishment in villages'. 'Indeed', he wrote,

[the nomads] appear to have demanded certain conditions of the Persian Government in return for their acquiescence in the scheme and it is not yet known whether these will be agreed to at Tehran. The Shah had however consented to

a remission of one year's taxation amounting to Ten or Twelve Thousand Tomans as some compensation for the loss and inconvenience to which they would undoubtedly be put by the contemplated change in their condition. It is proposed by the Sardar to restrict the whole of the Tribe from resorting to winter quarters in Mughan the greater part of which is held by Russia - and here I believe consists the main difficulty to the execution of the scheme of settling this people in villages. The Tribe is rich in flocks, camels and cattle, to abandon which would be ruinous to them, and to maintain them, they require to resort to the rich pasture lands of Mughan in winter.

According to Abbott's information, the Shahsevan nomads residing south of the Aras amounted to no more than 12,000 families, of which some 5,000 already had village bases in the Ardabil and Mishkin districts, while the rest, mainly of the Mishkin division, were nomadic tent-dwellers. It was to the latter 7,000 families that the settlement plan referred.²²

In November, following his fall from the Sardar's favour, Abbot elaborated on a number of the points already mentioned, particularly on the value to the economy of the province of the nomads' contribution, which would be lost if they were sedentarised. The Sardar's severity at Ardabil, and his measures to settle the Shahsevan, he wrote,

have rendered this Tribe more discontented and greater enemies of the Government than ever, so that for some time to come it will probably prove a scourge rather than an advantage to the province ... there is no doubt the Tribe has been the cause of pretty constant annoyance to the Russian frontier Authorities and their petty depredations have been the subject of unceasing complaint - but the remedy for all this will scarcely be found, I think, in the measures taken to make them a stationary people, at least for some years to come, and for the present matters are rendered worse than before by the Tribe pillaging far and near in revenge for the treatment they have experienced. A regiment and two guns have been posted in the vicinity of Mooghan to cut off their access to those plains and some trifling resistance has been offered by the Tribe which no doubt finds

itself in a great measure ruined by the change it is being compelled to make in it's habits and mode of life.

I think it impolitic in the Persian Government to seek to render it's great nomad Tribes a stationary people. Persia is differently circumstanced to most other countries, and the nature of it's climate, it's natural features and the general habits of the people require that it should possess a population which can adapt itself to variations of mountain and plain and draw from that condition of life resources which are in a great measure denied the fixed inhabitants. It is on these great pastoral communities that the population of the cities and plains nearly depend for their supplies of animal food - for the flocks - for the butter, cheese, and other preparations from Milk which are so largely consumed in Persia and for many coarse but useful articles of woolen and other manufacture for which the produce of the fields and cities is exchanged. The Tribes are a further advantage to the country in consequence of their wealth in camels which afford a cheap means of conveyance for merchandise to the most distant parts; but these advantages are in great measure lost to the country when the tribes are compelled to renounce their nomadic condition to become cultivators of the soil - and the State in authorizing these changes lessens it's resources in a military point of view - for whereas the Young men of the nomad Tribe are to a great extent available for military service, the duties and labour of the community being chiefly performed by the females, the labour of cultivating the soil must fall principally on the males - and no doubt also the hardiest races in Persia and the most valuable for military duties are the men of the wandering Tribes.²³

These observations on the nature of nomadic pastoralism in Iran are perhaps surprisingly modern in tone, and would have held good until quite recently as an assessment of the value of the nomad tribes and of the valid arguments against a policy of enforced settlement such as was carried out by Riza Shah in the 1930s.

Early in March 1861 Sardar Aziz Khan was in Tehran, where he was interviewed concerning the

Nomads and Commissars in Mughan

state of Azarbayjan by the British envoy Alison, who sent a memorandum of the interview to Abbott in Tabriz for comment. The Sardar claimed that, thanks to his attention, the frontier was at present tranquil;

A fruitful source of dispute between Persia and Russia had arisen from the depredations of the nomadic tribes who, during the winter months, frequented the plain of Mughan. Persian tribes committed depredations on Russian territory, and Russian Tribes on Persian. The only remedy was to oblige them to renounce their nomadic habits. This was no easy matter, considering that one of the Persian Tribes - the Shahseven - counted upwards of 12,000 families, and would strenuously resist any attempt to deprive them of a privilege which they and their ancestors had enjoyed for centuries. To have transferred them to another province would have been to deprive an important frontier of a strong barrier. The Sardar, therefore, proceeded in person to Ardebil, and finding its neighbourhood a suitable locality, summoned the tribe and by a due mixture of fair proposals and threats induced about 9,000 families to build houses and settle. The remainder, he expects, will soon follow their example. By this means the chance of a War with Russia has, he hopes, been averted; the annual payment to that Power of 5,000 Tomans to permit the tribe to pasture their flocks on the other side of the Arras, will be saved, and should the necessity ever unfortunately arise, the tribe will henceforth for the protection of their own homes, be compelled the more efficiently to defend the frontier. The settlers have already contributed 500 horse to the Persian Army, and the Sardar hopes the number will next year be increased to 1,000. The Russian Authorities, he added, have expressed their intention to take similar measures with regard to their own frontier tribes, in which case a source of continual ill-feeling and irritation between the two countries will be radically removed.²⁴

Abbott commented at length, reiterating most of his former points. He agreed that the Mughan frontier was now tranquil, though the province in general was in an appalling state of insecurity. The Shahseven had at first acquiesced 'under fear and with a

bad grace' in their sedentarisation, but the scheme was as yet far from a success. A large part of the tribe had broken through the inadequate force stationed in Mughan, which appeared to have confined its activities to 'plundering of all its wealth one respectable division of the tribe on it proving refractory'. Abbott's objections to the policy still held:

there is still every cause to apprehend the downfall and ruin of that great and flourishing pastoral community, for should they be forced to abandon their nomad habits it will be at a sacrifice of much which at present constitutes a source to them of wealth and prosperity - and should they continue refractory the Government may make this a pretext for plundering them as it is reputed has already happened to one division. Any such change in the condition of the Tribe as was contemplated by the Serdar will be attended likewise with injurious effects to the country generally - the prices of meat and of other articles of animal food which this people usually furnish, produce of their flocks and herds, will be greatly increased - indeed there is already every appearance of this having already happened through the unsettled state of the Tribes, in the present high prices of Animal Food in Azerbaijan.

Abbott was further sceptical about the Sardar's estimation of the seriousness of Shahsevan raids on the frontier: there was no real danger of war there. The Russian Shahsevan tribes were equally responsible for raiding activities, but their Iranian cousins 'being the most numerous were better able to protect their own property and they retaliated severely on those who molested them'. The figure of 5,000 toman for the pasture-dues was exaggerated: only 750 tomans used to be paid. Abbott believed that the nomads did not cross the Aras but kept themselves to the Mughan plain south of the river. On the increase of the long-established levy of 500 horsemen, Abbott commented, 'The Tribes generally are ready enough to furnish horsemen to the State when their services are remunerated,' and the Shahsevan could afford to contribute 1,000 men - but not if they were sedentarised. He had no information on Russian intentions to settle their own tribes - though Russian sources indicate that this settlement was in fact proceeding.

In conclusion, Abbott noted that the removal of the Shahsevan from the frontier would undoubtedly

improve the situation there, but the trouble would only move to the new locality, 'and the Persian districts would be exposed more than before to the depredations of a people who whether stationary or erratic is not likely to abandon all at once it's ingrained and inherent propensity for appropriating the property of it's neighbours.' Abbott's association of pastoral nomadism with kleptomania is perhaps the only jarring note in an otherwise perceptive analysis of the Shahsevan situation at the time. He refrains from explicitly suggesting alternative and more effective measures for dealing with the problem, implying only that given better government in Azarbayjan and less extortion on the part of officials, the Shahsevan might be persuaded to restrict their lawless activities.²⁵

In the following years the Azarbayjan government did not improve and, as Abbott predicted, Shahsevan disorder increased, until in 1867 even the appointment as Governor of Ardabil of Muhammad Rahim Mirza Zia al-Douleh, a man with a reputation for justice and integrity, could do little to alleviate the situation.

The Russians Increase the Pressure

The reports of the British Consul-General at Tabriz are the main source for the preceding events, yet British agents were apparently not aware of the Shahsevan again for another twenty years. Meanwhile the Russian accounts, having remained silent on the settlement attempt of 1860-1, describe the next phase of the story in detail. Presumably under the influence of the new 'forward policy' prescribed by the Gorchakov memorandum of 1864 on Central Asia (see chapter 2 above), the Russians determined to set in train a solution of affairs on their Mughan frontier too. In 1869 for the first time they appointed a permanent Frontier Commissar: Colonel Ogranovich, the source of much information on the Shahsevan tribes in the nineteenth century. Iran had had Commissars since 1859, but they had so far dealt with temporary officials from the Baku Government, and with local chiefs and their assistants. Now both Commissars were supposed to be present at Belasovar from October to April, throughout the Shahsevan residence in Mughan. Ogranovich complained that his counterparts did not arrive until February, leaving only one month in which disputes could be settled; there was nothing to check Shahsevan law-

lessness earlier in the season, when complaints could have been dealt with on the spot and satisfaction rendered. Actually, if the Iranian Commissars were late, it would have been understandable in view of their previous experience of the unpunctuality of Russian officials.

