



Circe-Film

Circe-Film · Karolingerstr. 88 · 4000 Düsseldorf

Filmproduktion GmbH
Karolingerstr. 88
4000 Düsseldorf
Telefon (02 11) 34 16 59

Düsseldorf, den

TSCHADARI & BUZ KASCHI
- Afghan women today -

a film by
Elke Jonigkeit

c CIRCE-FILM-GmbH

Karolingerstr. 88
4000 Düsseldorf 1
West-Germany

Male voices:

Is she American?
No, German.

Why the veil?

She's living
with Afghan women and

making a film about them.

- Afghan women today -

Kabul

Chadar & Buzkashi

Commentary

TEXT 1

Dear friend in strange and faraway Europe,

Allah continues to give me the strength to endure the difficulties of life here in Kabul.

I clearly remember your first days of work on the film.

For you, the Chadar - our veil - was just an obvious image of how repressed and backward Afghan women are.

You and your film crew could hardly wait to start filming the veiled, illiterate woman dictating a letter to a scribe in the street.

The others - those who can read and write and who don't wear the veil - weren't interesting enough.

"Too normal pictures," you always said.

Since our country's been afflicted by war, it's no longer clear who is hiding behind the veil.

Discussion of the pros and cons of the veil has flared up again.

You feel a heaviness
in your body.

Your head's on fire.
Your shoulders are heavy.

The world seems
cramped and dark.

You can only see
straight in front of you.

It's difficult to breath -
everything's difficult.

Two veiled girls:

It's the custom
in Afghanistan.

You see everything. Great!

We see everybody who tries
to flirt in secret.

Boarding-school girls:

Some husbands don't want

their wives to go out
with their faces uncovered.

It depends on the family.

For them it's the custom
to wear the veil.

I don't mind,
if it's what they want.

Whatever they want -
to wear the veil or not,

to study or not -
it's up to them.

But if they do study
and discard the veil,

it's better.
I think that's good.

Do your family force you
to wear the veil?

No, it's not a matter
of compulsion.

It's up to us whether we

wear the veil or not.

You're wearing one!

My mother wears the veil.
She says:

{ "it's good, so wear it.

{ Our country is Islamic,

and in the Islamic view
it's a good thing!"

At home - ist there your
western clothing accepted?

No, we wear our
national dress there.

I see. At home you wear
those baggy trousers.

There, next to you.

Yes, like yours.

A young girl

If my husband says
"wear the veil",

I will.
If not, I won't

What job do you want to do?

Film and theatre actress.

A man

When a woman
goes out of the house,

Islamic custom requires
that she wear a veil.

The veil's a symbol of
her integrity and honour.

The veil prevents
social degeneration.

Kabul

1974

TEXT 2

In Pakistan the old arguments are being used to conceal women behind the veil again.

After the Communist Revolution: the Revolution of the Islamic Fundamentalists!

In Pakistan: they've decreed that women wear the veil.

In Afghanistan: they pressurize women into discarding the veil.

As a result of this pressure, some women flee even further, to you in the West. Here, others wear the veil as a sign of protest.

The massive attack on our traditional way of life and thinking is forcing us to reassess our traditions as well as our religion.

TEXT 3

Appearances are deceptive these days at the University of Kabul. You have to look closer, remember well:

If for instance more than 50 % of the students today are women, it's not because our government is progressive and favours women. The fact is: a large number of the young men are fighting in the war.

I hope you managed to find some pictures to prove that we women studied side by side with men before the Revolution in 1978 - without veils, of course!

I even think that we were more modern then than now.

As far back as 1970 we demonstrated publicly for the right of women to be educated and to choose their own husbands.

They stuck them in here
and turned on the current.

The first 2 or 3 nights
were terrible.

When they turned on
the electricity I felt

a kind of flowing sensation
all over my body,

then my ears began to ache
and my jaw went stiff

as if it was
completely paralysed.

Later I realized why

I had to stand bare-foot:

to make me "conduct"
the electricity better.

If I raised my feet a bit,
I didn't feel

the electricity
quite so much.

