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THE PACIFICATION OF THE HAZARAS OF AFGHANISTAN

by

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The opposition of the Hazaras to Amir 'Abd al-Rahman's policy of extending the authority of the central government in their land was very fierce, and culminated in a full-scale war which lasted from 1891 to 1893. Because they were Shi'ite Muslims and on bad terms with their Sunni neighbours, their position, despite their semi-independent status, was inherently a weak one. They had also made themselves unpopular by assisting the British in the past. This enabled the Amir to rally popular support against them. Ultimately, they were overcome and Sunni tribes settled in their lands.

The Hazaras lived in the central highlands between Kabul, Turkistan, Ghor, Kandahar, and Ghazni. The Tajiks and so-called Sayyeds also lived in their land, known as the Hazarajat or Hazaristan or Barbaristan. Hazarajat was more a geographical than a political or administrative term, with no fixed limits. While the total number of the Hazaras was said to be half a million, the Hazaras of the Hazarajat proper might have numbered 340,000 in the second half of the nineteenth century.

Origin

The Hazaras are comparatively recent settlers in Afghanistan. It was generally believed that the Hazaras were the descendants of the army left by Chengis Khan, but evidence suggests that Chengis Khan withdrew all his forces upon the accomplishment of his campaign objectives. The Hazarajat seems to have been peopled chiefly by Chaghataians from Transoxiana. Other Mongols and some Turks or Turco-Mongols may have joined the Chaghataians. It is also possible that
rebellious troops in the Khurasan of the Ilkhanids sought refuge in the Hazarajat. Later under Timur and his son Shah Rustam, troops and administrative officials were sent into the area and it is possible that some of these remained when the Timurids returned to Samarqand. Thus it would appear that the Hazara Mongols are descended from Mongol troops, many of them Chaghataians, who entered Afghanistan at various times during the period from 1229 to about 1447. By the sixteenth century, the Hazaras were a distinct people dwelling approximately in their present habitat. The original people, later called the Hazaras, were warriors without women. They obtained wives from the few existing inhabitants, Barbars (Tajiks), who were probably Iranian in origin. Their mixing with these and other neighboring Tajiks may account for their gradual change of speech from the Turkic and Mongolian to Persian, generally known as "hasaragi", a variation of the standard Persian.

Historical Background

Babur made no attempt to invade the Hazarajat proper, although he crossed its northern part and passed Bamian in the last years of the fifteenth century. Thereafter Bamian, though not considered a part of the Hazarajat, but an important center linking the regions of the Oxus, the Indus and the Hazarajat, remained more or less open for expeditions undertaken by his successors, notably Shah Jahan. Still, the latter's attempts to invade Hazarajat proper were not successful. However, a Persian Safavid king, Abbass I (1588-1629), was able to influence the Hazaras by appointing an elder over them. Presumably, it was in this period that the Shi'ite faith of Islam began to replace the shamanism of the Hazaras. Nadir Shah Afshar (1736-1747) is said to have received the submission of the Hazaras and to have removed a number of the Dai Wangi and Dai Kundi Hazaras to the Badghis region in Herat, apparently as a counterpoise to the power-
Afghan rulers, before Amir 'Abd al-Rahman, had made attempts to bring some areas of the Hazarajat proper under control. As early as the reign of Ahmad Shah Durrani (1747-1773), the Mohammad Khwaja and the Jaghato Hazaras of the Ghazni area paid revenue to the government. Under Amir Dost Mohammad Khan, (1835-1839, 1842-1863) the Behsud Hazaras to the southwest of Kabul also recognized Afghan suzerainty. Notable progress was made during the reign of Amir Sher Ali Khan (1863-1867, 1869-1879), when the Hazaras of Balkhab, Sheikh Ali, Dai Zangi, Dai Kundi, and Jaghuri were pacified. As before, these Hazaras continued to be ruled by their own mîrs (elders of tribes and tribal sections), but they were made responsible for the payment of revenues to the government. Moreover, Amir Sher Ali conferred the title of Īkhâni on Mir Mohammad Amir of Dai Zangi, of Sardar on Sher Ali of Jaghuri and of Nizâm al-Dowla on Mohammad Khan of Qala-i-Now of Herat.