The rules according to which crimes and disputes were dealt with were, first of all, those of local customary law (adat): presentation of the case by both sides with witnesses; if this did not solve the case, mediators were called; if they could not agree, the matter was referred to a court of mullahs, who decided it according to the sharia, by means of oaths and 'public expediency' (maslahat). These procedures were complicated for Ogranovich by certain 'unofficial' Iranian and Shahsevan practices: for example, plaintiffs tended to demand twice or three times what they expected by way of compensation, so as to be able to afford the fees of 'informants' or 'detectives' (mushtulukchi). There was also a form of self-help, whereby the victim of theft could seize property from the suspected thief - or anyone else - as a guarantee (girou) not to be returned until his own property had been restored. If the thief happened to be a chief or one of his henchmen (noukar), the 'detectives' were easily bribed to drop their investigations, and if the victim himself appeared he might well be beaten until he swore he had secured reparation. Finally, Iranians recognised no distinction between criminal and civil law: thieves were not punished but had only to restore the stolen property if caught; the same was true of homicide, for which Russian law demanded the death penalty, while Iranian law allowed reconciliation and compensation. Ogranovich was clearly much frustrated by a lack of precision in his instructions as to how to deal with this situation. Many disputes were solved, however, law and order improved, and new settlements were formed in Mughan, even on the Iranian side.²⁶

The summer of 1870 was one of unprecedented drought, followed as in the rest of Iran by a terrible famine, and by cholera and two harsh winters. According to Ogranovich the Shahsevan nomad population was literally halved, and two-thirds of their flocks died. Destitute families, where they survived the famine and cholera, scattered into the settlements of eastern Transcaucasia to find food.²⁷

Reports of frontier incidents in the 1870s mostly concern the Qojabeglu of Mishkin, now emerging as the most powerful and lawless of the Shahsevan nomad

tribes. The winter of 1879-80 was again one of terrible famine in Azarbayjan, and Ardabil was among the worst hit districts, though reports from the Shahsevan indicate that they were surviving these disasters well, largely through the success of their raiding activities. In late summer 1883, the Heir Apparent visited Ardabil to collect huge sums of money as 'presents' from the Shahsevan chiefs, and thoroughly alienated the tribes, but the troops and artillery which he brought with him persuaded them of the inadvisability of revolt, and the Prince succeeded in taking three of the most notorious chiefs hostage. He was said to be as surprised as his subordinates at the manner in which his expedition had escaped serious opposition and returned safely to Tabriz.²⁸

This autumn, 1883, the Russians put into effect measures which led to a 'final solution' of their Shahsevan problem, which they had been planning for some years. Internal troubles and failures of policy at St Petersburg, in addition to recent British successes in Afghanistan, had moved the Tsar to more aggressive policy on his eastern frontiers, particularly in Central Asia.²⁹ In 1876 the Caucasian Government entrusted E. Krebel with the Shahsevan question, and he was instructed, on becoming Russian Consul-General in Tabriz the following year, to go to Mughan, report on the state of affairs, and advise on Russian policy. Krebel visited Mughan in autumn 1878; on his return he reported that in the Shahsevan affair there were two policies open to the Russian authorities: either the nomads must be brought under their complete control while they were in Mughan, and all interference by Iranian officials or the Shahsevan elbegis must cease; or the Shahsevan must be prevented from coming to Mughan at all. At this stage the Caucasian Government would not favour the latter solution, as it would lead to loss of the nomads' herds and to consequent further disorder and intensified raiding, and moreover the Mughan settlers would lose the nomads' pastoral produce on which they depended; so the former policy was adopted.³⁰

The Caucasian authorities drew up a list of regulations to cover the administration of the Shahsevan, which was approved by the Tsar at the end of 1882. The main provisions were that the Shahsevan should be subject to the Belasuvor Commissar during their stay in Russian territory; the Commissar would deal with the chiefs of individual tribes and not with the elbegis, who must not interfere in the nomads' affairs while in Russia; the Commissar might

grant or refuse admission to specific tribes at his own discretion; those admitted were to be shown their allotted grazing grounds and handed documents defining their boundaries; the Commissar, responsible to Baku and assisted by the tribal chiefs and by two police officers and a special detachment of 100 Cossacks (apart from the regular frontier garrisons), would hear and judge minor complaints and disputes, and would investigate more serious cases which became subject to martial law; persistent Shahsevan offenders must be deported to Iran. Trouble was anticipated, since no more than 6,000 families of the Shahsevan were expected to cross the frontier, while the same number customarily remained in Iran under the authority of the elbegis and Iranian officials, just the other side of a thin cordon of Cossacks.

During 1883 the Iranian Government was informed of these measures. Their request that they be permitted to send an official to co-operate with the Russian Commissar was refused, as it would have been contrary to the main purpose of the regulations. A further request for an Iranian vice-consul in Mughan was also turned down. as there was already a vice-consul in Baku who was free to visit Mughan as an observer. Having given the Iranian authorities time to warn the nomads of their new position, and also hoping that 'this new measure might persuade the Persian Government to try to end the migration of the Persian Shahsevan onto our territory, to which end it might set aside winter quarters for the Shahsevan within Persia', the Caucasian Command put their new policy into effect in autumn 1883.

As the nomads crossed the frontier, the Commissar officially informed them of the new system. The chiefs claimed they had not been warned, that the Governor of Ardabil had in fact told them to continue to obey their elbegis in everything. According to Markov, the Commissar met with no co-operation from the chiefs, and raiding and other crimes rose to their previous levels. The Commissar received claims from Russian subjects against the Shahsevan, for the 1883-4 winter season, amounting to some 35,500 roubles. The new system had failed; the Caucasian Administration decided the time had come for a 'final solution': the Shahsevan must be banned from Mughan, whatever the consequences.³¹

The Closure of the Frontier

The Russians had always regarded this ban as inevitable if not desirable, but hoped they would be able, by diplomatic means, to get the Iranians to initiate it. Russian nomads had now been banned from Iran, so the Iranians could no longer insist on the Shahsevan right of reciprocity.

In March 1884 the Heir Apparent was ordered, in response to the new system in Mughan,

to proceed to the spot and make arrangements for the localization of such portion of these tribes as can settle down to a sedentary life. With regard to those whose circumstances render it impossible for them to do so, some place within the Persian borders is to be fixed for their annual migration.³²

Presumably less than eager to face the Shahsevan again after his narrow escape of the previous year, The Prince asked his father for 100,000 tomans as expenses for the journey to Mughan; the Shah refused, so the Heir Apparent did not go. Instead, Muhammad Sadiq Khan Qajar, Amin Nizam, was appointed to this mission, and left Tabriz in May for Mishkin and Mughan to carry it out.³³ In the autumn, when the Russian envoy Melnikov raised the matter with the Iranian Government, he was assured that the Governor of Ardabil (Amin Nizam) had been commissioned to examine the question of settling the Shahsevan within Iran.

Finally in early November the Iranian Foreign Minister sent Melnikov the Note for which he had been waiting, stating that the Government could not accept the regulations which the Tsar had approved in 1882;

Despite the fact that the prohibition of the nomad tribes from migration to their customary wintering places presents great difficulties and occasions these nomads a considerable loss, nevertheless the Iranian Government has forbidden them to return to that part of Mughan which is Russian territory and to remain in winter quarters there. It has been decreed that on no account are the Shahsevan to migrate to Mughan, nor to remain there in winter quarters. The necessary instructions have already been sent to the Azarbayjan authorities and to the Governor of Ardabil and Mishkin, concerning the

measures to be taken to prevent the Shahsevan from returning to Mughan, and the implementation of the present order. The Azarbayjan authorities have already, specially and seriously, taken the necessary steps to carry out the Imperial Decree, but as it may happen that several of the Shahsevan secretly escape to Mughan, which would clearly be against the orders of their Government, and as the Russian Government is obliged by Treaty to return such fugitives, Your Excellency will not neglect to instruct the Russian frontier authorities in good time not to allow those tribes to remain in Russian territory. On their side the Iranian authorities will show the utmost diligence in preventing the Qojabeglu, Jorughlu and other Shahsevan tribes from crossing to Mughan, and in carrying out the stated decrees.³⁴

Meanwhile the Shahsevan prepared to cross the frontier as usual, in spite of Iranian attempts to stop them. It seemed likely that if they crossed, the Russians would not let them return the following spring, and so the Heir Apparent, with instructions to stop the migration at all costs, left Tabriz for Mughan in early November, since he had no alternative but to present himself personally so as to prevent the crossing of the Polatlu tribe, the nearest to the frontier, whose moves would be followed by all the others. He would not hesitate to use force if necessary, and was considering the sedentarisation of the nomads, in spite of the failure of such a policy 24 years before.³⁵

When he reached the Mughan frontier, he was met by the Amin Nizam and Colonel Ogranovich. The latter, according to Markov, informed the Heir Apparent 'of the real state of affairs and of the oppressions which the Shahsevan suffered from their self-interested rulers'. The Prince told the Amin Nizam that he hoped such excesses would cease. He stayed on the frontier until early March 1885, and while there was reported to have settled almost all the Shahsevan tribes on the lands put aside for them. The Shahsevan remained peaceful throughout the winter and made no attempt to cross the frontier.³⁶

The British Consul-General in Tabriz, William Abbott, did not mention the Shahsevan during 1885, the year when he wrote: 'Azerbaijan - bound hand and foot by Russia, her trade crippled, her army in rags, without a single carriageable road, corruption permeating every pore';³⁷ and the year when Hasan Ali

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Khan Garusi, the Amir Nizam, became the Heir Apparent's Minister (pishkar), took over the governorship of the province with a firm hand, and began to clear up the mess.