Woman in front of poster

This poster shows

a woman labourer
holding a hammer

and a woman peasant
holding an ear of corn.

There's a woman
defending the Revolution,

a gun at her shoulder.

Another woman is learning
to read and write

in a literacy course.

At the bottom

the leader of the world's
proletariat is quoted:

"Without women no movement
can be successful!"

Literacy course

Since the April Revolution
we have been at pains

to improve the quality
and the quantity

of the corn.

The most important
agricultural principle

is to spray the corn.

Please read that sentence!

The most important
agricultural principle...

And now you, please.

...to spray the corn.

This makes the corn
stronger.

This makes the corn
stronger and helps

the growing corn
to become more hardy.

Pakistan.
Afghan refugee camp

Nageeba

We had lots of problems
when we tried

to set up schools
in the camps here

because some people
disapprove of

education for girls.

They think that every
educated girl

or educated person
is a communist.

Because of that
they don't allow

their girls to go
to school.

So, many problems arose
when we started up

the schools in the camps.

Some people even came
and threw stones

at our school
to make us close it.

So we sent our brothers
from the Mujahedin

to convince them that
we're not communists

and are on their side,
and that we want

them to be educated,
to know something

about their lives
and everything else.

Sometimes this was
successful, but

sometimes we had to
move our schools

to another area.

But when they saw
that these schools weren't

like schools in Afghanistan

and weren't anti-Islamic,
they were less suspicious.

- 12 -

Then the same people

who had thrown stones at us

asked us to set up schools
where they lived.

So we have
lots of problems, but

we have to live with them
and at least try.

The song of the girls in the camp "AKKU"

In the name of Allah!

"The voice of the Mujahed."

My sword in my hand,

I'm going to fight
the holy war of Islam.

For my faith
I will give my life.

Our country is the house
our love lives in.

The Russians have come
and forced their way in.

I am a Mujahed,
I will break the will

of the Russians.

For my faith
I will give my life.

Islam is our honour.

Islam gives us dignity.

I won't cede the enemies
of Islam anything.

For my faith
I will give my life.

The Mujahed
has sworn an oath:

"For my country
I will lay down my life.

For Islam I will always be
ready to lay down my life.

For my faith
I will give my life.

Our banner says:
'Allah is great!'

When we speak we say:
'Allah is great!'

With a cry of
'Allah is great!'

I will sacrifice my life.

At the blackboard

Where is the front sight?
- There! -

How do you take aim?

I look at the target through
the front and rear sights.

Do you aim at the Russian's
belly or at his feet?

At his belly

to make sure he won't
come back to life.

Good.
Now you - come here!

There are 6 sorts
of standard weapons:

e.g. the light weapon,
which fires small

and large ammunition

- 16 -

from a barrel,
using gas and explosives.

They fall into
8 categories,

one is
the Kalaschnikov.

Loud shouting

Allah is great!

Long live Islam!
May it live!

May the Koran rule!
May it rule!

Long live Islam!
May it live!

Allah is great!
Allah is great!

Kabul.

Little red soldiers

Greetings!

Long live the Revolutionary
Party of Afghanistan!

May it live!

Long live Soviet-Afghan
friendship!

May it live!

Long live Soviet-Afghan
friendship!

May it live!

May peace rule forever!

May it rule!

May war be destroyed!

Destroyed!

We want peace!

I shall be at hand
as an Afghan soldier.

As my country's guardian,
I will sacrifice my life.

I will grow up
to be a hero,

a guardian
of my country.

The flowers in the fields
give me their love.

In my heart I will
always believe this:

I will grow up
to be a hero,

a guardian
of my country.

Pakistan.
Afghan refugee camp

A child's voice

TEXT 4

I'm making a car
to take our things

and I want to take our things
to the Punjab
so we can get help.

at first you don't know what to do
Kabul

but you can't stay in Kabul
it is too dangerous

and you can't stay in Kabul
because it is too dangerous
and you can't stay in Kabul
because it is too dangerous

You can't stay in Kabul
because it is too dangerous

TEXT 4

As I write, I can't help smiling again at your reaction when I showed you the handiwork project for women refugees in Pakistan.

