

# **Afghanistan's Communist Epoch: A Comparative Study of Khalq and Parcham Factions of People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) in the Years 1965-78**

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## **Abstract**

People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) was the first political party founded on 1 January, 1965, based on Communist principles, following constitutional reforms, introduced by King Zahir Shah on 1 October, 1964. The party program was adopted at the founding congress, espousing nationalist democratic reforms, a national democratic government and non-capitalist economic system with emphasis on industrialization and nationalization of foreign trade to improve the condition of the people. After two years of its formation, in 1967, the party was split into Khalq and Parcham factions along with differences on policy issues, personality clashes and the socio-economic background of the constituencies from which each would draw support. This study critically examines the ideological, organizational, and socio-political differences between the Khalq and Parcham factions of the PDPA (1965–78), drawing on archival sources and secondary scholarship to evaluate their role in Afghanistan's revolutionary trajectory. The present study evaluates the factional differences between their strategies; Khalq adopted a strict posture, whereas Parcham gave priority to a moderate one, especially in relation to the regimes of Sardar Daud Khan and Zahir Shah. It will also provide an overview of the re-unified PDPA's Saur Revolution endeavor to alter the current system of exploitation of the poor.

**Keywords:** Communism, Afghanistan, PDPA, Khalq, Parcham

## **Introduction**

The founding congress of People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) took place on 1 January, 1965, secretly at the house of Nur Muhammad Taraki, located the Kabul's *Karte Char* district,<sup>†</sup> following the announcement on 1 October 1964 by King Zahir Shah of his "New Democracy" program, which included a constitution, a parliament, elections, freedom of press, and freedom to form political parties.<sup>‡</sup>

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<sup>†</sup> In the middle of the 1960s, the country's growing middle class, which included accountants, teachers, and public servants, lived in this neighborhood.

<sup>‡</sup> Interestingly King never signed the law that allowed the permission of political parties. Despite the constitution's Article 24, which was to broaden the scope of

According to party sources, twenty-seven men were present at the founding congress.<sup>§</sup> They belonged to various sections of the Afghan society including writers, civil servants, teachers, bureaucrats and doctors.<sup>\*\*</sup> Interestingly at this early stage of the formation of the party, it did not enlist in its ranks any of the workers or peasants in whose name it was founded.<sup>††</sup>

Nur Muhammad Taraki was chosen as Secretary General of the Central Committee and Babrak Karmal as Deputy Secretary General of the Central Committee. In his presidential address to the first congress Taraki emphasized upon the unity of workers and intelligentsia on the basis of Marxist-Leninist ideology to strengthen and bring the downtrodden masses on a simple platform to resist its exploitation by the rich.<sup>‡‡</sup> At this occasion the party's program was also adopted. The PDPA's public platform was a blend document espousing nationalist democratic reform. Afghanistan's status as "a country with a feudal economic and social system" guided its initial analysis. The people's condition is pathetic because of the exploitation made by the feudal lords, some big businessmen, foreign traders, corrupted bureaucrats and the tyrannical

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political activity i.e., no member of the royal family be allowed to be politically active or to serve in any of the leading positions of the state, including those of cabinet minister, member of parliament, or justice of the supreme court, the new intelligentsia was convince that the Muhammadzai family ran the country behind the scenes. They took the absence of a law governing the political parties as a sign that the royal family intended to retain the continuation of its undeclared dominant position. Barnett. R. Rubin, *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan* (Michigan, Book Crafters, Inc., Chelsea, 1995), p.73 & Anthony Arnold, *Afghanistan's Two-Party Communism: Parcham and Khalq* (California, Hoover Institute Press, 1983), pp. 23-24.

<sup>§</sup> Those participated in the founding congress were, Nur Muhammad Taraki, Babrak Karmal, Saleh Muhammad Zearey, Suleiman Laeq, Nur Ahmed Nur, Muhammad Zahir Zadran, Muhammad Zahir Ofaq, Abdul Hakim Hilali, Abdul Wahab Safi, Atta Muhammad Sherazi, Abdullah Jaji, Adam Khan Jaji, Ghulam Muiddin, Tahir Badakhshi, Dastagir Panjsheri, Dr. Shah Wali, Muhammad Hassan Bareq Shafi, Sayed Nurullah, Abdul Hadi Karim, Akram Kargar, Sultan Ali Kishtmand, Karim Misaq, Isa Kargar, Abdul Qayum Qasim, Sharullah Shapur Ahmadzai, Abdul Karim Shari Jozjani, Khal Yaar. "*The Establishment of the Marxist-Leninist Party of Afghanistan*", (Kabul: Political Department, 1976), p.1.

<sup>\*\*</sup> Rosanne Klass, *Afghanistan: The Great Game Revisited* (New York, Freedom House, 1987), p. 141.

<sup>††</sup> Henry. S. Bradsher, *Afghanistan and the Soviet Union* (Durham, Duke University Press, 1985), p. 44.

<sup>‡‡</sup> "Platform of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan" *Kabul Time*, Party Program, 1 January, 1979.

rulers who are the agents of imperialism. It was suggested that a national democratic government would help them improve their condition. They promoted a non-capitalist economic system that prioritized industrialization and the nationalization of international trade, but they could not explain how the plan would be funded. Noteworthy, however, is the absence of Marx and Lenin, religion, or the specific of socialism. Probably they did it to avoid public criticism because they were not prepared for an ideology that challenges their tradition and culture.<sup>§§</sup>

From the time of formation of PDPA in January 1, 1965 till its fragmentation in 1967, the party progressed in terms of recruiting teachers, students, and people from media and bringing out some publications. PDPA's earlier concentration for recruitment was focused on urban centers particularly on Kabul. In their policy of recruitment, they did not consider any potential in rural areas at this stage. Further, PDPA's concentration for recruitment went on to various groups in different time. There were likely more than 20,000 industrial workers in Afghanistan in 1965–1966, or roughly 0.7 percent of the country's total population. Therefore, the lack of a significant working class to recruit made it challenging to increase the membership. But Taraki like Lenin substituted middle-class for the workers. They argued that it is not necessary that the workers should be leading, but rather than members are “equipped with the ideology of the working class”. So for the recruitment of cadres, the PDPA concentrated its attention on the small number of literate Afghans, which was less than 5 percent of the population.<sup>\*\*\*</sup>

For Taraki and his supporters, the economic argument (unemployment of the educated) was the most effective issue for attracting

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<sup>§§</sup> In the beginning the party members were hiding the identification with communist ideologies and, therefore, given the party a name lacking socialist flavor and closer to the people for its democratic term. But interestingly its secret constitution, adopted at the same time, revealed only to party members, showed a Marxist-Leninist approach to organization, discipline and goals, including dedication to proletarian internationalism. *Kabul Time*, Party Program, 1 January, 1979 & “*The Establishment of the Marxist-Leninist Party of Afghanistan*”, p.1.