In the autumn, however, on their return to winter quarters, the Shahsevan were desperate. On 25 November (Russian calendar) over 700 families broke through the insufficient Iranian and Russian frontier guards, and were quickly followed by thousands more, some of whom declared it their wish to escape harassment by the Iranian authorities and to take Russian citizenship or death rather than return. The Russian authorities could not allow this, not least since the Shahsevan were hardly desirable as immigrants, but also since Iranian permission would properly be required. They took hasty measures, sending 500 Cossacks as reinforcements to Mughan, and had their envoy in Tehran request the Iranian Government to prevent the incursions and to remove the Shahsevan from the frontier. Meanwhile the Governor of Baku, accompanied by the Commissar, went round the Shahsevan pastures in early December, trying to persuade the nomads to return; when they refused, they were granted two days' grace before they were driven out by force. On 10 December the 500 Cossacks arrived and set off in the direction of areas where nomads were said to be encamped. The first day they came across scattered camps, who packed up their tents and possessions on the arrival of the troops and headed back towards the frontier, promising they would not stop until they had crossed back into Iran; and they sent word to the elders of two other tribes, the Nouruzalibeglu and the Jahankhanumlu, to move on by the following day. Then reports arrived that a mass of nomads was encamped in the centre of the steppe, known as Aji, so an official was sent to find out more, and to tell the camps to return to Iran. On the second day the Jahankhanumlu camps were found to be on the move as instructed, and the troops quickly cleared their pastures and proceeded towards Belasuvar, which they reached two days later without coming across any further nomads. Meanwhile their agent had returned with the information that up to 1,500 nomad families were indeed encamped at Aji; he was accompanied by several chiefs, who asked for a few more days' grace, since their animals were exhausted from the snow and from lack of fodder. They were allowed four more days, until the 16th, in which to leave Mughan.

On the 15th the Mughanlu, a large but peaceful tribe, numbering perhaps 750 families, broke through

the cordon into Russian Mughan. Shots were exchanged, both sides suffering casualties, but the rest of the nomads escaped into the centre of the steppe, leaving many of their animals and possessions in the hands of the Cossacks. The Russian Commander took 200 men in pursuit, caught the Mughanlu after 35 kilometres, and surrounded them. Even though exhausted, the nomads turned back and crossed the frontier again by evening, having lost more of their animals, including all their new-born lambs. They claimed they had come over because of oppressions suffered at the hands of the more warlike Polatlu and Qojabeglu tribes, and because they had heard that they would be allowed to stay until spring. Several wretched groups of women and children and 6,000 of their sheep were captured; the former were allowed to return to their camps, but the animals were taken eventually to Belasuvar.

On the 18th it was learnt that the Aji camps had not yet moved, and now wanted a further week's grace. The Commander sent a detachment to clear them out at once. By the evening of the 21st all the camps were rounded up and led eventually across the frontier. Large numbers of nomads were known to have hidden among camps and villages in the Russian border districts, so energetic measures were at once put in train to find them and return them with all their property to the Iranian authorities. Markov claims that within five days all Iranian subjects had been found and sent back, and that by 27 December Russian Mughan was clear of the Shahsevan nomads.³⁸

The Aftermath of the Closure

There remained the question of the confiscated property, which had now been sold. According to Markov, the Governor of Baku and the Frontier Commissar brought the matter to the attention of the Caucasian Government, who asked the Russian Ministry of Finance for money compensation to pay the nomads, but this was refused on the grounds that the property was contraband and had been legally sold, and that the Shahsevan would learn a salutary lesson from their loss. The Amir Nizam wrote to the Shah in 1886:

Most of the Shahsevan tribes which had gone to Mughan have now returned, through either Russian measures or the diligence of our own officials ... As I have already reported, however, the

Russian officials have behaved most immoderately towards all those tribes which crossed over, and have not only confiscated their goods and baggage but have also seized over 20,000 of their sheep and caused them great loss. Although I have ... telegraphed to the Mir Panj [the Governor of Ardabil] strictly enjoining him to request Russian border officials to restore the property and flocks of the Shahsevan, and have also written a full account and sent it to [our consul] at Tiflis, there has been no sign from the Caucasian Government that the Shahsevan property and flocks are to be restored... a large section of the Shahsevan has been ruined.³⁹

The Iranian Government pressed their request for compensation, saying the nomads might be forced to take up brigandage if they were left without their pastoral resources. Finally the Tsar was informed of the matter, and in May 1886 agreed to allow compensatory payment to the Shahsevan; although there is no record of this having been made, Markov writes that with it 'there ended the direct relations of Russia with the Persian nomads. From 1885 to the present [1889] the Shahsevan have continued to conduct themselves peaceably and have made no more attempts to cross our frontier.'⁴⁰ These complacent remarks were premature, to say the least, though the Shahsevan did remain within Iran that winter (1885-6), which was one of heavy snowfalls.

On Russian recommendation, Mustafa Quli Khan, the Mir Panj, Governor of Ardabil, had been sent to the frontier at the beginning of 1886 to take all possible measures in co-operation with the Russian authorities to restore order and to remove the most lawless groups far from the frontier. In the same letter quoted earlier, the Amir Nizam complained that the Mir Panj merely plundered two of the worst tribes, the Polatlu and the Qojabeglu.⁴¹ In autumn the Amir Nizam, seen by all sides as a Russophile, and now 'alive to the importance of Persia scrupulously fulfilling her part of the agreement with Russia concerning the Shahsevans', decided to send the Mir Panj to Mughan again, with a large force, to prevent any further border infringements.⁴²

The Mir Panj died during the winter, and was replaced as Governor of Ardabil by another Russian nominee, Asadullah Khan Vakil al-Mulk, who was persuaded to resign his post as Iranian Minister at St Petersburg. He found further drastic measures

against the Shahsevan to be necessary, and began by arresting and blowing from the cannon's mouth two chiefs, and imprisoning ten or twelve other Shahsevan notables at Ardabil, all of whom were said to have raided extensively in both Russia and Iran. Abbott reported gloomily in July 1887:

If what I hear be correct, the Russian frontier officials are unable to prevent or rather now wink at the Shahsevens proceeding periodically to the Moghan - within the Russian border - to pasture their flocks, because the villagers in the Moghan have represented to the Russian commissary that they depend for their living upon the annual visits of these nomads. It is quite impossible on frontiers situated and circumstanced as are those of Ardebil and the Moghan to put a permanent stop to brigandage and other excesses - Russia and Persia both suffer from these causes; but the result must eventually be that the weaker of the two coterminous states will go to the wall, when Russia will annex the Shahsevend districts including Ardebil and convert these tribes into valuable irregular cavalry, utilizing them as she has the Turkoman tribes.

Order was for the moment maintained to the satisfaction of the Russian authorities, who attributed the prevention of conflicts to the Vakil al-Mulk's energy and tact; but the Shahsevan question was seething, 'though dormant not dead, and at Russia's signal may crop up at any moment.'⁴³

If Abbott was right in his suspicions that Shahsevan nomads were still being allowed to enter Russian Mughan, it can only have occurred on a small scale at this time. The Russians for their part soon began to 'open up' the steppe for cultivation. Markov, writing in 1889, summarises his justifications for the Tsarist Government's action in finally excluding the Iranian nomads from Mughan, and discusses the immense development potential of the steppe, concluding:

the fact that the Shahsevan were forbidden to pasture in Mughan augurs well for this extensive part of the Baku Province; with the improvement of communications up to the outskirts of Mughan itself, it will be cultivated all over and covered by tilled fields and cotton plantations ... Thus, at the present

time, when the Persian nomads have been removed once and for all from our territory, Russia has the prospect of reaping the benefit of its territorial gain by the Treaty of Turkmanchay with Persia, and with this aim she must turn special attention to the canals scattered throughout Mughan and with the aid of irrigation turn this almost waterless plain into one of the richest granaries of the Transcaucasian region.⁴⁴

A later writer noted that now 'the face of the steppe began to change under the cultivation and filled with settlers',⁴⁵ and the Shahsevan nomads did not try to use Russian Mughan for pasturage again until the year of the Bolshevik Revolution - though their raids on the Russian settlers increased in the years after the frontier closure.