At first you didn't even want to film it.

Sewing, knitting, embroidering - these were supposed to be progressive women?!

And yet for the average Afghan woman the act of going out of the house to work with other women is a decisive step towards independence - the first stirrings of self-confidence.

You can't imagine what it's like never to have had any money of your own.

TEXT 5

Women labourers in a building collective - pictures of Afghanistan today. Do they satisfy you?

Perhaps your women can cope with the double burden of family and work because you have everything: electricity, running water, washing machines etc.

Here the day isn't long enough to get all the housework done.

Remember: almost every Afghan woman has more than 5 children and has to look after parents and other members of the family.

And even where electricity's available - electrical appliances are simply far too expensive for normal people.

Woman at wire

You been working here long?
- For 6 years. -

How many children you got?
- 1 child. -

How much do you earn?
- 2,500 Afghanis. -

9,500.-- ?
- No. 2,500.-- -

Is that enough?

- Enough...? If we want,
we can do overtime.

If we don't want to,
we don't have to.

Woman factory worker

My name's Nazi Bibi.

I work in the
inside walls section.

I've been working here
for 14 years,

can do everything.

I can operate the machine,

the switches, and if need be
I can work the crane, too.

I've taught other women to
do the job. I train them.

I can do all the jobs here.

Life is better for us now.

I've got 4 children.
1 girl, 3 boys.

One's still a toddler,
at home, and 2 others

- 23 -

I sent to stay with
our Russian allies.

My daughter is a mid-wife
in the hospital here.

I have a very good life.
Thank you.

Pakistan.
Afghan refugee camp

TEXT 6

It was a pity you weren't able to film some of the non-conformist women. Perhaps that's why I remember so clearly what was said to us in the corridor:

"I'm expected to be beautiful, educated - and to work like a donkey.

I'm expected to be a man, a woman and a donkey all in one!"

TEXT 7

You felt more at home with the Soviet-style blocks of flats than with our mud houses.

But how can our extended families with their 20 or 30 members possibly live in such boxes?

Or is that what they want? To destroy the extended family, the foundation of a society that has been so difficult to conquer?

It's so much easier to get a grip on the nuclear family in such small flats.

The pressure of the alien life style has increased from year to year.

Reason enough for several million of our small population to leave their native country.

Woman in block of flats

I am Hafiza. I work
in a building collective.

I've been working in
this factory for 6 years.

I live in a workers'
housing estate,

built by the collective.

For us it's very good.
Low rent,

electricity 24 hours a day,

hot water twice a week,
cold water all the time.

There's a polyclinic,
a school, a crèche

and a kindergarten.

After the Revolution
I stayed on at work

and discarded the veil.

My family don't ask:

"Why don't you [↑]
wear a veil?"

I've been married
for 7 years,

as second wife,
to my husband.

I live, together with
my husband's first wife,

in a flat, and we have
a good, quiet life.

What else should I say?

You laughed, and then
I forgot everything.

Am I not the second wife?
I'm not the first, am I?

What's it like for you
being the first wife?

Can you describe how you
come to terms with that?

To start with, I found it
very difficult.

I've got used to it
in the 7 years since.

- 26 -

I don't think about it
so much now.

I did earlier.

I'm against a man
having two wives.

I'm really against it!

When I married my husband,

I didn't work for the state
as I do now,

I wasn't in the Party
or the Womens' Council.

If I'd thought then

like I do now,
I'd never have done it.

But that was fate, and
it's over and done with.

My husband married me
because he had no children.

As luck had it, I couldn't
have children, either.

Girls in a Boarding-School

Do you want to get married?

Yes, after university.

Will you want children?

4 children.

And you?

Two.

It's the tradition here
for parents to decide

who girls marry.

No, our families propose
someone, then ask us.

But they know better
than we do.

They assess the intended's
character and education.

- 28 -

Then they ask us
whether we accept this man.

Then we say "yes" or "no".

Do you already know
your husband to be?

Not yet.

Do your parents
have someone in mind?