Before the complete pacification of the whole of the Hazarajat under Amir 'Abd al-Rahman Khan, only the Hazaras of the southeast and southern parts, notably Uruzgan, numbering 44,500, remained independent while the rest were brought still more closely under the Afghan rule. Their revenues were considerably increased, various kinds of new taxes were imposed, and īkhâms (sub-governors) were appointed over them. Only the mîrs of the Dai Zangi and Dai Kundi Hazaras were allowed to administer their respective tribal communities, as reward for the support they had given the Amir against his rivals Sardar Mohammad Ayub Khan in 1881, and Sardar Mohammad Ishaq Khan in 1888. For the same reasons, the Amir promoted Mohammad 'Azim, mîr of the Se Pai section of the Dai Kundi Hazaras to the rank of the Sardar and appointed him his peshkhidmat (head servant) in the darbar (court).
Submission of the Independent Hazaras

In 1890 the Amir appointed Sardar 'Abd al-Quddus as governor of Bamiyan and empowered him to pacify the Hazarajat proper. At the same time the Amir invited elders of 45 sections of the independent Hazaras of Uruzgan, Ajaristan, Malistan, Dahla, Zawli, Dai Chapan together with a small number of Tajiks living with them, to submit. In the firman (royal proclamations) sent to these elders the Amir did not offer any terms in return for their submission. He simply asked them to submit because, as he put it, their further insistence on rebellion, in view of the proximity of the Christian powers, would be injurious to Afghanistan. The Hazaras, however, claimed that they were invited to submit on terms which included autonomy for the Hazaras and no revenue to the government for several years to come. At any rate, the Hazaras agreed to submit and in the spring of 1891 Sardar 'Abd al-Quddus, accompanied by a large army and tribal levies including the Hazaras of the Dai Zangi, Dai Kundi and Behsud under the leadership of Sardar Mohammad 'Azim and Mir Mohammad Amir Ilkhani, entered the independent Hazarajat, mainly unopposed.

The Rising

In the following winter, the Hazaras rebelled for a number of reasons. Because there was not a central place large enough to station the whole army, it was divided into several contingents and stationed in various parts. This made the army vulnerable and the Amir ordered that the Hazaras should be disarmed. Some Hazaras surrendered their weapons while others refused. At the same time the weapons which had been collected were sent on to Kabul. This action was considered a breach of the promise given to the Hazaras that their weapons would be returned as soon as the situation warranted it. Further, officers and soldiers raped married and unmarried women alike and tortured and killed.
persons who refused to surrender their arms.26 Fearing that his soldiers might rebel, Sardar Quddus, who was the first to enjoy the company of the Hazara women, failed to restrain them.27 Meanwhile, the Amir, in an effort to break the Hazara power, ordered their mirs and religious leaders separated from the common Hazaras. They were to be sent to Kabul where lands and positions would be assigned to them.28 Because of the existence of strong tribal feelings and the fact that two-thirds of the Hazaras belonged to the temporal and clerical leadership groups29, this policy of the Amir, though not fully implemented, created widespread fears. The fact that the mirs acted as tyrants over the common Hazaras to the extent that they sold their children into slavery30, and in some areas usurped their lands, still had not created a strong group cleavage. Initially, perhaps due to the unwillingness of the common Hazaras to fight,31 they did not oppose the entry of the troops into their land, but when the troops became oppressive, the common Hazaras rallied around their mirs wholeheartedly. In Saraj al-Tawarikh, no mention is made of whether the Hazaras were made to pay revenue, but numerous other reports indicate that they undertook to pay one rupee per family annually.32 In addition, the Hazaras were hard-pressed for supplies.33 The rising was initiated by the Palo section of the Uruzgan Hazaras who killed a few soldiers. Soon other Hazaras joined in and expelled and killed the rest of the army scattered throughout the Hazarajat. Further, they declared war and jehad (holy war) against the Amirate of Afghanistan. Sardar Quddus, stationed with his army in Gizao, fled to Qalat in Ghilzay country.34

Mobilization of Public Opinion

The Hazara rebellion crystallized religious animosity between the Sunni and the Shi'ite population still further, and religious leaders on both sides
instigated their co-religionists to battle. The Amir also tried to turn the episode into a sectarian war. The Ulema issued a fatwa to the effect that the Hazaras were "infidels," rebels, and worthy of destruction. They preached this in their regular religious sermons and incited the soldiers whom they accompanied to the battlefields. On the secular front, relations between the Hazaras and their Sunni neighbors had never been good. While the Hazaras robbed the caravans in their neighborhoods, their neighbors, particularly the Firozkohis of Herat enslaved the Hazaras and sold them in Bukhara. Later, during the second Anglo-Afghan war, the Hazaras, instigated by the British, had sacked Ghazni and thus intensified the feud. The Amir now repeatedly asserted that because the Hazaras were "infidels," the army and tribal levies were free to act as they pleased with regard to the Hazaras and their property when their land was occupied. The actual Hazara land however, was promised only to the Ghilzays and Durransis. In particular, the Amir declared that his object in conquering Uruzgan was to secure for the Durransis "an impregnable natural position," as at the time they were exposed to attacks by the infidels on both sides.