Until the early years of the twentieth century no major political disturbances brought the Shahsevan to the attention of the Iranian Government - or that of the representatives of the two imperial Powers who had been previously interested in their activities. At this time, however, north-east Azarbayjan, and the Shahsevan tribes confined there, were undergoing drastic social and economic upheavals, which were to erupt into political activity in a few years, and whose causes were to be found not simply in the frontier closure but also in the increased oppression perpetrated by the officials of the Qajar administration. A detailed and depressing picture of this upheaval and its immediate causes was given by two further Russian officials - who did not apparently appreciate the degree to which Russian imperialism and rivalry with Britain in the nineteenth century were largely responsible for both the frontier closure and the abuses of the Iranian administration. Markov, concerned only to justify Russian action in closing the frontier and its benefits to the inhabitants of Russian Mughan, did not consider its effects on the Iranian side. L. Artamonov, however, who visited the region in November 1889, a year after Markov, was shocked at the poverty and oppression of the peasantry and the obvious distress and disorder suffered by the nomads as a result of the closure. Fourteen years later Colonel L. Tigranov of the Russian General Staff carried out an investigation of the region, and published an informative and perceptive account of the economic and social conditions of the Ardabil province and of the nomad and settled Shahsevan

tribes.⁴⁶

In effect, for almost forty years after the closure, the Shahsevan were in sustained rebellion against all external authority. The half dozen or so chiefs who had emerged by 1900 as the most effective leaders divided the pastures and village lands of the region between them and sent their armed henchmen to raid widely in neighbouring regions of Russia and Iran. These chiefs led not only their own tribes but clusters of smaller and weaker neighbours, who sent mounted warriors to serve as henchmen in return for protection of their pastures and flocks. The chiefs' suites were swollen by these tribal levies, by refugees from other tribes, and by villagers who found settled agricultural pursuits increasingly difficult in prevailing conditions.

In 1909 most of the Shahsevan joined a coalition of local tribes in revolt against the Constitutionalist Government, and their plunder of the city of Ardabil received wide coverage in the European press. These and other exploits gave Russia an excuse for sending troops to subdue the tribesmen, but neither they nor various Iranian military expeditions had lasting success, being more often subjected to severe loss. The Shahsevan tribesmen retained control of the region until 1923, when they were finally defeated and disarmed by the troops of the War Minister Riza Khan, later Riza Shah Pahlavi.⁴⁷

With the Shahsevan disarmed and many of their chiefs captured or executed, the region enjoyed a decade of unprecedented security. Agriculture revived, land ownership became more profitable, and the nomads too grazed their flocks in unusual tranquillity. Though by now the Ardabil tribes were almost all settled and administered in villages, most of the Mishkin groups remained nomadic and continued to winter in Iranian Mughan. An Army officer was appointed as elbegi over the nomads and made responsible for political security. Individual tribes were now recognised as independent fiscal and political units, with their chiefs as representatives expected to deal with officials of the administration. The former tribal clusters did not disappear, however, but reformed on a new basis. Both the authorities and the smaller tribes found it expedient to deal with each other through the more powerful chiefs. Their power in the new situation depended no longer on military force, but on material resources and their ability and willingness to use these to the advantage of followers in new ways, mainly as middlemen.

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Further reforms of the Riza Shah period affected the nomads more directly. The young men were subjected to conscription and men's traditional dress was banned in favour of 'European' suits and hats. Far more drastic, however, were the outlawing in the 1930s of the Shahsevan tents and the ban on migrations, measures which were brutally enforced. The nomads were told to build houses and start cultivation. The results were catastrophic for them and their flocks. By 1941, with the fall of Riza Shah and the Allied invasion of Iran, the Shahsevan along with other nomads reverted to their former way of life, which they pursued unchecked throughout the Soviet occupation of Azarbayjan (1941-6). The tribal clusters regained some of their military importance, under those chiefs who had acquired or consolidated their economic resources in the two previous decades.

After the return to Iranian administration in 1946, there was a steady reduction in the chiefs' power. Economic and political security and communications all improved, and in 1960 the chiefs were deposed from recognised positions of authority. In the 1960s the 30 to 40 Shahsevan tribes of the region formed a loose confederation under the effective administration of the Central Government, with the Army, the Gendarmerie, and the Court system as ultimate sanctions for the maintenance of order. Individual chiefs still wielded considerable local influence and played an important political role in Shahsevan affairs, but the last foundations of their power were being undermined as a result of Land Reform, and the significance of the tribe as a political unit was declining.

Since the last war, intensive efforts have been made to develop the Iranian part of Mughan. A Government-sponsored irrigation scheme was initiated in 1951, and commenced functioning a few years later. Private schemes also began farming elsewhere in Mughan, both irrigated and rain-fed crops, mainly of wheat and cotton. The dry-farming at least expanded unwarrantedly, but surveys have declared the region to be potentially one of the most productive in Iran and urged the intensive development of the pastoral sector, given the nation's growing demand for livestock products and particularly meat. In the 1970s a further scheme, involving Soviet co-operation with dam construction on the Aras, expanded the irrigation network in Mughan to over 70,000 hectares. In 1972 it was announced that Mughan was to be the centre of an agro-industrial complex and the Shah-

sevan people were to continue exploiting the region's rangelands from settled bases and with modernised technology. It would appear, however, that the Shahsevan were largely left out of consideration in the eventual implementation of these plans, and were rather subjected to increasing oppression in Mughan by officials and entrepreneurs from outside the region, while their pastures were nationalised and pastoralism generally declined. This writer has heard little of their situation since the Khumeyni revolution. In spring 1979, 400 camp leaders from 30 Shahsevan tribes apparently went to Qum to present the Ayatullahs Khumeyni and Shariat-madari with a list of requests for the removal of oppressive officials, the improvement of their conditions of production and the provision of health and education facilities.⁴⁸ As elsewhere, they probably will have reclaimed their pastures and restored the pasture tenure system of the 1960s, which had its origins in the events described in this chapter.⁴⁹

NOTES

1. This chapter is based on chapter 8 of my 'The Shahsavan of Azarbaijan: a study of economic and political change in a Middle Eastern tribal society', unpublished PhD thesis, University of London, 1972. I am most grateful to Leslie Collins, Caroline Humphrey and Michael Cook for translations from Russian sources, and to Ann Lambton, Sandy Morton and Nancy Tapper for helpful comments on early drafts.

2. The origins and early history of the Shahsevan are traced in my 'Shahsevan in Şafavid Persia', *BSOAS*, 37, 2 (1974), pp. 321-54. Another paper on the Shahsevan in the eighteenth century is in preparation, based like the former on chapters from my 'The Shahsavan of Azarbaijan'.

3. F.B. Rostopchin, 'Zametki o Shakhsevenakh', *Sovetskaya Etnografiya*, 3/4 (1933), p. 98; G. Radde, *Reisen an der persisch-russischen Grenze. Talysch und seine Bewohner* (Brockhaus, Leipzig, 1886), p. 428; V. Markov, 'Shakhseveni na Mugani. Istoriko-etnograficheskiy ocherk', *ZKORGO*, 19, 1 (1890), p. 25; Abbott to Sheil, no. 17 of 27 Mar. 1847, FO 248/125.

4. N. von Seidlitz, 'Etnograficheskiy ocherk Bakinskoy gubernii', *Kavkazskiy Kalendar na 1871 god* (Tiflis, 1870), part 2, pp. 1-67.

5. Markov, 'Shakhseveni', pp. 23-4.

6. On the position of nomads in Russian territory at this time, see the most informative article, based on extensive study of contemporary official records, by D.I. Ismailzade, 'Iz istorii kochevogo khozyaystva Azerbaydzhana pervoy

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polovini XIX v.', *Istoricheskie Zapiski*, 66 (1960), pp. 96-136.

7. A.K.S. Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant in Persia* (Oxford University Press, 1953), p. 150.

8. For example, E. d'Arcy Todd, 'Itinerary from Tabriz to Tehrān via Ahar, Mishkin, Ardabil, Tālish, Gīlān and Kazvīn, in 1837', *JRGS*, 8 (1838), pp. 30-4; W.R. Holmes, *Sketches on the shores of the Caspian* (London, 1845); K.E. Abbott, 'Narrative of a Journey from Tabriz along the shores of the Caspian Sea, to Tehran', MS in FO 251/40.

9. I.A. Ogranovich, 'Svedeniya o Shakhsevenakh', *Kavkazskiy Kalendar na 1871 god* (Tiflis, 1870), part 1, pp. 68-84; id., 'Provintsii Persii Ardebil'skaya i Serabskaya', *ZKORGO*, 10 (1876), pp. 141-235; Radde, *Reisen*, pp. 418-43; Markov, 'Shakhseveni'; cf. Tapper 'Shahsevan in Safavid Persia', p. 331.

10. Cf. J. Morier, 'Some account of the Īliyāts, or wandering tribes of Persia ...', *JRGS*, 7 (1837), pp. 239-41; Ismail-zade, 'Iz istorii', p. 111.

11. Radde, *Reisen*, p. 429; Markov, 'Shakhseveni', p. 25.

12. Stevens to Sheil, no. 3 of 13 Jan. 1850, FO 248/142; FO to Bloomfield, no. 25 of 29 Jan. 1850, FO 97/345; Bloomfield to Palmerston, no. 77 of 8 Mar. 1850, FO 65/376; same to same, no. 324 of 22 Oct. 1850, FO 65/380; Markov, 'Shakhseveni', p. 27.

13. I.A. Ogranovich, 'Shakhsevani na Muganskoy stepi', articles in various issues of *Kavkaz* (Tiflis), 1872, quoted in Rostopchin, 'Zametki', p. 101; also Radde, *Reisen*, pp. 429-30; Markov, 'Shakhseveni', p. 26; Ogranovich, 'Svedeniya', pp. 74-5.