Yes, they did have.

But because I'm a student
I said no.

Why ?

Because I wouldn't be able
to continue my studies.

That creates problems.

Would you consider marrying
a foreigner, and indeed

are you allowed to marry
a man who's not an Afghan?

No.

Why not?

No, we're Moslems.

As Moslems we can't
marry foreigners.

Is that what you yourselves
want or is it tradition and

you know you can't do
anything about that anyway?

No, our hearts wouldn't be
in it, if we married them.

Why not? That's prejudice
against foreigners.

Translate it.

No, we want to be
friends with them,

but we don't want
to marry them.

That's completely untrue!
We're not at all prejudiced

against foreigners.

Well, it's obvious it's obvious

that you're not prejudiced
against foreigners.

But your men quite often
marry foreign women.

Because they're men.

According to Islam,
there's nothing wrong

with men marrying
foreign women.

Their wives can become
Moslems.

women are not allowed

to marry foreigners
or non-Moslems.

Your men are allowed
to have 4 wives,

for you it's not allowed.

Wars and catastrophes
reduce the number of men.

To stop families being left
without a head of family

men can marry 4 women.

But women can't marry
2 men.

A man (Hekmatyar)

I think women have

more rights than men
in an Islamic society.

A man (Motawazeh)

In the name of Allah!
My name is Motawazeh.

I'm in the Control and Order
Committee of the

Hisb-e-Islami-e-Afghanistan
Party.

Every family needs
someone to lead them.

In Islamic Law
it's the father.

He is the head
of the family.

He does all the hard and
difficult jobs

outside the house.
Jobs that women manage

only with difficulty.

Women do the easy jobs
in the home and outside.

The jobs they're suited for
by nature and character.

Some people say men are
more gifted and stronger.

As a result, men have
the strength and potency

to marry more
than one woman.

Women have their periods
once a month, and

during this time they can't
sleep with their husbands.

Or a man's wife may be
infertile or old.

For these reasons
men are allowed

to have more
than one wife.

44

Our clothing is expensive,
7,000 Afghans.

Our friends wear suits,
not turbans.

Our clothing is outdated.

Our country has
a rural population.

the destruction of all
customs and practices.

As my friend says,
progress results in

according to how advanced
their country is.

The clothing and habits
of a people vary

all customs and traditions
are done away with.

In the course of time

Every country in the world
progresses and develops.

3 men

- 36 -

For 7,000 Afghanis
you could buy meat

or something else for
the wife or the children.

It will be abolished.
For us that would be good.

Workers and farmers

We worked.

What did you do
for a living before?

We tilled the land
and raised cattle.

We're doing the same
thing now, and we'll

go on doing it in future.

And what were you?

I was a farmer and
raised cattle, too.

What do you want to do
in peacetime?

- 37 -

The same again.

Are you married?

Yes.

Do you have any children?

Yes, six.

I've got 7.

How many girls?
How many boys?

I've only got 5 boys
and 3 girls. 8 altogether.

He forgot it.
He's got 8 children.

I've got 10 children.
4 girls, 6 boys and 3 wives.

Should Afghan society remain
like that in the future?

Or will you renounce
polygamy?

Oh no! Because our country
was backward and our

population illiterate,
everybody could do

just as he liked.

We had capitalism
and feudalism.

Are you for or against it?

No! I'm against it.

A man, a woman
and 2 children.

Pakistan.
Afghan refugees' graveyard

Kabul

TEXT 8

Our visit to the Graveyard of the Revolution made me very sad.

You don't have to be a member of the Party to feel that - after all, more than 35,000 of my compatriots are buried here.

And yet we saw hardly anybody, who'd come here to mourn them.

They died - but what for?!

Your permit to film at the Graveyard with its signatures from the Foreign Ministry, of various generals and the Governor of Kabul still decorates the wall in my room.

How much distress the dead still cause the living!

Do they want to keep the public in the dark about the large number of casualties claimed by the Revolution?

Or do they want to hush up the fact that many of the graves have been destroyed? And certainly not just because Islam forbids the decoration of graves with pictorial images.