Thus the words of the "shadow of God," and the representatives of Islam, promising plunder and heaven, stirred the Sunni Muslims to genocide. Never had the Amir been so successful in rallying the Sunni tribes around him and the tribal leaders volunteered their services against the Hazaras. The Hazaras in turn declared a religious war, and proclaimed Timur Shah, a descendant of Imam Musa Raza, as their Caliph. In the overdramatized version of the Hazara War written by Lady Hamilton, the Hazaras were said to have detested "the unholy alliance" between the Amir and the English and declared "we will fight for one true God, and his true prophet, and for Ali, and against these Kafirs
and allies of Kafirs.\textsuperscript{44} Although the Hazaras, like their Sunni neighbors, also threw a religious cloak over the war, they were not against the British. In fact, in view of their previous cooperation with the British, they believed that now the British would help them against the Amir.\textsuperscript{45}

Occasionally peace overtures were made by both sides, but they came to nothing. The original proposal of the Hazaras to retain internal autonomy in return for becoming tributary vassals\textsuperscript{46} was subsequently repeated in several forms, but the Amir was willing to extend them pardon, only if they disposed of their mirs,\textsuperscript{47} who had already declared that they would never trust the Amir's promises and that they knew how he had done away with many leading men of Afghanistan and how he governed his own nation with a rod of iron.\textsuperscript{48}

**The Fighting**

Meanwhile, the rising spread throughout the Hazarajat. Although never before had the Hazaras been as united as they were now, some still did not join the rebellion. The smaller tribes of the periphery, such as the Chardasta, Jaghuri, Jaghatu and Mohammad Khwaja supported the Government.\textsuperscript{49} So did a few small segments of the Dai Zangi and Behaud Hazaras\textsuperscript{50} as well as a number of the mirs from the hitherto independent Gizao and Panjab in Uruzgan.\textsuperscript{51} The bulk of the Hazaras, however, believing that the shrine of Imam Qasim (a descendent of Imam Musa Kasa) in the Tur region of Uruzgan would ultimately cause defeat of the Amir's army (as, in their view, it had repulsed similar attempts in the past), fought recklessly under the leadership of Qazi 'Askar (elder of the 'Inayat section), Mohammad Hussayn Beg (elder of the Sultan Ahmad section), and Sardar Mohammad 'Azim (elder of the Se'Pai Dai Kundi).

The Amir poured about 100,000 troops and tribal levies into the Hazarajat
from all sides. They were led by Sipah Salar Ghulam Haydar Orakzay, Sardar Quddus, General Sher Mohammad Khan and others. Numerous battles took place, the most decisive ones fought in Daya, Polad, and Uruzgan. In Uruzgan the battles continued on and off for five days, and 50 skirmishes occurred before the place was occupied. In the winter, the Hazarajat, except Uruzgan, was evacuated. For this reason, the second major rising was initiated in the northern area where no troops were stationed the following spring. After their initial successes, the Nazaras suffered major defeats by the tribal levies and the army led by the Sipah Salar and General Amir Mohammad Safay. Perhaps the last most decisive battle was won by General Amir Mohammad Safay along the banks of the Helmand River between Daul Kund and Dai Zangi. The Hazaras, however, were not totally crushed until September 1893.

The Hazara Settlement

The Amir's policy was to break the power of the Nazaras who, as one ethnic group occupying a compact mountainous area, were considered a potential source of danger to Afghanistan. This policy was to be accomplished in a number of ways.

First, the Amir tried to separate the Hazara temporal and religious leaders, whom he considered to be the real enemies of both the common Nazaras and the Afghans, from the rest and settle them elsewhere. Naib Padshah Gul was deputized to round them up and send them on to Kabul; but, as the Amir's officials were corrupt, most of the real mirs escaped the ordeals, and ordinary Hazaras were sent to Kabul instead. They were settled in Bagram and Nahr-i-shahi in Jalalabad, but during the reign of the Amir's son and successor, Amir Habibullah (1901-1919), they were allowed to return to their land.