14. Muḥammad Taqī Lisān al-Mulk Sipīhr, *Tārīkh-i Qājāriyeh*, vol. 14 of *Nāsikh al-Tavārīkh*, ed. J. Qā'im-Maqāmī (Tehran, 1337/1958), part 3, pp. 76, 111f.; Stevens to Sheil, no. 3 of 13 Jan. 1850, FO 248/142.

15. Stevens to Sheil, no. 51 of 12 June 1851, no. 80 of 4 Sept. 1851, and no. 105 of 10 Dec. 1851, FO 248/145; also Sheil to FO, no. 19 of 26 June 1851, and no. 35 of 24 Sept. 1851, FO 60/166; Muḥammad Taqī, *Tarikh*, p. 111; Markov, 'Shakhseveni', p. 27.

16. Markov, 'Shakhseveni', p. 24.

17. IOL: 'Papers relative to the Affairs of Persia, Jan.-Dec. 1856', LPS/20, A.7, 2, p. 237.

18. Markov, 'Shakhseveni', pp. 27-9; Abbott to Murray, no. 11 of 23 Feb. 1858, and no. 13 of 3 March 1858, FO 248/177; Murray to Malmesbury, no. 17 of 3 July 1858, FO 60/232; Dickson to Rawlinson, no. 3 of 22 Jan. 1860, FO 248/192.

19. Ogranovich, 'Provintsii', p. 201.

20. Abbott to Alison, no. 13 and no. 14 of 23 July 1860, and no. 38 of 29 Nov. 1860, FO 248/192.

21. Abbott to Pelly, no. 1 of 13 June 1860, *ibid.*

22. Abbott to Alison, no. 12 of 17 June 1860, *ibid.* Cf.

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K.E. Abbott, 'Narrative'.

23. Abbott to Alison, no. 38 of 29 Nov. 1860, FO 248/192.

24. Alison to Abbott, no. 2 of 13 Mar. 1861, FO 248/201.

25. Abbott to Alison, no. 14 of 17 Apr. 1861, FO 248/199.

Earlier, in 'Narrative', Abbott reported that the Shahsevan 'are not accused of marauding and pillaging on a large scale'; his more recent opinion coincided with that of the Russians, e.g. Radde, *Reisen*, pp. 423-4, Markov, 'Shakhseveni', p. 21.

26. Markov, 'Shakhseveni', pp. 33f; Radde, *Reisen*, pp. 435-6.

27. Ogranovich, 'Provintsii', p. 201; cf. id., 'Shakhsevani', as quoted by Rostopchin, p. 104; Baron M. von Thielmann, *Journey in the Caucasus, etc.*, tr. C. Heneage (Murray, London, 1875), vol. 2, p. 29.

28. Bernay to Thomson, enclosed in Thomson to Granville, 2 Oct. 1883, FO 248/400. (The French Consul, M. Bernay, was acting for British Consul-General W. Abbott, on leave.)

29. Cf. F. Kazemzadeh, *Russia and Britain in Persia, 1864-1914* (Yale University Press, New Haven, 1968), pp. 57f.

30. Markov, 'Shakhseveni', pp. 37f.; Abbott to Thomson, no. 55 of 21 Oct. 1878, FO 450/8.

31. Markov, 'Shakhseveni', pp. 41f.

32. Thomson to FO, no. 57 of 5 Apr. 1884, FO 60/460.

33. Bernay to Thompson, letters of 6 May, 17 July and 31 Aug. 1884, FO 248/413.

34. Quoted in Markov, 'Shakhseveni', pp. 49-50.

35. Bernay in Thompson to FO, no. 173 of 27 Nov. 1884, FO 60/461. W. Abbott sent Thompson a long review of the situation when he returned in December: no. 6 of 28 Dec. 1884, FO 60/464, also in FO 450/8 and FO 248/413.

36. Markov, 'Shakhseveni', pp. 50f.

37. Abbott to Thompson, no. 25 of 21 Sept. 1885, FO 248/425.

38. Markov, 'Shakhseveni', pp. 51-7. Unfortunately Markov, the sole source for the events of autumn 1885, was a Tsarist agent whose main purpose was clearly to justify Russian actions and presumably to cover up their errors and injustices; I have extracted the more circumstantial data from his account, but they still need to be treated with reserve.

39. Hasan 'Alī Khan Amīr Nizām Garūsi, *Munsha'at-i Amīr Nizām*, ed. M. Mahdī (Tabriz, 1328/1910), p. 182.

40. Markov, 'Shakhseveni', p. 57.

41. Hasan Ali Khan, *Munsha'at*, p. 182; but in another letter, *ibid.*, pp. 94-6, he is more complimentary, and notes the arrest of the elbegi of the Ardabil Shahsevan.

42. Abbott to Nicolson, 29 Aug. 1886, FO 248/438.

43. Same to same, no. 6 of 16 July and no. 8 of 27 July 1887, FO 248/449. Abbott's fear that the Shahsevan would be recruited by the Russians as irregular cavalry was shared by the American envoy, S.W.G. Benjamin, *Persia and the Persians* (Murray, London, 1887), pp. 479-80.

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44. Markov, 'Shakhseveni', pp. 58-62.

45. M. Avdeev, *Mugan i Salyanskaya Step* (Baku, 1927), p. 15.

46. L.K. Artamonov, *Severniy Azerbaydzhan. Voenno-geogr. ocherk* (Tiflis 1890); L.F. Tigranov, *Iz obshchestvenno-ekonomicheskikh etnosheniy v Persii* (St Petersburg, 1909).

47. The role of the Shahsevan in the years up to and including the Constitutional Revolution is discussed in my 'Raiding, reaction and rivalry: the Shahsevan tribes in the Constitutional period', forthcoming in M. Bayat (ed.), *The Constitutional Revolution in Iran*.

48. S. Taymaz, *Seh maqāleh dar bāreh-yi Turkman-şahrā, Dasht-i Mughān, va rūstāhā-yi dīgar* (Ilm, Tehran, 1979). I am indebted to Martin van Bruinessen for bringing this to my notice.

49. See L. Beck, 'Revolutionary Iran and its tribal peoples', *MERIP Reports*, no. 87 (May 1980).

Chapter 15

THE TRIBAL SOCIETY AND ITS ENEMIES

Ernest Gellner

The notion of the tribe has a variety of meanings: a 'primitive' tribe is sometimes conceived as an island unto itself, morally and conceptually. The tribal ancestor may in such cases be seen as the first man as such, and the inclusion of non-members of the tribe in humanity itself may be ambiguous. Such a 'closed' tribe then may or may not be a political unit, but it certainly is a cultural one. The limits of the society are the limits of a culture, and the limits of the culture are the limits of the world, and vice versa.

This, I think, is the ideal type of the tribe as a Closed Society. Whether and to what extent such a concept has much application, may for the time being be left to those who deal with such communities, or communities which look, prima facie, as if they might fit this model. What however is beyond any doubt whatever is that the model has no application to the communities customarily called tribes in the Middle East (or rather, such as are generically described, in the local languages, by terms conventionally translated as 'tribe'). In fact, one might well invert the characterisation of the primitive closed society: these tribes may or may not be cultural units, but they certainly are political ones. Their political role may perhaps not exhaust their essence, but it is a central part of it. By contrast, their cultural role and differentiation, though it exists, is not very marked. The tribe does not fill out the world, but defines itself in terms borrowed from a wider civilisation. You can identify a woman's tribal allegiance by her cloak, head-dress or jewellery, you may tell a man's membership of a community by his accent; but the amount of cultural equipment shared by diverse tribes outweighs the part which is used to indicate

distinctiveness. In brief: in the Middle East and culturally similar adjoining areas, tribes may be distinct politically, but they are not separated culturally or economically from a wider surrounding world, which comprises both other tribes and non-tribal populations.

These tribes exist in a cultural continuum. This continuum has, for a millenium and a half, been dominated by Islam. 'Muslim civilisation' is an appropriate name for this shared culture of the arid zone, notwithstanding the presence in it of non-Muslim minorities and enclaves. It is probably fair to say of most or all of these that they share the cultural styles and assumptions of the Muslim majority, even if they do not formally endorse their supposed theological premisses. A more important qualification arises from the plurality of cultural layers present in Muslim civilisation itself. The shared culture within which local communities articulate themselves is not necessarily identical in its tacit assumptions (however these may be identified) with that which a formally trained and widely recognised Muslim scholar would class as proper, orthodox Islam. Islam is, so to speak, a normative culture: it contains as part of itself procedures for determining what is and is not part of itself - criteria such as conformity to scriptural authority, to well-attested Traditions concerning the life of the Prophet and his Companions, communal consensus, or valid argument from analogy. These criteria and their applications are themselves sometimes contested: Islam is, to use Bryce Gallie's valuable philosophical phrase-slogan,¹ an Essentially Contested Concept (even though it may think of itself as an Essentially Fixed or Immutable one). This is part and parcel of its life, and the sociological observer must note it, even though it is none of his business to adjudicate in these disputes. But it is highly relevant to the present subject: the culture which these tribesmen share is Muslim, but not necessarily, nor generally, altogether in conformity with what the schoolmen would approve, though it is continuous with it.