<sup>\*\*\*</sup> In 1965-67, foreign aid first leveled off and then, as the decade entered its closing years began to decline. Between 1967-68 and 1970-71 foreign loans and grants had fallen by over 50 percent, from roughly \$62 million a year at the official rate of exchanges to \$ 27.5 million. Year by year employment fell until there were virtually no openings for the new graduates. Recruitment in the PDPA offered an outlet for frustrated job seekers, and PDPA membership began to swell. Bradsher, *Afghanistan and the Soviet Union*, pp.44-45 & Arnold, *Afghanistan's Two-Party Communism: Parcham and Khalq*, p.27.

new recruitment.<sup>†††</sup> On the other hand, Babrak Karmal and his supporters mostly came from wealthy families, had to play on different recruiting themes: intellectual curiosity, the adventure of joining an “illegal” organization, and the drawing power of friendship with those already in PDPA. The other PDPA magnet was Hafizullah Amin, who influenced and inspired large number of recruitments in the PDPA. He targeted the less affluent faculty at Kabul University, the relatively impoverished rural educators, and the Pashtun-oriented boarding school students and teachers in Kabul for better rural high school students. This was rich place for recruitment, because the government funded the boarding schools in Kabul for the finest pupils from each village after primary school (just like Amin had been twenty years before).<sup>†††</sup>

Between the times of PDPA's formal founding and the first free Afghan elections under the new constitution, there were less than ten months' time; elections to the Upper House (*Da Mesharano Jirgah*) were held from August 26 to Sept 9, and to Lower House (*Wolusi Jirah*) from Sept 12 to 24, 1965. PDPA fielded eight candidates for *Wolusi Jirgah*, of which four secured memberships to the parliament in general elections. These candidates did not label themselves as PDPA members at the time because political parties were still unsanctioned.<sup>§§§</sup>

After the elections, Zahir shah asked the head of the caretaker cabinet, Prime Minister, Dr. Muhammad Yusuf to form a new government, which he did. Yusuf and his cabinet colleagues were subjected to several days of criticism by a group of elected members led by Babrak Karmal and Anahita Ratebzad in which some liberals and opponents of the monarchy also joined. They accused the cabinet of the charges of bribery, corruption,

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<sup>†††</sup> Due to Taraki's charisma, PDPA had a considerable following among the older intellectuals. The characteristics of Taraki charisma were attributed as self-educated writer, poet, and an inspiring personality in personal relations. Klass, *Afghanistan: The Great Game Revisited*, p. 143.

<sup>†††</sup> Hafizullah Amin, a Pashtun from Paghman district of Kabul province, attended Columbia University for master program and incomplete doctorate degree. Despite missing the PDPA's founding congress, Amin made it back to Afghanistan in time to run unsuccessfully for the party's seat in Paghman in the August–September 1965 elections held under the new constitution. Ibid.

<sup>§§§</sup> The four successful candidates were all future Parchamis: Babrak Karmal, Anahita Ratebzad (one of four women elected to the *Wolusi Jirgah*), Nur Ahmed Nur Panjwai, and Fezan ul Haq Fezan. The unsuccessful candidates included Nur Muhammad Taraki, Sultan Ali Kishtmand, Hafizullah Amin and Abdul Hakim Sarayee Jouzjani. The success of future-Parchami candidates was probably due to their connections to high-level persons of establishment and economic well-being. Alfred Halliday, “*The Revolution in Afghanistan*”, *New Left Review*, no.112 (November-December, 1978) pp. 27-54.

nepotism and the like. This agitation continued for two weeks. Prime Minister Yusuf finally appeared before the *Wolusi Jirgah* and demanded that the charges against his government either be lodged formally as a criminal indictment or be dropped. He also requested that his new cabinet be subjected to a vote of confidence in three days' time.\*\*\*\*

Three days was adequate for Babrak and his colleagues to mobilize their student supporters for anti-government demonstrations. A student sit in staged by him and his supporters, forced parliament to cancel a scheduled meeting on October 24, the day the new cabinet was to be sworn in. On the 25 October, the students occupied many of the deputies' seats in the *Wolusi Jirgah*. Troops were called out, and in the clashes two students and a bystander were killed.†††† It resulted in massive protests, which led to the withdrawal of the Dr. Yusuf from the candidacy of premiership. In his place, Muhammad Hashim Maiwandwal was appointed by the King and confirmed by the *Wolusi Jirgah*.††††

These agitations proved two things: one PDPA for the first time had crossed over from legitimate political activity to violence and, the second, was that students became a political force. The Sueme-e-Aqrab demonstration also brought a division in the ranks of PDPA leadership. Amin was annoyed at Babrak's "irresponsible manipulation" of the party's young supporters. But the real case according to various sources, was not that they were agitating for genuine problems but the aim of agitation in parliament and outside parliament was to disrupt that body.§§§§ The party attitude, as was expressed in its own words, was:

*Since the very beginning of its establishment, the PDPA has had a Leninist attitude toward Parliament and Parliamentary campaigns. While it rejects bourgeoisie parliamentarianism, it supports the revolutionary use of parliament's tribunal and parliamentary campaigns on behalf of advancing Party goals, and it has organized this form of campaign for non-parliamentary problems.*\*\*\*\*\*

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\*\*\*\* Louis Dupree, *Afghanistan*, (Princeton University Press, 1947), pp. 590-97.

†††† This event is also known as the 6<sup>th</sup> of Aqrab (Aqrab is month of Afghan Calendar corresponding with October) event. Ibid.

†††† Ibid.

§§§§ Klass, *Afghanistan: The Great Game Revisited*, p. 142.

\*\*\*\*\* "The Establishment of the Marxist-Leninist Party of Afghanistan", p. 3.