Never before in Afghanistan have the dead needed metal cages to protect their tombs.

Day in and day out - like on an assembly-line - young men are buried here. Martyrs, as even the Communists call the soldiers who fall in the war, who sacrifice their lives for the ideals of the Revolution.

TEXT 9

Martyrs - that's what the Mujahedin call their dead, too.

They have sacrificed their lives for Allah, fighting against the communist adversary in jihad, the holy war.

There was sorrow here, too. And yet - didn't you sense an atmosphere of confidence, as well?

The relatives take consolation in the certain knowledge that their nearest and dearest haven't died in vain, that through their sacrifice they have gained entry into Paradise. Without this belief, I think such huge sacrifices would be impossible:

After all, more than 5.5 million of our population of 17 million have fled abroad. Another 2 million wander around, homeless in their own country.

1 million wounded, more than 1 million killed!

Do you know of another people that has had to endure so much?

TEXT 10

Was our King of The Two Swords, The Shah of
Doschamschera, able to help you?

Did he fulfil your wish?

From one Wednesday to the next, the number of women who
come to the grave of the King of Two Swords seeking
consolation and help seems to increase - and not only
religious women.

Shah e Doschamschera

Shah-e-Doschamschera Wali
is a Holy Place.

We come here to pray.

Everybody believes

their wishes will be
fulfilled here.

Everybody believes this.

Noone leaves this place
without hope.

Girl in yellow sweater

Why have you come here?

I've come to this Holy
Place in order to pray

for peace in Afghanistan.

They expect us young people
to defend our country

right down to the last
drop of blood.

I would like to get on
with my education,

stay top of the class
and become a doctor.

2 girls with their veils drawn back

Everybody in Afghanistan
should, with the help of

National Reconciliation,
be able to live in peace.

I went to school,
qualified for university.

Then, for 3 months,
I went to university.

Due to the morals
and practices there

I left the faculty.
Then my father said

I should wear
the veil, too, now.

Do you have any brothers?

Yes, we've got brothers.

What do they do?

My brother is a soldier.

And where are they?

- 42 -

In Kandahar.

In Kandahar, as well.

What kind of job
do you want to do?

I'd like to stay at home,
bring my children up well

and have a quiet life.

And you?

Me, too.

Say you'd like to
stay at home!

I'd like to stay at home.

Woman with pale blue veil

Please let my boy
return safe and well!

I can't think of
anything else but that.

Is he in the war?

They came and took him
away from his 3rd year

at the Polytechnic,
so he could work.

How long's he been
at Kandahar?

For a month.
For 2 ½ months.

They took him away
from the faculty.

We've come here -

dear God,
fulfil our prayer!

Woman with grey veil

We pray for our sons
to be demobilized,

for peace in Afghanistan

and for the annihilation
of the enemy.

I also pray
for my daughter,

who's returned from
Saudi Arabia.

Her husband's in America,
just up and left her.

Every Wednesday
I pray here

for her husband to return

and for her to have
a quiet life again.

One son is a labourer,
the other a soldier.

May he remain healthy!

- 45 -

I've got 4 daughters -
may God protect them!

Let there be peace
in Afghanistan!

All Moslems should be able
to live where they live

in freedom and peace.

Woman (off)

May God let our loved ones
return safe and well!

May He protect
their dignity and honour!

Our brothers and my husband
have died martyrs.

I pray to God for peace.

I have nothing,
no child, no possessions,

just faith in God.

Girls at Boarding-school

Masar-e-Sharif.

Here in Kabul you can't fail
to see that a war is on.

How does that affect
your lives?

The effects of the war
in Afghanistan are awful.

It's impossible
to learn properly

because our families live
in the combat areas.

My brother was a soldier,
had just finished

High School
when he dies a martyr.

when he died a martyr.

Has anyone been wounded
or died in your family?

Yes, my cousin
died a martyr.

He was a soldier.

On the mural there's a woman
in arms.

Would you take up arms, too?

Yes, why not?
For my country,

my home and for myself.

Yes, why not? I'm ready to.