There is a certain danger here for anthropologists. Eager to avoid the normative stance of theologians and of some orientalists, anthropologists sometimes fall over themselves to insist that the superstitions of the most 'ignorant' old woman are as good a social fact, as much a part of the local culture (more so, probably), as the ruling of a local learned scholar. I remember distinguished experts

on Middle Eastern societies using this point on me with insistence and anxiety, evidently suspecting any attempt to isolate conceptually purer and less pure variants of the faith as some kind of irrelevant, extraneously imposed, interfering, ethnocentric censoriousness. Not so. The superstitions of the ignorant are social facts as much as (or more so than) the learning of the scholars; but the fact that the scholars are deferred to, that the culture itself stratifies its own practices into lower and higher ones (even if it persists with the lower), and in favourable circumstances tries to impose the higher and eliminate the lower, is itself one further social fact. In our time, which favours, in the Muslim world, self-purification and revival movements, it happens to be a supremely important one. To neglect it, in the name of a misguided Wertfreiheit, is disastrous. It is not for us to judge what is or is not pure, in the societies we study; but it is for us to note that the locals themselves are preoccupied with the distinction, and whilst admittedly they often sin against it, they are also on occasion powerfully influenced by it.

So much by way of preliminary about the cultural background of the political communities of the Muslim arid zone. It is their politics which primarily concern us, but the cultural idiom in which they are expressed cannot be ignored.

What, then, are these 'tribes'?

The definition I would propose would run something as follows:

A tribe is a local mutual-aid association, whose members jointly help maintain order internally and defend the unit externally. This assumption of peace-keeping and collective defence responsibility, which thus defines the tribe, is contrasted with a situation in which the maintenance of order, and defence, is assured by the central state and its specialised agencies (courts, nominated officials, police forces, army).

It follows from this definition (as is intended) that the contrast between centrally governed and tribal areas is one which allows of gradation and continuity. If all peace-keeping and defence responsibilities are permanently taken over by the central state, we can no longer speak of tribes at all (though named communities with shared sentiments might conceivably survive); but there often is a sharing of these responsibilities. A tribe may retain all or some of these responsibilities (though if it retains none, it will cease to be a tribe).

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A very characteristic situation is of course one in which a leader with a tribal power-base is also confirmed as an agent of the state and granted a bureaucratic title. One may then ask whether he is imposing the central order on the tribe, or defending the tribe against the state. A clear answer to such a question probably belongs either to depth psychology or to metaphysics (or indeed both): at the level of visible social reality, it is precisely the ambiguity of his status which is of the essence of the situation.

These units may but need not be defined in terms of kinship. In the area which concerns us, they are generally patrilineal (the Tuareg of the central Sahara are the only significant exception to this within arid-zone Islam), but they invariably possess devices for incorporating individuals and groups without the benefit of the appropriate ancestry, and on occasion groups are defined by other (notably territorial) criteria, in defiance of the alleged predilection of such communities for the genealogical principle.

The most significant trait of these groups is the simultaneous coexistence of diverse groups at different levels of size. This is a familiar, but none the less extremely important theme in the discussion of 'segmentary' societies: the tribe resembles the tribal 'confederation' of which it is a part, but it also resembles the 'clans' into which it is divided, and so forth. This concept of segmentation derives of course from the classical work of Evans-Pritchard on the Nuer and on the bedouin of Cyrenaica, and his adaptation of Durkheim's concept of segmentarity, by his stress on the vertical similarity of nested groups, as well as the lateral resemblance of co-ordinate groups stressed by Durkheim. (Durkheim was in fact perfectly familiar with the existence of vertical similarity, from his knowledge of Algerian material, but treated it as a special highly-developed form of segmentation, without apparently understanding its full significance. If segmentation is treated as the most important way of achieving cohesion and the maintenance of order, then, given the fact that conflict is liable to arise at diverse levels, segmentation and balanced opposition must likewise be present at diverse levels.)

One may put the matter in this way: arid-zone tribalism is a technique of order-maintenance which dispenses with the specialised enforcement agencies that are associated with the state (and, in a way,

are the state). They dispense with political specialisation internally as well as externally. They not merely prevent the police of the central state from imposing its will, they also refrain from having any internal police force of their own. Internally, they use the same technique as they do externally: order inside the tribe is maintained by mutually-policing sub-tribes (clans, if you wish), whose mutual opposition forces each of them to restrain its own members; and so on.

The characteristic form of social stratification in such societies is one in which the large majority of adult males are formally equal, and qualified to participate in politics and violence, entitled and obliged to share the risks of feud and the benefits of blood money. This is quite unlike feudalism, in which a fairly small warrior stratum monopolises politics and violence. Below the broad tribesman stratum, subject minorities of slaves, oasis cultivators and petty artisans are to be found, with whom tribesmen ideally do not intermarry; above them, there is a sometimes ambivalently viewed religious aristocracy (as Tocqueville already noted, contrasting it with the noblesse d'épée of Europe), which however enjoys the effective advantages of its special status only when effective leadership is conjoined with attribution of appropriate birth. Within the dominant middle stratum, Big Men and chiefly lineages often emerge, but their position seems precarious and they do not seem to engender any deep and permanent stratification. The ethos characteristic of this large central stratum seems to express the organisational principles of such 'mechanically solidary' society: it contains a marked disapproval of specialism, political and economic (which does not prevent members of this stratum from taking to specialist trade when opportunities are favourable, or aspiring to political pre-eminence when the situation is ripe). Only religious specialism is tolerated traditionally, and even that with occasional ambivalence. Under modern conditions of centralisation, all this seems to become inverted: political and economic specialisation becomes possible and is favoured, whilst religious inequality, pretension to differential access to the divine, is subjected to severe criticism from Reform movements. It seems to me that Dale Eickelman is in error in his interesting Moroccan Islam,² when he suggests that dyadic, asymmetrical relations between men are reflected by similar relations in the spiritual sphere; it seems to me that the relationship is

inverse, and a symmetrical society favoured asymmetrical patronage in religion, whilst a centralising patronage-ridden society veers towards an enthusiasm for the equality of believers. The Other world does not always mirror, but sometimes inverts, the relations of this world. But we are here concerned with the old world of the tribes, which is still vigorous in many places.

It is overwhelmingly tempting to say that the ecological basis of this form of tribalism is pastoralism, though it would be rash and probably wrong to say that extensive pastoralism necessarily imposes this form of organisation. Pastoralism, which implies a form of wealth which is mobile, on the hoof, makes political domination much harder than is the case in agrarian societies tied to the land. It is hard to oppress shepherds, for they can run away and, above all, can run away with much of their wealth intact. Moreover, a shepherd is primarily a guardian of flocks, against wild animals and, most of all, other shepherds. His defensive vigilance develops skills which are just as usable in aggressive as in defensive violence, and he will of course, given the opportunity, use them in order to raid, as much as to ward off being raided. But his only hope of security lies in being a member of a mutual-insurance group, which jointly announces to the world that it will avenge the death of any one of its members, indiscriminately, on any member of the group from which the aggressor was drawn or is supposed to have come. This implicit announcement provides the other and rival group with an incentive to restrain its own members, unless it is willing to face vengeance directed against the group as a whole. The argument applies to groups of groups as much as to groups of individuals, and results in that characteristic pattern of 'nested' groups, generally found in this area and adjoining ones. One should add that whilst this pattern is most characteristic of pastoralism, it tends to be emulated by neighbouring sedentary groups if they have the opportunity. The mountains offer as good a protection from the state as does the savannah, and a similar form of organisation is as characteristic of mountain populations of this zone as it is of mobile pastoralists.

The characteristic form of ownership in this kind of society, as the Russian anthropologist and historian A.M. Khazanov pointed out,³ is private ownership of cattle and tribal ownership of pasture. Pasture can only be defended collectively, whilst

flocks and herds are surveyed by much smaller groups, though these may still cluster together in camp units for greater security.

This tribalism, then, is a political solution to a political problem. It is an alternative to the state. Everything stated so far, though perhaps not uncontentious, has hardly been original. But it raises questions which, when properly answered on the basis of material such as that assembled in this volume, will constitute a significant advance in our understanding of human society.

The interesting thing about the tribal solution to the political problem of order-maintenance, is that it is a solution which consists of combining political autonomy with cultural and economic dependence. These tribal societies are accustomed to a level of technology, in their agricultural, pastoral, military and domestic equipment, which seems to presuppose centres of artisan production and trade, in other words towns, and this in turn presupposes protection of towns by a specialised agency (towns in this part of the world seem rarely capable of looking after their own defence), in other words, the state. Likewise, the religious ecology, so to speak, of these tribesmen presupposes not only the sanctity or holiness easily found in their own midst, incarnated in special lineages, but also centres of scholarship, perpetuating and affirming the literate theology of a scripturalist religion. Thus religion too seems to reinforce and/or symbolise the economico-cultural dependency of politically autonomous tribes.