Another aspect of PDPA activity in the years to come was centered on propaganda. Dr. Yusuf's interim government promulgated a press law in July 1965 that led to the appearance of newspaper "*Khalq*" ('the people' or 'the masses') on 11 April, 1966, approved by the plenum of the PDPA's Central Committee.<sup>†††††</sup> On 22 May, 1966, *Khalq* was banned by the government under a provision of the press law. The government did it to protect public security, dignity and "safeguarding the fundamentals of Islam, constitutional monarchy, and other values enshrined".<sup>†††††</sup>

After *Khalq* was banned, the party's Secretary General, Nur Muhammad Taraki submitted the petition to the Ministry of Culture and Information in the October of 1976. The ministry did not respond positively and rejected the demand.<sup>§§§§§</sup> Dr. Saleh Muhammad Ziri, another party activist, submitted the second application on 28 April, 1968 for the license of a legal newspaper, entitled *KARGAR*. But the response of the Afghan government was same. In the same way, several other applications for licenses to publish some newspapers were made by the party but rejected by the government. When the government did not allow PDPA to publish newspapers legally, it clandestinely started publication of *JONBESH* (Movement) and *RAHNUMA* (Signpost).<sup>\*\*\*\*\*</sup>

### Factionalism in People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan

One of the reasons, which limited the effectiveness of PDPA in the 1967 to 1969, was the fragmentation of that party into *Khalq* and *Parcham* factions.<sup>†††††</sup> The balance of force and the mutual hostility of the two factions were to be apparent before the PDPA had reached its second birthday. From the beginning there were an impression that the founding Congress gathered various people in terms of their approach towards policy issues, tactics to be adopted toward the government, and the socio-economic and ethnic background of leading personalities. Nearly all of the intellectuals in *Khalq* were Pashtuns, and like its leader Nur Muhammad Taraki, they were from rural areas. Economically, they

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<sup>†††††</sup> It was called the propaganda organ of the party. It was written both in Pashto and Dari. First two issues, which appeared simultaneously, contained the party program. Each of the two issues circulated roughly 20,000 copies, however later circulation was limited to roughly 10,000 copies. "*The Establishment of the Marxist-Leninist Party of Afghanistan*", pp. 4-5.

<sup>†††††</sup> Dupree, *Afghanistan*, p.611.

<sup>§§§§§</sup> "*The Establishment of the Marxist-Leninist Party of Afghanistan*", p. 6.

<sup>\*\*\*\*\*</sup> These were entitled *Peyam-e-Khalq*, *Asr-e-Novin*, *Mashal-e-Khalq*, and *Jonbesh*, etc. Ibid. pp. 5-6.

<sup>†††††</sup> *Khalq* ["Masses" or "People"] *Parcham* ["Banner" or "Flag"] were the names of the factions' newspapers.

were not as prosperous as the Parchami. Babrak Karmal, the son of an army commander, led Parcham, whose members were mostly from prosperous, well-educated, urban (mostly Kabul) families. Despite the Pashtun roots of many Parchami, the group's urban, Kabul-focused composition featured a number of non-Pashtuns.<sup>+++++</sup>

Following the banning of the newspaper *Khalq* by the government in May 1966, Babrak criticized the publication within the party for having been too openly Communist and suggested that a better tactic would have been to hide its Marxist orientation.<sup>§§§§§</sup> But majority of the PDPA's Central Committee plenum rejected Babrak's criticism.<sup>\*\*\*\*\*</sup> The vote was probably close, however, Taraki enlarged the membership of Central Committee by appointing eight new members to that body.<sup>+++++</sup> The reason was given that in order to check the 'unprincipled and divisive' activities in the party this was essential.<sup>+++++</sup> It seems that the real purpose of Taraki was to counter-balance the majority of Babrak's supporters in the Central Committee, elected eighteen months earlier.<sup>§§§§§</sup>

Shortly afterward, Babrak proclaimed Zahir Shah to be "the most progressive king of Asia" in a speech given at the 12th term of the *Wolusi Jirgah*. He also reaffirmed his deep and enduring faith in the King. Additionally, he commended the ministry's budget, citing Zahir Shah's

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<sup>+++++</sup> The Soviets have traced the split to a set of Marxist tenets that: Difficult conditions of semi-legal activity, attacks by reactionary circles and ultra groups, repressions on the part of the authorities, the small number and weak organization of the working class, the low level of class and political consciousness of the workers, the incomplete process of class formation — all these complicated the institution and formation of the PDPA. Shortly after the breakup in 1967, Taraki was called to Moscow to accept a literary prize, while Babrak continued to attend Soviet embassy parties, strengthening his relationships. Arnold, *Afghanistan's Two-Party Communism: Parcham and Khalq*, p. 36 & Klass, *Afghanistan: The Great Game Revisited*, p. 141.

<sup>§§§§§</sup> "The Establishment of the Marxist-Leninist Party of Afghanistan", p. 6.

<sup>\*\*\*\*\*</sup> Ibid.

<sup>+++++</sup> Those added were, Muhammad Ismail Danish, Abdul Hakim Sahrayee Jouzjani, Hafizullah Amin, Muhammad Zahir Ofaq, Dr. Abdul Muhammad, Muhammad Hassan Bareq Shafiee, Nur Muhammad Panjwai, and Suleiman Laeq. "A short Information About People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan" (Kabul, 1978), pp. 2-3.

<sup>+++++</sup> "The Establishment of the Marxist-Leninist Party of Afghanistan", p. 6.

<sup>§§§§§</sup> Interestingly, the balance between future *Khalqis* and *Parchamis* on the Central Committee seems almost to be natural. Instead of that there were no formal *Khalqi* and *Parchami* factions until 1967, when the first rift became apparent. Arnold, *Afghanistan's Two-Party Communism: Parcham and Khalq*, p.27.

own time invested in its creation. This speech created a stir in the PDPA leaders. \*\*\*\*\* On another occasion Babrak tried to elect, Mir Akbar Khyber, his close aide, then serving in police department, and not even a PDPA member, to the Central Committee. But his attempt did not succeed. As a protest, on 24 September, 1966, Babrak submitted both from the membership of the Central Committee and the secretariat. The Central committee plenum was held and Babrak's resignation was accepted by a majority vote of the Central Committee members. †††††††

While factionalism was in progress, some members of the party tried to intervene and prevent further polarization. Through their efforts, both sides agreed for negotiations, which lasted for more than one week but without any positive result. On the failure of such attempts i.e., to reunite the party, both sides started accusing each other for the failure of these talks. ††††††† In July, 1967, the split became formal, and Babrak took with him about half of the PDPA Central Committee members. It was never acknowledged publicly, but it became instantly apparent among the students, who began clustering in separate, antagonistic groups, each accusing the other of ideological deviations. §§§§§§§

After then, each side asserted that it was the legitimate party and the other was a splinter organization. Citing government approval to launch the Parcham newspaper while Khalqis were consistently refused permission to launch another publication, Taraki accused Karmal of being a "royal stooge". Where Taraki was dubbed as an agent of the CIA (for having remained in USA as Press Attaché in the Afghanistan embassy there in 1953) by pro-Babrak members of the party and alleged that Taraki tried to hide his true intentions by enforcing divisive policies and adopting a bureaucratic approach. \*\*\*\*\*

Khalq would draw their support from the middle-class rural Pashtuns, while Parcham relied for its support upon the urban educated of Kabul, other major cities of the country and the northern part of

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\*\*\*\*\* "The Establishment of the Marxist-Leninist Party of Afghanistan", p. 7.