Second, as promised by the Amir, everyone involved in the fighting enslaved the Hazaras and looted their property. Because of the large number of Hazara prisoners,
they attracted profiteers. Traders from all over the country bought them from the soldiers and sold them at a profit.\footnote{61} In addition, the widespread famine following the war compelled the Hazaras themselves to offer their children at the market.\footnote{62} The zimmā (non-Muslim subjects), however, were not allowed to trade in the Muslim Hazaras. In Kandahar a few Hindus who sold some Hazaras and tried to convert others to their own religion, were fined.\footnote{63} The share of the state in the sale of Hazara slaves and their property was the largest, as it exacted truth on their sale\footnote{64}, and one-fifth of all the booty including the slaves.\footnote{65} In Kandahar alone such a sales tax amounted to 70,000 rupees.\footnote{66}

As a result, slavery, which had been banned by the Amir, once again flourished. Finally a voice of dissent rose from the gazi and Mufti of Jaghuri when they advised the Amir that the sale of Muslims was not allowed in Islam.\footnote{67} Sale of Hazaras was finally banned but they remained in bondage until emancipated by King Aman Allah (1919-1929), Amir'Abd al-Rahman's grandson.\footnote{68}

Third, because of the destruction of the homes and crops of the Hazaras\footnote{69} during the war, Hazarajat could no longer support even the diminished population, especially in the immediate postwar period. Some Hazaras were reduced to eating grass and selling their children for wheat.\footnote{70} With the additional oppression exercised over them and the fines imposed for their rebellion\footnote{71}, a large number of the Hazaras left their homes for Central Asia, Khurasan, Baluchistan and Sind.\footnote{72} The Amir then asked the Durranis and Ghilzays to settle in Uruzgan.\footnote{73} He also announced that anyone wishing to settle in the rest of the Hazarajat would be exempt from paying revenue for the first year and allowed to pay a lower rate in the future.\footnote{74} At the same time, the Amir announced that money and seeds would be advanced, also on easy terms, to the Hazara cultivators.
Fourth, the large tracts of the commonly owned grassy pastures which were a 
main source of livelihood for Hazaras were first converted into state property 
and subsequently sold to the Pushtoon nomads (the Kuchis), who had helped the 
Amir in transporting supplies during the war. Until then, these Kuchis had 
been unable to graze their cattle beyond Behard, Nehur, and the Sadohta of the 
Jaghuri area. After the pacification of the Hazaras they gradually forced 
their way, with the blessing of government officials, to pastures in Dai Zangi, 
Dai Kundé, Nadistan and other interior areas. The lands of the imprisoned 
mirs of Dai Kundé and Dai Zangi and of those who had fallen in the war and had 
left no heirs were confiscated. As the mirs of the Dai Zangi and Dai Kundé 
had usurped the lands of the common Hazaras, the latter now claimed their 
property. The Amir ruled that only those lands which had been cultivated by 
the mirs themselves were to be confiscated and the rest were to be left to the 
common Hazaras.

Fifth, the Hazaras and the Qizilbashes were compelled to observe the Sunna 
practice of Islam and the Muftis and Qazis, who were appointed along with 
Hakims to various districts, were instructed to settle the disputes arising 
among the Hazaras in accordance with the Hanafi school of Islam.

The Hazara war showed how religious, social and cultural institutions released 
forces for destruction. The Amir, the ulama, the tribal elders, and senior 
officers on the one side and the mirs and mujtahids on the other, together 
with common men on both sides became involved in a struggle in which the complete 
destruction of the adversary and of his property became the key to victory. In 
the absence on both sides of moderating voices to counsel restraint, this very 
brutal war was fought as if in a foreign land and neither side emerged with 
clean hands.
Abbreviations

MW-----------------'Ayn al-vaghl', by M.Y. Riyszi, Mashhad (Persia), 1904. Work of contemporary Afghan author. (in Persian)


HD-------------Herat Diary, (included in PSLI), unpublished documents, compiled by news-writers stationed in Herat for the British Government of India.


KD-------------Kabul Agency Diary, (included in PSLI), unpublished documents compiled by Indian Muslim Agents stationed in Kabul for the British Government of India.

MM-------------Monthly Memorandum, (included in PSLI), unpublished documents compiled by British officials out of the reports dispatched to the British Government of India.

PSLI----------Political and Secret Letters and Enclosures Received (in London) from India. India Office Library and India Office Records, London, UK. Vols. 25-91 (from 1880-1901).

Among others things, these unpublished official documents include Herat Diary, Kandahar Diary, Kabul Agency Diary, and Monthly Memoranda.