In the social organisation of pastoral or partly pastoral tribes, we find a kind of spectrum. At one end, there are pastoralists with minimal organisation, where the neat pyramid favoured by the theorists of segmentation is largely absent. In the middle, we find the neat, aesthetically-pleasing, 'nested' groups; and at the other extreme, we find tribal tyrannies with dominant individuals or lineages. What causes this variety? It is tempting to seek the answer in the relationship to the central state. The anomic absence of clearly-defined groups may be the consequence both of a strong and a weak state: a strong state may have destroyed them, a very weak one, rendered them redundant. The absence of such groups (exemplified by some pastoralists and nomads from other parts of the world) may be due to lack of pressure from other groups and from the state (which may be wholly absent). One is tempted by the supposition that the cohesive nested groupings

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which continue, probably correctly, to be the main stereotype of Middle Eastern tribalism, arise as a reaction of population pressure on resources, reinforced by pressure from the state itself as one of the contestants.

Another issue which arises is the nature of the economico-cultural dependency of these otherwise proudly independent tribesmen. Is it inherent in their economy? Is it so essentially non-autarchic that it needs artisans and tradesmen, come what may, simply for survival? Or does the existence of pastoral tribalism elsewhere (e.g. in East Africa), where it did not seem to have such an intimate relationship to political/urban centres, prove that the dependency is only engendered by the habituation to a certain cultural standard?

Paradoxically, if the tribe is an alternative to the state, it is also often a mini-state in itself, and, on the other hand, often also aspires to capturing the state and becoming its centre. One criticism of the segmentary model sometimes encountered insists that the model overrates the equality and power-diffusion within such tribes, mistaking ideology or wish for reality. No doubt: power does often crystallise within such groups. The 'balancing' mechanisms are indeed precarious. The balance often topples over, one side prevails under personal leadership, and the leader becomes, for a time, a possessor of great power, which can then stay in his lineage for generations. A tribe may also need strong leadership for all kinds of reasons, such as for instance ensuring, by mixture of diplomacy and violence, access to a pass crucial for its migrations. Leadership or group union may even be crystallised from urban centres by urban suppliers of arms, and not always by the state.

There is again an entire spectrum, ranging from rather small Big Men to really effective and powerful tribal Big Men. As Raymond Jamous has shown,⁴ the customary law of certain northern Moroccan tribes actually drew the distinction between a situation in which there was a Big Man in the segment, and one in which there was not. The Urf called for a different situation according to which of these alternatives applied. Jamous' work constitutes an important corrective to the extremely valuable and unjustly forgotten pioneering work of Robert Montagne,⁵ who was the first to draw attention forcefully to the tendency of such tribal societies to oscillate between the 'republican' oligarchy of household heads, and ephemeral personal tyrannies. Montagne's preoccupa-

tion with the very big Grand Caids gave the impression, which he may not have intended, that the oscillation had to be extremely polar, so to speak: that there was either a very big robber chief, or the assembly, the jemaa. In fact, there is room on the spectrum and in reality for quite small Big Men. But their existence does not destroy the usefulness of the segmentary model which, in fact, is required to explain why and how they emerge and why they do not last. The tribal state of this kind is essentially reversible: it does not seem to modify the conditions which have engendered it.

This instability, and the variety of forms it can engender, should I think be incorporated in segmentary theory, rather than be allowed to count as its refutation. It shows that the over-idealised, idyllic picture of symmetrical diffusion of power, often, very often, does not apply. But it does not destroy it, for a variety of reasons. The segmentary diffusion of power remains a kind of baseline from which this game started and, significantly, to which it often reverts. Political centralisation in this kind of society has a fragile, reversible character, which distinguishes it from easily-dominated agrarian zones. Moreover, even when it loses its symmetrical character, it still has, to use S. Andreski's useful phrase, a very high Military Participation Ratio - even when, temporarily, the Political Participation Ratio is drastically reduced.⁶

The question about whether we should see the religious and cultural continuity of this society as essential or accidental, as reflecting an ecological dependency or, on the contrary, as historically contingent, also relates to the issue of the role of religious personnel, both in keeping the tribal system going by oiling its joints, and in suspending it by facilitating the emergence of wider enthusiasms and more effective centralisation. A fair amount has been written on this question, but it is unlikely to be fully settled for a long time.

The tribes sometimes engenders an internal mini-state, and sometimes captures the larger maxi-state. How central is or was religion to this process, permitting the fusion of urban enthusiasm and tribal greed, providing the ideological joker card which can trump the mutually neutralising ambitions of the locally-tied sacred of the dervishes and the marabout? To what extent can the state save itself from tribal aggression by purchasing (or tax-collecting) its own elite on the Mamluk, devshirme and janissary principles, securing its members from

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rude environments and training them in isolation from the temptations and pressures of kin connections, which otherwise seemed to be the only basis and training for politico-military effectiveness? Given the importance and longevity of the Ottoman Empire, and of the Mamluk system within it, can it be treated as atypical? In the tribal-central relations, did the flow of subsidies to supposedly loyal chiefs exceed the payments extorted in taxation, or was it the other way round?

So, to sum up the situation: the tribe is an alternative to the state. Is it engendered in part by the threat of the state? Is it destroyed when a strong state no longer tolerates it, or even when a weak one makes it redundant? Is it above all the relationship to the central state which, by providing an opportunity for ambition, turns the tribe itself into a mini-state internally? When does it itself capture the state? The tribal mechanisms which evolve to evade the arm of the state seem paradoxically also to fit the populations involved in it to create a new state, and sometimes to build a micro-state of their own.

The view of Middle Eastern tribalism which I have sketched out places it firmly in a certain context: tribalism emerges as pastoral and rural self-administration, partial or complete, with many nuances and intermediate forms and oscillations, but presupposing an economic and cultural interdependence with non-tribal units, notably towns, and often brought into being as a reaction to non-tribal political forces, notably the state. The state differs from the tribe in having a much more developed division of labour: it has full-time warriors and officials, sustained by the labour of peasants, artisans and traders.

In other words, this picture of Middle Eastern tribalism is tied to an overall picture of Middle Eastern society. This view, and hence the picture of tribalism which it incorporates, has of late encountered various criticisms. The most prominent critics can be placed in various groups. These groups are not mutually exclusive: a man may certainly belong to more than one of them. They are defined by the underlying intellectual motive or counter-idea which inspires them. The groups I have in mind are nationalists, Marxists, and followers of Clifford Geertz. Nationalists and Marxists both dislike the stability (perjoratively: stagnation) which the model seems to attribute to Middle Eastern society as a whole, notwithstanding its internal political turbu-

lence. Nationalists in addition dislike the stress on tribal units and the distinctive culture associated with Muslim tribalism, notably its religious aspect, which they prefer to see as a corrupt rather than an authentic version of local life (sometimes as one artificially encouraged by colonialism). Marxists combine a distaste for the overall stability of the system (notwithstanding the fact that Friedrich Engels endorsed this view in so many words) with a scepticism concerning the partial egalitarianism attributed to tribal society, and the inadequate concern with class conflict. The theme running through the work of anthropologists of Geertzian persuasion seems to be scepticism about the categories in terms of which the model is articulated, notably segmentation and the sharp opposition of government to tribal dissidence.⁷ Like the nationalists, though presumably for other reasons, they suspect these notions of being projections of colonial anthropology or those influenced by it. Both individual manipulation and a shared culture are more prominent in their analyses, within which these two as it were corrosive agents (from my viewpoint) dissolve the unduly neat units (in their view) in terms of which the model is articulated.

No doubt it is a good thing that these questions should remain open and be explored further. For the time being, however, I must confess that I am less than convinced by the critics. Compared with the cataclysmic transformation wrought by the diffusion of industrialism (of which colonialism was merely the outward political expression), most traditional or agrarian societies must seem 'stable'. I do not think the attribution of stability should be seen as pejorative. Many past societies have valued stability and many of us rue its loss. The question concerning whether this or that society had an overall stability should be investigated without any spirit of attributing merit. Similarly, the existence of a tribal Little Culture, which does not meet the standards of an old Great Tradition, should not be denied for the past simply because it no longer satisfies the needs of a more urbanised, centralised, literate society which has replaced it. As for the third set of criticisms, one can only answer that a wide range of well-attested institutions - the feud, collective oath, a legal system relying heavily on arbitration, marriage patterns, pasture use - only makes sense on the assumptions of something like the model propounded. Both ethnography and history seem to me to support the model. But, no doubt, it will benefit

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from criticism. One salient fact which seems to me to emerge from the present collection of papers is that we must heed Robert Montagne as much as Edward Evans-Pritchard: tribal reality is more unstable and volatile in its political forms than one would suppose if one took the segmentary idea in an excessively simple and literal way. Ephemeral crystallisations of power are endemic in it; but they are ephemeral, or were so until the modern world intervened.

This varied range of relationship and variant forms needs to be fully explored. It is only relatively recently that anthropologists have shifted from cultural-island tribes to these kinds of marginal or peripheral tribes, whose peripheral but ultimate involvement with a wider economy and culture and, turbulently, a wider polity strong enough to threaten them but not strong enough to dominate and replace them, is of their very essence rather than something extraneous. The strong modern state tends to destroy them, though it has not yet done so everywhere.⁸ I suspect they form a distinct species, though this is something yet to be established and discussed. The tribe is the anti-state, politically unspecialised or very mildly specialised, and state-resistant; it may also be the fruit of state pressure; it may be the seed of future states; and it may crystallise mini-states internally. It can be both agent and enemy and victim of the state. It is the home of religious ignorance, and the sword-arm of orthodox revivalism. These forms and relationships are multiple, complex and volatile - but not devoid of pattern, and the pattern is beginning to emerge in these studies. The material assembled in the present symposium constitutes an extremely rich and varied collection of clues and testimonies, which when properly digested should do much to help identify the answers.