††††††† Nur Muhammad Taraki, Dastagir Panjsheri, and Dr. Saleh Ziri, Abdul Muhammad and majority of alternate members endorsed his resignation. Sharullah Shapur, Tahir Badakhshi and Sultan Ali Kishthmand voted against his resignation. Ibid. p.8.

††††††† The Khalqis stated in their 1976 history of the party that the royal regime and reactionaries were so frightened by the 1966 edition of their newspaper that they decided to split the PDPA, using Babrak Karmal as a tool. "A short Information About People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan", p. 2 & "The Establishment of the Marxist-Leninist Party of Afghanistan", p. 9.

§§§§§§§ Bradsher, *Afghanistan and the Soviet Union*, p. 44.

\*\*\*\*\* Ibid.



Afghanistan where majority of the population was non-Pashtun. Both groups, however, retained the PDPA label, followed identical party regulations and both demonstrated loyalty to Moscow's line.<sup>††††††††</sup> In organizational terms, the split could not be regarded as the development of two factions within one party but the split of one party into two: each had its own secretary general and Central Committee and each proceeded to recruit specifically into its own ranks; when re-united, despite their mutual exclusiveness and antagonism, they were factions of a large whole.<sup>††††††††</sup>

Moreover, at the time of Khalq-Parcham split in 1967, Parcham probably had the larger membership. Certainly, over the next years, it capitalized on its connections with the Afghan establishment to attract more influential adherents, including some important military officers, than did Khalq.<sup>§§§§§§§§</sup> Parcham's emphasis on a "common front" approach, although it appealed to a wider spectrum of political support than did Khalq, alienated the more militant revolutionaries and automatically led to a looser organization with reduced unity and discipline. By contrast Khalq maintained tight control over its members, adhering to a more rigid, purer form of Marxism-Leninism and priding itself on intellectualism and maturity. At the time, Khalq was involved in political, ideological, and organizational activities among the country's intellectuals, workers, and peasants. Since the Khalq was founded on the Leninist idea of democratic centralism, its operations were extremely centralized and strictly regulated. Moreover, both factions retained their respective rich-urban and middle-class-rural orientation.<sup>\*\*\*\*\*</sup>

Parcham had made an effort to appear moderate (so much so that Khalq dubbed it the "royal Afghan communist party).<sup>††††††††</sup> The Parcham's

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<sup>††††††††</sup> The importance of Afghanistan to the Soviet Union was strategic as well as economic. Strategically it wanted to counter the threat of emergence of Islamic fundamentalism in the Russian occupied Central Asia, which was once crushed under the Tsar in Basmachi Movement. Economically it wanted to cover the stretching in its South to reach the Indian Ocean. On balance, however, for the USSR the effort to penetrate and dominate Afghanistan economically and strategically, a policy was adopted to support a group of revolutionaries who could protect the interests of Soviet Union at the time of need. So PDPA was supposed to serve Soviet interests in Afghanistan and, therefore, was assisted in its organizational terms by the Russians. Ibid. p. 49.

<sup>††††††††</sup> Ibid.

<sup>§§§§§§§§</sup> Halliday, "*The Revolution in Afghanistan*", p. 27.

<sup>\*\*\*\*\*</sup> Arnold, *Afghanistan's Two-Party Communism: Parcham and Khalq*, p. 40.

<sup>††††††††</sup> Babrak responded to these accusations that the party "viewed the national democratic stage of the revolution not as a period of consecutive reforms but as

public organ '*Parcham*' opened on March 14, 1968 and continued its publication during 1969. It owed its continued survival to an initially milder approach and what appeared to be a tacit agreement with left-leaning government of Nur Ahmed Etemadi, who had been appointed prime minister in November, 1967. The paper called for a democratic united front and for evolutionary change within the framework of the constitutional system. Babrak projected himself, as a "reformist economic" socialist. However, Babrak's accommodative strategies were insufficient to keep *Parcham* open, and it had been shut down on July 15, 1969, shortly before the Afghanistan's last free parliamentary election, held in August the same year.\*\*\*\*\*

Creating a united front against the Zahir Shah regime was one of the PDPA's main concerns following the 1969 election. But that seemed a far possibility. As despite having identical objectives, Khalq and Parcham could not be united. The PDPA's representation was cut by two seats in this election. Of the identified Parchamis, only Babrak was re-elected. Parcham might have realized about this time that the covert cooperation with Etemadi government outweighs the benefits of popular support. For its part, Khalq's Hafizullah Amin, who contested the election from his native constituency Paghman, near Kabul, was successful. Taraki and Jauzjani, however, lost again.\*\*\*\*\*

The tribal and provincial elites gained even greater power after a far more conservative parliament was elected in 1969. They learnt from previous experiences that being a Member of Parliament one enjoys more powers than his simple village Jirgah. The result was that the majority those elected to the parliament were tribal elders with village orientation and conservative in their approach on religious matters and state affairs compared to the parliament of 1965, which was having urban-oriented and liberal representation.\*\*\*\*\* The effect was to further cripple the central authority, which was likely their goal given that Afghan politics was characterized by a continuous power struggle between Kabul and the

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the legitimate material and political preparation for the socialist revolution". Babrak Karmal, "*On the Strategy and Tactics of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan*", *Parcham*, no.9 (1969).

\*\*\*\*\*The government after a year or more publication eventually shut down *Parcham*. This came in effect before the general elections of 1969 announced by the King on 21 April. Zahir Shah was determined not to permit the wave of criticism of the government and in particular of the monarchy to continue. Hafizullah Emadi, *State, Revolution, and Superpowers in Afghanistan*, (New York, Praeger, 1990), p. 49 & Dupree, *Afghanistan*, p. 616.

\*\*\*\*\* Kabul Time, 20 August, 1969.

\*\*\*\*\* Rubin, *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan*, p. 82.

provinces. While the king's impotence guaranteed the feudal-tribal ruling class's rise to power and made sure that no legislation would be passed that would threaten their position, other factions, such as liberals and leftists, were growing more and more discontented.††††††††††

In the winter of 1971-72, famine struck Afghanistan in the wake of a disastrous, prolonged drought. The government, already discredited by its inability to run the country effectively, failed to cope with the situation. Although the United States made available 200,000 tons of wheat, the Indo-Pakistan of 1971 delayed delivery of about a quarter of it, and the rest was delayed by the poor condition of the communication links and corruption among the food distribution. People were annoyed against the government's lack of proper measures to rescue the situation. It was probably about this time that Sardar Muhammad Daud Khan and his supporters started plotting to seize power by force.††††††††††

On 20 September 1953, Sardar Muhammad Daud Khan, cousin and brother-in-law of King Zahir Shah became the Prime Minister. Being a supporter of *Wikh-Zalmyan*§§§§§§§§§§ and their liberal ideas, Daud's internal and external policies were revolutionary: women were ordered to appear in public without veils (a reform King Amanullah attempted in vain in the 1920s); a central bureaucracy increasingly controlled the economy; East and West aid projects multiplied; Afghan troops received Soviet weapons and trainers; and the Pashtunistan issue became a focal point for nationalist sentiments.\*\*\*\*\* Moreover, Pakistan's response in 1955 and again in

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†††††††††† Emadi, *State, Revolution, and Superpowers in Afghanistan*, p. 58.