Because of the enemies
of Afghanistan -

the foreign enemies
of Afghanistan.

Kabul

TEXT 11

Imagine it: now my brother, who just turned sixteen, has been picked up off the street and put into uniform, too.

Several days elapsed before a terse note came, informing us that he is defending the fatherland.

Otherwise Kabul remains much the same as when you were here making the film - a military stronghold.

Hundreds of bunkers, gun emplacements and artillery observation posts form a defensive ring around the city.

More and more refugees are flooding into the city. Already its population has trebled to 1.5 million.

The air is continually a-drone with aircraft, which drop glaring magnesium balls in order to foil the Mujahedin rocket attacks.

A growing hysteria grips the city.

What's going to happen to us now?

Even if life does go on - sometimes just as it did hundreds of years ago - here in Kabul, we really are living on a powderkeg.

TEXT 12

The nights are particularly bad.

Helicopters and aeroplanes in the air, tanks in the streets, again and again explosions.

That's when I think of all the friends who have been abducted, imprisoned, killed.

Some, of course, approved when the Soviets made Babrak Karmal the new head of government.

Over night there were 50,000 Russian soldiers in our country!

None of us will ever forget that day - the 27th. of December 1979.

All our efforts to secure more rights for us women had been in vain.

New Communist programmes for women were developed.

Their main aim was to destroy family ties.

But the Party's approach lacked subtlety. They wanted to create a rift between men and women.

Yet how could we abandon our husbands, brothers and sons when they were fighting in the war?

Were we to value our rights as women higher than our right to live in our own fatherland, free from foreign rule?

Side by side with our men, we struggled against the destruction of our culture and our way of life.

The prisons were overcrowded, and so in 1980 the first major amnesty was declared.

Tens of thousands were released to make room for others.

Women had also been imprisoned because they had struggled actively in the Resistance.

But this is seldom spoken of in our society.

The traditional role of women requires that they be protected by men. They're not supposed to take their fate in their own hands.

Some people accept the role that women have played in the Resistance, others are actually ashamed of it.

A wounded man

Where do you come from?

We come from Jalalabad.

How long have you been here?

We've been here
for about 6 months.

Why are you here?

Because of my injury...
I was in action

in Kandahar and was
wounded there.

I sent a telegraph.
When it arrived

my family was moved
to Kabul.

How long were you
in the war?

Me? About 2 years.

How do you find life here?

Here? We live well here.
Better than before.

How big is your family?

There are 13 people
in our family.

Who provides for you?

My father works,
my brother works.

They provide for us.

Mens' voices, off

It's freezing.

It's cold enough to kill
an elephant in the tents.

The children particularly
suffer from the cold.

You turn round
and think "Dear God,

where am I to find
somewhere to live?"

I swear you can't find
a place to live anywhere.

Pakistan.
An Afghan refugee camp.

1st old woman in MS

We were on the road
for 2 months.

We've been here
for 4 months.

On the way lots of children
and elderly people died.

It was an unimaginably
difficult time for us.

3 or 4 families
in our village

were carried away
by the army,

we don't know where to.

In the bombing
5 or 6 people died martyrs.

By God, the government
has done nothing at all

to help us so far.

- 52 -

We ended up here
4 months ago.

We come from Balkh
in the Masar District.

Here we're
completely helpless.

There's absolutely
nothing to eat here.

Whole families
have disappeared.

Women, old people,

young people were abducted
by the government!

We fled at night.

The planes
were dropping bombs.

3 boys were killed.
They died martyrs.

In times like these
hunger afflicts everyone.

The children go out,
we women wait

for them to bring
something to eat.

During the air-raids
the children ran away.

They didn't come back
for several days.

It would be good
if people were to help us.

If they don't, we'll die
in all this desolation.

Afghanistan

2nd old woman in N.S.

We came to this country
4 or 5 months ago.

Many of us were killed.
They died martyrs.

In Lojbaba we were bombed

and in Farsana and the
Gauergan-Bachlan, too.

My son also died
the death of a martyr.

Everything we had
we left there.