NOTES

1. W.B. Gallie, *Philosophy and the Historical Understanding* (Chatto and Windus, London, 1964).

2. D.F. Eickelman, *Moroccan Islam* (University of Texas Press, Austin, 1976).

3. See his forthcoming comparative study of pastoral nomadism in general, Cambridge University Press.

4. R. Jamous, *Honneur et Baraka: Les Structures Sociales Traditionnelles dans le Rif* (Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, Paris / Cambridge University Press, 1981).

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5. R. Montagne, *Les Berberes et le Makhzen dans le Sud du Maroc* (Felix Alcan, Paris, 1930).

6. Cf. S. Andreski, *Military Organization and Society* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1954).

7. Cf. C. Geertz, H. Geertz & L. Rosen, *Meaning and Order in Moroccan Society* (Cambridge University Press, 1979); C. Geertz, 'In search of North Africa', *New York Review of Books*, 22 Apr. 1971.

8. For instance, tribalism in the Yemen has actually been strengthened, at the expense of the central state, in this century: see forthcoming work by M. Mundy, C. Myntti, S. Weir.

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Chapter 16

TRIBE AND STATE: SOME CONCLUDING REMARKS

Andrew Strathern

The chapters in this volume closely reflect two dominant trends in contemporary social anthropology: the fusion of anthropological and historical interests, and the stress on studies of process rather than the building of structural models. Both trends indicate divergence from an earlier concern with typological description and classification, best exemplified perhaps in Fortes and Evans-Pritchard's work on African political systems. Nowadays authors explicitly locate their descriptions in historical time, look for interrelations between units as much as for cohesion within them, and are determined to recognise the essential complexity of their subject matter by portraying such varying relations as dialectical, existing at numerous levels, and determined by combinations of political and economic factors. Instead, therefore, of separate accounts of 'stateless' and 'state-based' societies, we are presented with a kaleidoscopic picture of the historical interaction between tribal and state entities, culminating in the most recent historical events within Iran and Afghanistan: collapse of a dynasty in one case and the creation of a new puppet regime in the other. It is a field ripe for further productive generalisations, yet the very recognition of complexity makes such a task considerably harder.

Throughout the conference two things struck me: one was the ease with which social anthropologists and historians accepted each other's participation. It was encouraging to realise that such collaboration is now a part of 'normal science', and does not have to be commented on. The other was that despite this ease of communication, signalled largely by a realistic adoption of the historical approach on the part of all contributors, it was unclear whether much theoretical advance was within our grasp. An explicit

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focus on mechanisms of transformation might have yielded at least a set of empirical generalisations which could then be further refined, especially since so many of the papers concentrated on Pashtun society. What we do have is an extremely rich set of accounts of how tribal populations have opposed state control, have used state forces in their own battles, have been absorbed into states, have merged to form confederacies and quasi-states, have split these, have toppled dynasties, have given them crucial support: practically every process logically imaginable is shown in ethnographic form here. Again, it is a measure of the overall progress of our subject that so much can be added, and so forcefully, to Fredrik Barth's early analysis of Swat Pathan politics; yet it is also interesting that from all this we do not gain a clear set of models, which could supersede those of Barth. Barth's account was most deficient where the contemporary studies are strong: in analysis of how tribal alliances may emerge into, or be capped by, state organisation. Yet the perusal of history does not seem to have led in a straight line to the creation of models replacing that of the segmentary lineage and the transformations of this effected in Barth's own analysis.

One of the reasons for this is pin-pointed most clearly, I believe, by Jon Anderson (chapter 3) when he notes that

considerable confusion and ambiguity obtain on the ground in 'tribe-and-state' relations in Afghanistan ... the more successful khans who survive the contradictory pulls of tribal and national associations, trade on the contradictions and flourish in the ambiguities that allow them to play more than one game at a time.

The same kind of process is alluded to by David Brooks (chapter 12) when he writes that in some sense Bakhtiari are their own enemies, for there is always someone who will collaborate with an outside power in order to secure the downfall of his rivals, even if it should also mean some loss of his own autonomy. Correlatively, there is bound also to be bitter resistance to the outcome of such manoeuvres. The terms of the game are set by segmentary competition, and the play is decided by network moves followed by resistance in blocs to the advantages gained by those who have manipulated the networks. Such a process probably occurs at numerous structural levels,

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and seems to be at work at the level of the state of Afghanistan itself at present. Of course, colonial officials, as well as tribal leaders, have been well aware of these processes for a long time, as Yapp (chapter 4) and Ahmed (chapter 5) among others demonstrate: they are not an anthropological discovery but a part of practical politics.

One chapter which does, however, illuminate the problems to do with transformation, development, and cyclical processes in this part of the world is that by Salzman (chapter 8). He shows clearly how ecological factors do influence political structure, if only in terms of limitations. The same kinds of insight emerge in the sustained historical analyses of Glatzer and the Tappers (chapters 6, 7 and 14), and the general question of the relationship between 'nomadism' and 'tribalism' is also posed with elegant force by Ernest Gellner (chapter 15). Brooks, again, shows how the requirements of nomadic migration have influenced the Bakhtiari to create numerous networks which run across and beyond formal segmentary structures. It is the combination of small productive units and large areas of communal resources which produces the apparently contradictory features of independence and interdependence which are the hallmark of nomadic tribal populations, including peoples such as the Nuer, who inspired the original creation of the segmentary model by Evans-Pritchard. In Salzman's analysis chiefship is created by external political needs and limited by internal ecological circumstances, and it is a matter of preference whether we regard the resulting structure as an 'adaptation', a 'dialectic', or a 'contingency'. What is clear is that there is an economic background to the creation of states: but the states themselves are not absolute transformations, but reminiscent rather of the 'segmentary states' described by anthropologists such as Fallers and Southall who worked in East Africa. The advantage which scholars who are working on Middle Eastern materials have, however, is their access to a greater historical depth of information and also the sheer volatility of political events and processes themselves.

For someone such as myself, who is not an expert on the area, a final interest lies in the potentials for extrapolation and comparison. As I have earlier remarked, the greater the richness of historical specificity in the accounts with which one is faced, the harder it is to tell whether an account of, say, Pakhtun politics will provide analogies to what is happening in Melanesia, for example, my own

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field of study. Historical circumstances are quite different. Melanesia has neither the development of hierarchy nor the intermingling of tribes and states which shows so strongly in Afghanistan and Iran. Yet the same analytical problems of transformation and differentiation of systems from egalitarian bases certainly are set in Melanesia. It is noticeable that from time to time authors here have specified conditions under which 'big-man' politics become dominant: for the khans certainly are big-men, albeit with a hereditary position and depending on a stratification of society at large into nobles and commoners. They note also that big-manship is an open-ended continuum; it is almost by definition a 'transitional type' of leadership which can issue in more than one direction depending on historical factors. Here, then, would be another sphere for comparison and generalisation, analogous to that attempted much earlier by Sahlins for Melanesia in relation to Polynesia. One factor of great, if crude, importance is the technology of destruction, alluded to astutely in another context by Hager at the end of his powerfully argued chapter (2). Guns make war more deadly than arrows, as Melanesians found to their cost when they opposed colonial penetration. It has always seemed to me that the great urgency and emphasis on mustering forces in the Pathan system as described by Barth had to do not only with the intense material competition for land and its immaterial counterpart of prestige, but also with the physical dangers of warfare once begun. In Melanesia, arrows are sometimes shot deliberately to miss, or for fun. Guns, I think, lend themselves less to that kind of subtlety.

The concept of tribal dissidence interested me also from another viewpoint. In Melanesia numerous secessionist movements have arisen at or around the times of Independence from former colonial powers, either mirroring earlier opposition to colonialism or as an artefact of new struggles for power (or reflecting both of these). Such movements are the clear equivalent of the dissenting 'tribe', and although they usually have an overtly local or regional basis their ideology may be very similar to that of the tribes discussed in this book. Harder to place in context, however, is the phenomenon of clear violence between groups which are already constituted as descent groups, such as those of the New Guinea Highlanders, among whom violence over political and economic issues has been quite marked since just before self-government came in 1973. Here, the

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colonial period was remarkably short, lasting no more than forty years or slightly more than a single generation, so that there is an obvious continuity with pre-colonial patterns of conflict. Yet there is a faint articulation of conflict with the emerging national state as well, in that the New Guinea Highlanders have not readily given up the sanction of force as an ultimate means of controlling one another. Leaders whom I know well have sometimes wondered why their government will not let them be, to fight out an issue on their own, thus asserting their sovereignty to do so. Hence fighting itself comes to be a statement of independence within the new Independent State. The condition for the transformation of such a pattern into one more directly like that now being enacted in Afghanistan would clearly be the use by the national government of some outside force to control their Highlands populations.

In conclusion, then, it does seem to me that the great richness of materials and the diversity of insights displayed in these essays both lend themselves potentially to further comparisons and reflections; but that to achieve this further step we need to combine the background use of the segmentary model, as Ernest Gellner has argued, with the development of further models of process which are not limited either to tribal or to state politics but can apply to either, and to their interconnections. This volume, therefore, points the way to such a possibility.

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