†††††††††† *Afghanistan's Two-Party Communism: Parcham and Khalq*, p. 43.

§§§§§§§§§§ In early 1947, a political-literary movement called *Wikh-Zalmyan* (Awakened Youth) was formed by Muhammad Rasool Pashtun in Kandhar. From Kandahar it spread over to Kabul. The ideology of the organization was the liberalization of state apparatus and with staunch approach towards Afghan nationalism. The members of Young Afghans (another liberal organization at that time) the Republicans, the pro-Amanullah elements, Democrats and some members of the royal family including Daud Khan and his brother Muhammad Naim, first cousins of the king Zahir, were its members. Fazl-ur-Rahim Marwat, *The Evolution and Growth of Communism in Afghanistan*, (Karachi: Royal Book Company, 1997), pp. 211-16.

\*\*\*\*\* When British India became independent as India and Pakistan in August 1947, the Pashtun territories, on the south-east of Afghanistan came under the authority of Pakistan. *Wikh-Zalmyan* argued that the tribal areas, NWFP (now Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) and part of Baluchistan, accommodated by the Pashtuns, too, should have had the option of declaring independence as the nation of Pashtunistan, which presumably would have been integrated into Afghanistan, making the Pashtuns united of both sides. But the British authorities did not give any heed to Afghan demand and the border was to remain the Durand Line, an

1961 on Pashtunistan had been to close its border with Afghanistan to all commerce, thus pushing Kabul into dependence on the USSR for transporting virtually all its foreign trade (at that time there were no suitable Afghan-Iranian road linkages). The economic dislocations that developed hardship on the people, and the ever-closer bonds with the Soviet Union were a source of Afghan distrust of Soviet expansion. During this time the country seemed in danger of losing its traditional independence, nonalignment, and neutrality in the conflict of Great Powers. Thus, in March 1963, King Zahir requested Sardar Daud to step down. Daud resigned without resistance.+++++

For Sardar Daud the only way back to power was a coup, given the prohibition in the constitution of 1964, against members of the royal family taking leading government roles. His plan for a forcible takeover won Parcham's hearty approval in the hope to share power without proving its popularity at the ballot box. It would also provide (or so Parcham calculated) a figurehead leader with non-communist credentials who could be retained or jettisoned after the Parcham had consolidated its power. All that would be necessary was to close ranks around Daud, alienating him apart from non-communist liberals, all Khalqis as well as those politically representing the religious elements.+++++

The army and air force officer corps were arguably the most significant segment of the newly educated urban elite that was unhappy with Zahir Shah. During Daud's tenure as premier (1953–63), the military gained a unique status. By sending numerous young officers to the Soviet Union for training and arming them with cutting-edge Soviet weaponry, he modernized and enlarged the army and air force. A large number of these officers shared Daud's dedication to modernizing and creating a new Afghanistan, which would allow them to have a prominent position in the political structure of the country. Supporting Daud was also motivated by the fact that the majority of these senior officers belonged to the Pashtun aristocracy, and Daud's tough stance on Pashtunistan won them over. Moreover, as the Parchamis network spread, and as the dissatisfaction with

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arbitrary demarcation of the 1893 that ran through tribal territories and left nearly half the Pashtun population outside Afghanistan. The Awakened Youth struck a popular responsive chord when it promoted the concept of Pashtunistan, a name that was to prove far more durable than that of the organization that first coined it. Dupree, *Afghanistan*, pp. 485-90.

+++++ M. P. Srivastava, *Soviet Intervention in Afghanistan*, (Delhi: Ess Publication, 1980) p.41.

+++++ Arnold, *Afghanistan's Two-Party Communism: Parcham and Khalq*, pp. 55-67.

Zahir Shah grew, it was probably about this time a clandestine alliance took place between Daud, Parcham, and the military. §§§§§§§§§§

Daud's *coup* took place on July 17, 1973, while the King was in Italy for the treatment of his eyes. It was nearly bloodless, the only casualties being accidental. Although the constitution was abolished, parliament dissolved, and political activity suspended, Parcham immediately set up an overt headquarters in Kabul's luxury Spinzar Hotel. It was the only political group known to have dared to operate so openly, its boldness doubtless stemming from Babrak's belief that Daud would be forced to rely on Parcham to run the country. §§§§§§§§§§

Some Parchamis became ministers, while others were nominated to the Revolutionary Council. There were reports that a Parchami triumvirate of Mir Akbar Khyber, Anahita Ratebzad, and Babrak Karmal had formed within Daud's Central Committee, an unofficial subcommittee that passed on all appointments. ††††††††††††††††††††

Later, the Khalqis also claimed that they had supported Daud's "revolutionary program", but, unlike Parcham, were careful to keep organizationally aloof and underground. Whereas Parcham had collaborated wholeheartedly with the Daud government, the Khalqis had been prepared to offer support only if Daud kept his "revolutionary" promises. †††††††††††††††††††† But the real reason Khalqis did not join Daud's government was that Parcham successfully kept them out. The immediate effect of the coup on the factional struggle was the reported desertion of some lower cadres of Khaqis to the Parcham party. Later, Khalqis willingness to collaborate with Daud was documented in a letter sent to him at the end of 1974 in which he was called on to fire his inefficient, corrupt Parchami ministers and replace them with Khalqis. §§§§§§§§§§

Daud's initial foreign policy reflected leftists' inspiration. Shortly after coming into power, he publicly voiced approval of Moscow's Asian

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§§§§§§§§§§ Beverley Male, *Revolutionary Afghanistan* (London, Croom Helm Ltd, 1982), p. 46. & Rubin, *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan*, p. 89.

§§§§§§§§§§ Arnold, *Afghanistan's Two-Party Communism: Parcham and Khalq*, p. 44.

†††††††††††††††††††† High-ranking officials in Daud's republican government included Major Faiz Muhammad as Interior Minister, Pacha Gul Wafadar as Frontier Affairs Minister, Major Abdul Qadir, who was reportedly close to Parcham, as Vice-Commander of the Air Force, and Major Zia Muhammadzai Zia, a royal family member who favored Parcham, as Chief of the Republican Guard. Dupree, *Afghanistan*, p.7 & Halliday, "The Revolution in Afghanistan", p. 29.