Everybody fled from the
bombs, even the educated,

fled barefoot
and bare-headed, too.

Many died.

Then we came here -
to nothing!

All these people
in one tent!

On the one hand illness,
on the other hand the war
and exhaustion!

2 or 3 families to a tent!

We came from Afghanistan,
and what have we come to?

May God and our fellow
human beings help us!

Lord, hear our prayer and
show us a way out!

I myself sit here,
completely helpless.

The responsibility for the
whole family rests with me.

I just don't know
what to do.

Such times we live in,
brothers and friends!

A man

They had great difficulties
getting here.

Their house was burnt down.

Not even this tent
is theirs.

The widow was carried off
by the Russians.

You tell them
about the widow!

A woman

What is there to say
about the widow?

The Russian guards
took her away from us.

And it's not in your power
to bring her back.

Simin

In the name of Allah!
My name's Simin.

I don't want to be filmed

because my relatives
still live in Afghanistan.

One day the Russians came
and attacked our region.

They came in tanks,

guns firing, and followed
by soldiers shooting, too.

Above them were aeroplanes.

Not far from our village

the Mujahedin
were entrenched.

Despite the planes,
I slipped outside.

A Mujahed came and asked me

to find out how close
the enemy troops were.

I saw that they were
already quite near.

The tasks women can do
behind the lines

boost the morale
of the Mujahedin.

For us women
it's easier to get hold

of water and bread
for the Mujahedin.

When their communications
were poor, we tried

to find out the strength
of the Russian troops

and when they were
planning an attack.

Sometimes we laid mines
in areas which were

occupied by the Russians
and thus were danger zones.

We buried the martyrs,
looked after the wounded.

- 59 -

Every year the Russians
launch 2 terrible attacks

on the villages.

They burn down the woods,
lay waste the fields.

TEXT 13

You ought to take another good look at your pictures of street life in Peshawar.

How many women can be seen on them?

I remember seeing hardly any - although in fact more and more women are leaving their homes in order to stand by the men.

I, too, am frightened by the increasing influence of the conservative traditionalists.

Their renunciation of both East and West is beginning to create a kind of hysterical desire to submit voluntarily to increasingly stricter rules and laws.

Tajwar Kakal

My name's Tajwar,
Kakal Tajwar.

I come from Kandahar,
actually.

My husband's from Kunduz.

For about 18 years
I was a teacher

in Kunduz, and
up until the putsch

on April 27th 1978
we led a peaceful,

happy life, just like
our other compatriots.

And then, in 1981,
they arrested me

and put me in jail.
For 1 year I was there.

I couldn't stand up
when I was in the cell.

They hit me,

they slapped my face
and kicked me.

What was most incredible:

on the ceiling of the
torture-chamber there were

2 bloody footprints,
like official stamps.

They'd painted over it,
but it still looked as if

it had only just happened.

The walls were covered
with blood.

Often prisoners were unable

to bear the pain, and
confessed within a year.

If they couldn't get any
confessions out of them

they set them free
or strung them up.

I expected them to
do that to me.

- 62 -

In the end I was
released on "probation".

Kakal, 2nd sequence

On April 19th some Russians
forced their way

into a dockworker's house.

They raped his wife.

When he tried to protect her
they killed him.

After 3 days, we demonstrated
against the rape.

At first we were 20 women.
In the end we were 500.

It was as if they had

dropped out of the sky or
sprouted from the earth.

They were all veiled,
so as not to be recognized.

We shouted:

"Hand over the Russian!
So he can find out

what you get
for raping an Afghan woman.

Despite the veils,
some of us were recognized

and in the evening
they were arrested.

I managed to flee.

Dr. Barikzai and a patient

What's your name?

Begum Jan.

What happened in your home town? Was it bombed?

Yes, it was. Everything was on fire.

My husband died the death of a martyr,

just like my brothers.

Our houses were destroyed, all of them at once.

People were injured and killed, children orphaned.

We fled to Kunar.
We were there for 10 days.

Then we fled again.

We spent one night in the village of Shangari,

the next night in another
village and so on...

Were your children spared?