ZM-------------Zia al-mu'arafa, by M.Y. Riyszi, Mashhad (Persia), 1904. (in Persian)

Note: In the above list, printed works and published documents are underlined, and unpublished documents are not.
Footnotes

1. This article is based on a chapter under the same title in the writer's, Afghanistan: A Study in the Internal Political Developments, 1880-1896, Lahore, 1971. The present article, however, has been completely overhauled in the light of new source materials.

2. M. Hassan Kazai is Associate Professor at Kabul University. Currently he is engaged in another research work, entitled Afghanistan in the Reign of Amir 'Abd al-Khalim Khan, 1880-1901 at Princeton University as Visiting Research Fellow.

3. Smaller Hazara groups settled in the provinces of Herat, Turkistan and Badakhshan will not be discussed here as they had already been brought under the control of the central government.

4. Gazetteer of Afghanistan, Part 4, Kabul, 1895, 272. (Henceforth G.A.K (1895)).

5. Riyazi, M.Y., Ziya al-Mutafa, Mashhad, 1904. (Henceforth ZM.)

6. ZM, 47.


(footnotes cont.)

15. CAM (1895), 277

16. Ibid. 278


18. Ibid.


20. For names of the mirs and tribal sections see ST, 727-728, 29, 44-45.

21. ST, 728.

22. Statement by Mir Mohammad Hussayn Beg, elder of Sultan Ahmad clan, 11 April, 1886, PSLI, 74, 547.

23. ST, 735.

24. ST, 736.

25. ST, 891.

26. ST, 745.

27. ST, 761.

28. ST, 761, 891.

29. ST, 862.

30. ST, 891.

31. ST, 891.

32. NW, 249. KD, 22 Dec 91, PSLI, 65, 119.

33. MM, Dec 91, PSLI, 65, 103.

34. NW, 250. Mir Hussayn Beg, 11 April 94, PSLI, 74, 548. ST, 761.

35. ST, 891, KD, 22-24 June 92, PSLI, 66, 1511.
(footnotes cont.)


37. ST, 703.


41. However "27,000" Afghans (identifications and places of residence not specified), living with the Hazaras, were said to have joined them against the Amir. These Afghans were rebellious for some time. KD, 21-24 May 92, PSLI, 66, 110. 3. According to Riyazi, the inhabitants of Kohistan near Kabul encouraged the rebel elders in their stand against the Amir. AW, 251. The Mir of Mainana, who was in rebellion at that time, promised support to the Hazara insurgents. ST, 621.

42. KD, 10 May 92, PSLI, 66, 666.

43. Lady Hamilton, 31.

44. Brown, Major J., to Secretary to Government of India, 11 April, 94, PSLI, 74, 547.

45. Hazaras of Daya and Peled to Amir, KD, 25 April 91, PSLI, 63, 159.

46. Herat Governor in Darbar, KD, 6 Aug 92, PSLI, 67, 528.

47. Hazara elders to Amir, KD, 8-10 June 92, PSLI, 66, 1296.

48. ST, 773, 774.

49. ST, 956

50. ST, 890, 995. According to Riyazi, the cattle owners of Urmgan left their fortifications for pastures and still others accepted bribes. AW, 260. Riyazi may be referring to those mentioned in ST.

51. Amir to Durrani elders of Kandahar, Kand D, 2 July 92, PSLI, 66, 1721. According to Riyazi, the number of regular troops was 30,000; of tribal levies 60,000 and of guns 40, but his figures of 10,000 for the Hazara fighting men are incredibly low. AW, 258.
(footnotes cont.)


54. Amir in Darbar, KD, 21-23, Sept 92, PSLI, 68, 105.

55. MM, Sept 93, PSLI, 72, 257, ST, 838.


57. ST, 937, 1100.

58. ST, 987.

59. ST, 934.

60. ST, 853.

61. ST, 820, 937.

62. ST, 863.

63. ST, 989.

64. ST, 863.

65. ST, 830.

66. ST, 969.

67. ST, 1115.


69. The fertile valley of Ajaristan was laid waste. ST, 819.

70. of the 20,000 families of Behsud Hazara only 6400 families and of the powerful Sultan Ahmad clan only 60 families survived the war. ST, 854, 1031.

71. ST, 841, 846.

72. ST, 989, 855, 914.

(footnotes cont.)

74. ST, 629, 855.
75. ST, 986.
76. ST, 714.
77. ST, 1100.
78. ST, 1011.