†††††††††††††††††††† Saleh Muhammad Zeary, "Afghanistan: The Beginning of a New Era", *World Marxist Review* 22, no.1 (Kabul, January 1979), p. 75.

§§§§§§§§§§ Bradsher, *Afghanistan and the Soviet Union*, p. 58.

collective Plan, aimed at isolating and containing China. He was hostile to Pakistan and Iran, supporting freedom and independence for its Pashtun and Baluch ethnic communities in the proposed states of Pashtunistan and Greater Baluchistan, to be carved from their territory.\*\*\*\*\*

Domestically also Daud pursued policies that own PDPA approval. As stated earlier, he abrogated the constitution and dissolved parliament. All non-governmental publishing was abolished, and state control was tightened over industry and commerce.+++++

### PDPA at Revolution

#### *Daud's Political Maneuvering and PDPA*

From the beginning, however, Daud saw the danger that the organized-left posed to his rule. It wasn't until early 1974 that Daud felt comfortable enough to distance himself from the left, gradually substituting his own family members or previous royalist ministers for radical ones.+++++ Meanwhile, Daud's quicker pace of turn in foreign policy was also intolerable to the Soviet bloc sympathizers. In addition to improving relations with Pakistan+++++ and inviting Reza Shah Pahlvi, the Shah of Iran, to visit Kabul in June 1978, Daud did not

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\*\*\*\*\* Ibid.

+++++ "The Establishment of the Marxist-Leninist Party of Afghanistan", p. 15.

+++++ Ali Ahmad Khoram was appointed Minister of Planning in May 1974, and Muhammad Khan Jalal, a former Finance Minister, was appointed Minister of Commerce in January. These were two significant conservative appointments. Pacha Gula Wafadar, the frontier Affairs minister, and Abdul Hamid Mohtat, the communication minister, were dismissed in March and April. By the end of 1975, Abdul Qadir Nuristani, the former Chief of Police known for his brutality, had replaced Parchami Faiz Muhammad as the final significant Interior Minister in charge of security services and provincial government. After playing a key role in uniting the air force against Daud in 1973, Major Abdul Qadir was stripped of his Vice-Commander duties and sent to oversee a military slaughterhouse. Simultaneously, former Prime Minister Muhammad Musa Shafiq and Abdul Wali Shah, who had both been denounced as "traitors" in December 1973, were released from prison. Arnold, *Afghanistan's Two-Party Communism: Parcham and Khalq*, p. 60.

+++++ By 1975 Pashtunistan rhetoric had come down noticeably, and, in 1976, celebration of the Pashtunistan day was nominal. Contrary to the previous practice, the presence of civil servants was not mandatory, and, although, several officials of ministerial rank attended, Daud himself did not. Earlier that year he held two brief but cordial meetings with Pakistan's Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, and relations were as warm as at any point in the history of the two states. Ibid. p. 64.

By 1976 a special commission appointed by Daud had prepared a draft constitution. In January 1977 he convened a *Loya Jirgah*, with representatives from all over the country, to discuss the future affairs of the country. There was little or no leftist participation in this body; this showed Parcham's estrangement from the Daud government explicitly. After two weeks of debate, which resulted in 34 amendments and 6 new articles, the constitution of 1976, became the basic law of the land. It provided for a unicameral parliament (*Milli Jirgah*) and a one party state, which would be elected every four years and handle routine legislation. The new constitution enshrined the *Loya Jirgah*, traditionally Afghanistan's ultimate decision-making body, as the "paramount power of the will of the people" and spell out rules for its size, composition, election of members, and other details. The constitution contained socialist and revolutionary rhetoric, and called for 'economic and social reform', 'the elimination of exploitation', land reform and nationalization. At the end of the debate, the assembly elected Daud president for the next six-year term. ++++++

For Khalq and Parcham both, this shift in foreign policy and on domestic level was tantamount to treason.\*\*\*\*\* The constitution and Daud's invitation for all political groupings to unite in his *Hizb-i-Inqilab-i-Milli*

\*\*\*\*\* Bradsher, *Afghanistan and the Soviet Union*, pp. 66-67.

+++++ It would meet only on an ad hoc basis, to decide especially important questions of policy. Following parliamentary nomination, the president would be chosen by a two-thirds majority of the *Loya Jirgah*, which would be primarily made up of representatives from the government, the party, and the military forces. The party would also nominate candidates for the parliament. Dupree, *Afghanistan*, pp. 763-764.

##### In their foreign policy, Khalq and Parcham were deeply committed to the Pashtunistan cause. Of the two, Parcham (in spite of its broader ethnic representation) was more dedicated to the Pashtunistan issue than Khalq. Khalq believed in an autonomous and sovereign Pashtunistan, which would be integrated with Afghanistan with the passage of time, whereas Parcham wanted it to be part of Afghanistan. Arnold, *Afghanistan's Two-Party Communism: Parcham and Khalq*, p. 64.

Moreover, In the first months of Daud's rule, Parcham had launched an intensive recruitment drive, but by the end of 1973, this had been slowed down. Parcham lost strength both in absolute term and in relation to Khalq. It had to share responsibility for mistakes committed by Daud regime. Still, in 1976, there were enough Parchamis left in Daud's government that the party apparently did not dare resume recruitment for fear of jeopardizing the positions of those who remained. \*\*\*\*\*

## Re-unification of PDPA

In July and August 1975, Parcham and Khalq, held their first reconciliation talks since the 1967 split of the PDPA. While they were still in progress, Parcham apparently published a self-serving version of them, violating a prior agreement to keep the negotiations confidential until their conclusion. Khalq broke off the talks, giving Daud another brief respite.+++++

However, a plea for PDPA unity appeared in the *Party Life*, publication of the Communist Party of India (CPI) on May 22, 1976. The article was published under the byline of N. K. Krishnan, a member of the Politburo and the secretary of the CPI. In order to put Daud's republican government's new policies into effect, he urged Afghanistan's progressive forces to band together. Krishnan regretted the 1967 split and stated that "there seems to be less rationale for the maintenance of the divide in the circumstances of today." He referred to the PDPA as "a focal point of the

##### “*The Establishment of the Marxist-Leninist Party of Afghanistan*”,  
p. 11.

\*\*\*\*\* Ibid. p. 61.

+++++ Louis Dupree, *A Note on Afghanistan*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), p.11.

[illegible]



There is another version of the Khalq and Parcham reconciliation, which indicate the efforts of Ajmal Khattak (the former General Secretary of the left-leaning National Awami Party of Pakistan, who was then in exile in Kabul since 1973). Daud's soften stand on Pashtunistan issue and his inclination toward the right parties provoked leftist sentiments all over the region against his regime. Ajmal Khattak used to sit with the party to cadres (apparently with the Parchamis) because of his own affiliation with the left movement and due to his literary works, which were admired in those circles. His friends in the PDPA asked him to begin conciliatory effort between the two factions to which he agreed. In May, he made an effort for reconciliation and by eradicating the irrational grievances of each faction in July 1977 the splintered PDPA's factions were unified.

Due to the head of a larger faction, Khalq, and his seniority in age to all, Taraki was elected as the United Party's general secretary. Karmal became his deputy; all civilian groups were to be merged under a central committee of thirty members, with equal treatment for all. Taraki was also part of the eleven-member politburo that took the place of the previous Central Committee. The two sides shared the remaining posts equally. According to some sources, numerically, Khalq commanded two or three times more membership than of Parcham, but Parcham could accept nothing less than parity in the membership of a combined central committee.<sup>††††††††††††††††</sup>

Each faction continued to try to recruit its own military supporters even after the formal unification.\*\*\*\*\* Such was the fragile and

According to Krishnan's March 1981 interview, he submitted copies of the article to Karmal and Taraki, and in July 1976, they sent emissaries to see him in New Delhi. The representatives of Khalq and Parcham, whose identities had not been revealed, agreed in March 1977 to bring these two groups back together in India. M. Farooqi, another member of the CPI central committee, and Krishnan were the CPI delegates in the negotiations. In July 1977, the PDPA representatives returned home to set up the unification summit. Bradsher, *Afghanistan and the Soviet Union*, p. 69.

\*\*\*\*\* Male, *Revolutionary Afghanistan*, pp. 58-59.

++++ No copy of the Khalq-Parcham agreement of July 3, 1977, appeared in the public. However, it seems that neither faction trusted the other and each kept its own separate organization intact. Ibid. p. 59.

By 1977, the Soviet Union had trained 3,700 Afghan officers and non-commissioned officers to use the USSR's \$600 million worth of military equipment. During their training period, a majority of these officers were

## The Saur Revolution of 1978

The first event that precipitated the April change was the murder of Mir Akbar Khyber. On the night of April 17, 1978, two men came to Khyber's home, called him out on the street, and shot him dead. On 19 April, two days later, his body was taken in procession, attended by a large crowd in front of presidential palace and buried on the road-side. All along the way, the processionists, men and women, were raising slogans in favor of PDPA and Mir Akbar Khyber. In front of the U.S. Embassy, they slowed down, to a standstill, to give an impression that the assassination had been committed at the instance of the CIA. At the grave, almost all the PDPA members and sympathizers took an oath for revenge of the cold blood murder of the Khyber and held responsible the government for it. ++++++

§§§§§§§§§§§§§§§§ Saur is month of Afghan Calendar corresponding with April.

### *The Dialogue*

In any event, the assassination of Khyber set in motion a sequence of events that resulted in the PDPA seizing power ten days later. Anger with Daud's government and policies, which had been simmering beneath the surface until then, was expressed during the anti-government protest. The PDPA's display of power alarmed Daud. The following week on 24 April, 1978, he called a cabinet meeting and decided first to round up the PDPA leadership and at later stage to make an account of groups affiliated to PDPA in civil and armed services (of which they were not completely assured of identities).+++++

On Wednesday, 26 April, Daud's security police simultaneously raided at midnight seven ranking PDPA Central Committee members: Taraki, Karmal, Amin, Dr. Akbar Shah Wali, Dastagir Panjsheri, Abdul hakim Sharayee Jauzjani, and Dr. Zamir Safi. The police party raided the house of Taraki at 10 p.m. on 25 April. The wife of Taraki blocked their entry and resisted all the courtesy and pleas offered by the police until her right hand, which had a scab, was slightly injured by a nail to bleed. The police, still trying to console her, being a lady, and making an apology, forced their entry and searched the house. A big quantity of leftist literature and some documents were recovered. At about 4 a.m. of 26<sup>th</sup>, Taraki was put in the prison of Kabul police headquarter, after his medical check-up. \$\$\$\$\$\$

The Police party assigned to arrest Amin exercised negligence. They merely held Amin under very loose house arrest for a critical ten-and-a-half-hour period, during which he was able to set in motion the coup plan that had been rehearsed before. \*\*\*\*\* To inquire about Taraki's whereabouts, Amin dispatched his son Abdur Rehman, who was also a committed party member. He brought back the news of the leader's arrest

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apparently was opposed to the establishment of PDPA government in Afghanistan at this early stage. According to him, the conditions were not congenial for the success of Communist government in Afghanistan. Amin disliked this argument and considered him an hurdle in his pre-planned seizer of power. Few also doubted Russian involvement but with no clear evidence. It was also believed that Abdul Qadir Nuristani, a non-Communist participant in the 1973 revolution and Daud's powerful new interior minister, whether or not Daud approved of it, desired to bring down the Communist leadership, who could pose a potential threat to the regime in near future. Bradsher, *Afghanistan and the Soviet Union*, p. 73 & Arnold, *Afghanistan's Two-Party Communism: Parcham and Khalq*, p. 58.

+++++ "On The Saur Revolution", pp. 15-16.

\$\$\$\$\$ Ibid. p.23.

\*\*\*\*\* Preparing for the coup of 28 Aril, 1978 (Saur Revolution), Khalq claims to have held ten rehearsals in the months preceding April 1978. Ibid. p. 23.

around six o'clock. With just five hours to spare before he was taken into custody and imprisoned, Amin put the plan into action, ordering the revolution to start at nine in the morning. ++++++

Not only the movements of his children were not checked, but also Amin was allowed to receive some Khalqis at home and discuss with them, and comfortably put in on paper, the plot of overthrow of the Daud regime. He received the central Committee member Faqir Muhammad Faqir. Amin gave Faqir an elaborate set of orders to be delivered to Sayed Muhammad Gulabzoi ++++++ and other key officers. Gulabzoi was directed to carry the message to the high command cadres in the Air Force and Air Defense Units at Khwaja Rawash airport near Kabul. Another Central Committee member, Muhammad Zarif was instructed with additional copies for Saleh Muhammad and Khyal Muhammad Katawazi, who were to take charge of Radio Afghanistan. Preparations for the plot and issuance of the orders concluded at 10:30 a.m., after that, Amin was taken by armed police in three vehicles to prison at 10:45 a.m. ++++++

Things went more or less according to the plan. The Defense Minister, General Ghulam Haider Rasooli was at first misinformed with regard to the movements of the troops that some students were preparing to come out in protest for the PDPA leaders and they might arouse the masses in support. ++++++ Aslam Watanjar ++++++ left the Armored Corps Headquarters in Puli Charkhi at precisely 11:30, leading a convoy of 250 tanks and armored vehicles. He fired the first shots at the Defense Ministry before noon. The 7th and 8th Divisions, with

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+++++ The timing was decided by the officers' daily bus ride to their different units, which they used to convey the directives to begin the revolution. Ibid. 24.

+++++ Sayed Muhammad Gulabzoi (born 1951) was one of the leaders of PDPA's Khalq faction. An Afghan Air Force mechanic by training, he studied at the Air Force College. Following the coup, he was appointed aide to President Nur Muhammad Taraki, and later Minister of Communications. J. Bruce Amstutz, *Afghanistan: The First Five Years of Soviet Occupation*, (Washington: Diane Publishing, 1986), p. 388.

+++++ Male, *Revolutionary Afghanistan*, p. 63.

+++++ Arnold, *Afghanistan's Two-Party Communism: Parcham and Khalq*, p. 60.

+++++ Mohammad Aslam Watanjar (1946-24 November 2000) was also member of the Khalqi faction in officer corps of Afghan Military. He was Minister of Internal Affairs from 1988 to 1990 and Defense of the Republic of Afghanistan from 1990 to 1992. He was the main military leaders of the 1978 Saur Revolution. J. Bruce Amstutz, *Afghanistan: The First Five Years of Soviet Occupation*, pp.388-89.

the 8th directly under Rasooli's command, put up the strongest fight in defense of Daud, as was to be expected. The 8th Division surrendered when Rasooli and other high-ranking officers departed the Central Forces headquarters. The 4<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Armored Corps, stationed at Puli Charkhi, were ordered to go in operation on Khalqi Side. The roads and streets were occupied and the presidential palace was attacked.\*\*\*\*\*

In the meantime, other revolutionaries were searching for the leaders who had been imprisoned. It was 5:30 p.m., before they located the correct jail, destroyed the wall with tanks and armored vehicles, and freed the Central Committee members. At the same time at 5:30 p.m. the Khalqi forces occupied the radio station. The leaders of the party arrived there half an hour later. At 7 p.m., Amin made the victory announcement over the radio with the consent of party leadership. After that Taraki, Karmal and other Central Committee members withdrew from Radio station to the comparatively safe airport. But Amin remained there to communicate with the Khalqi officers all over.\*\*\*\*\*

When on 27<sup>th</sup> April, announcement of victory of the revolution was broadcasting over radio Kabul, fight in the presidential palace was continued and Daud was still alive. While the 7th Division in Reshkhori persisted in its fight, the Khalqis were being fired upon from within the Daud's Arg (Presidential Palace). The Khalqi pilots started firing on Daud's Arg with their fighter jets at this time, as Kabul was growing gloomy, rainy, and overcast. This forced the officers and men to surrender before morning. Nevertheless, Daud, his family members, and servants were putting up a fierce fight. In the succeeding shootout Daud's eighteen family members were killed, including five children, the youngest of them three years old. Taraki later on claimed that only 72 soldiers and others died, while Amin said the overall death toll was 101, and independent estimates of deaths went into thousands.\*\*\*\*\*

On 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> April, Revolutionary Council of Armed Forces was formed and on 30<sup>th</sup> it merged in the newly formed Revolutionary Council of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan. Nur Muhammad Taraki was elected unanimously as President of the Revolutionary Council and Prime Minister of the State. On the first of May 1978, the

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\*\*\*\*\* Bradsher, *Afghanistan and the Soviet Union*, p. 31.

\*\*\*\*\* "On The Saur Revolution", p. 46.

\*\*\*\*\* Of the units that resisted the coup, only the Republican Guards, Daud's elite 2,000-men bodyguard, fought to the end. Eighteen hundreds of them were supposed to die in the fight and other 200 were taken prisoners who were also executed at a later stage. Arnold, *Afghanistan's Two-Party Communism: Parcham and Khalq*, p. 61.

Soviet Union was the first State to recognize the new government of Democratic Republic of Afghanistan on May 1. Later on other countries extended recognition. On May 4, Taraki, in his first press conference denied affiliation of the re-united PDPA with Communist movement. He intended to follow non-aligned policy of neutrality in international politics.+++++

From the time of formation of PDPA in 1965 till its fragmentation in 1967, the party progressed in terms of recruiting teachers, students and people from media and bringing out some publications. But the split of PDPA into Khalq and Parcham factions in July 1967, and the socio-economic backwardness of Afghanistan, with only 5% literacy rate, were some major reasons, which minimized its effectiveness in the mainstream national politics of Afghanistan. It was also conceived from the beginning that there two kinds of representations in the party, whose constituencies were distinct in terms of ethnicity, and socio-economic backgrounds. This assumption was further proved when the leadership of PDPA developed personal cults along these lines.

Parcham was more open to the approach of moderation with respect to monarchy and even later co-opted with Daud's republican regime, whereas Khalq was keeping its ideological purity and was more concentrated to gain popular support for its cause. Parcham's emphasis on a "common front" approach, although it appealed to a wider spectrum of political support than did Khalq, alienated the more militant revolutionaries and automatically led to a looser organization with reduced unity and discipline. By contrast, Khalq maintained tight control over its members, adhering to a more rigid, purer form of Marxism-Leninism and priding itself on intellectualism and maturity.

The impact of split of PDPA was the further weakening of Afghan leftist politics on national stage, which was pulled by Khalq and Parcham in two different directions with respective approaches. Khalq, to gain power, concentrated on the recruitment in military, which was prepared for that purpose, since most of the Afghan cadres were trained in USSR and thus converted to Marxist ideology and Parcham fulfilled this

†††††††††††††††††††† “On The Saur Revolution”, pp. 32-33.

\*\*\*\*\* Arnold, *Afghanistan's Two-Party Communism: Parcham and Khalq*, p. 63.

ambition by sharing power with Daud's republican government. However, Daud's political maneuvering in international politics from Left to the right and showing more neutrality in the than Super Power rivalry at the expense of alienating domestic power-sharing, shattered the Parcham's dream of gradual progress through socialist reforms. This provided a catalyst for Khalq and Parcham to re-unite for the realization of their long-standing goal of changing the Afghan society abruptly.

Moreover, the struggle of two hostile revolutionary forces for changing the centuries old Afghan society in no time latter on proved catastrophic for state and society even with the best intentions of PDPA. Theoretical contradictions also played their role for an unsuccessful attempt to implement the communist system in a society, which was at large, tribal-feudal structure. According to Marxist theory, the stage of transition from feudalism would be capitalism, whereas PDPA tried for an incomplete process employing the instrument of party in accordance with Leninist idea and went directly for advance stage of socialism from feudalism. The Soviet backing for PDPA was necessary; since former was supporting the forces of change in the third world countries and more than that the success of communist regime would have served for their Russian expansionist agenda.

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