They were injured,
but not killed.

You're a young woman and
your son's only 3.

Yes, the others are girls.

Who provides for you?

Noone. Apart from God.

My daughters can't work.
One's got a paralysed arm.

The other's only 11,
I can't send her to work

by strange people,
after all we're Pashtuns.

The 3rd is 6,
and my son is only 3.

- 67 -

If God is merciful,
he'll send someone

with a kilo of corn
or flour for us.

Or maybe somebody will
bring us something to eat.

Our and another village
were burned down.

At the time there were
tanks in the area,

firing all over the place.

Apart from my faith,
I have nothing -

no tent, no blanket,
no mat to sleep on.

The cows died, the donkeys.

The smell was unbearable.

We fled by a secret path.

The walls caved in.

I wasn't injured,
but I longed

to die a martyr, too.
It would have been better.

TEXT 14

At the time, you were incensed at the fact that in the hurly-burly of the international aid committees in Pakistan, essential medical care for women was falling by the wayside.

But the dilemma is in fact much greater.

Women who are actually allowed access to medical treatment are fortunate.

Their husbands are sensible, which is the equivalent of "progressive" here.

For how much longer will other men be able - with impunity! - to forbid their wives to leave the house to consult a woman doctor?

A friend told me that only recently some women had stones thrown at them when they tried to carry a sick woman from her mud hut to the ambulance tent.

"Don't meddle with God's will!" people shouted at them.

But there are still a lot of women who refuse to go to hospital for fear that they might be examined by a man.

Then again, how many women doctors do we actually have?

After all, 90 % of our population are unable to read or write!

So the tents with women doctors and nurses are a step in the right direction - but only a drop in the ocean really.

TEXT 15

Death has become a familiar companion to our people, an everyday occurrence.

More than 1 million deaths already in this war!

So many, it's easy to forget that each one of them had his own individual fate, was unique as a human being.

The burial of the young refugee woman in the desolate Pakistani border country made a deep impression on me.

The Pakistani boy - much too small for such a big gun - and yet already sent out by his father to guard the family's land.

How hard his voice was, as, gun in hand, he forbade the Usbeki refugees to bury the dead woman there.

Afterwards I made a note in my diary of what the Mullah said to the boy:

"Look - today is a very hard day for this family.

As you know, at one time this Pashtu area belonged to Afghanistan, and it's a custom among our people to help lessen the suffering of those in mourning.

A young mother has died giving birth to her first child. She was only a little bit older than you.

Why do you bring even more sadness into her heart with that gun of yours? Why do you lay an even greater burden on her shoulders?

Imagine the enemy were to drive you away from your village and you had to leave your home, bury your own mother in foreign soil. And then someone like you comes along with a gun."

How relieved we all were the boy's heart could be moved by these words!

A ray of hope in these terrible times.

Khurschiad

Hail, mothers and sisters!

A woman's sense of duty and
responsibility are crucial

in this period of exile.

The revolutionary
Islamic changes affect

clothing, social attitudes
and the family.

If you don't start now,
there will never be

an Islamic restructuring.

The martyrs have laid down
their lives

to ensure that Islamic
conditions prevail!

Unfortunately, some people
do the very opposite.

they buy luxury goods for
their homes,

have no respect for
the veil and Islamic laws,

they become addicted to
wastefulness,

they wear un-Islamic
clothing, like heathens,

they ignore the words
of the Prophet, who said:

"He who emulates foreigners
is not one of us."

If, by our own
un-Islamic behaviour,

we cause the Revolution
to play into Satan's hands,

it's an act of treason
and a great offence.

The mothers' task is of
paramount importance.

The mother is a child's
first teacher.

It gets its first ideas
and habits from its mother.

If she doesn't bring up
her child according to

Islamic tradition,
it's a sin to have it -

a self-perpetuating sin,

for if a child sins because
it was badly brought up,

the mother is also guilty.

Such mothers are despised
by everybody.

Bringing up and educating
children, Islamic schools

are a serious matter.

The hope of all Moslems
is our Revolution.

Gulbodin Hekmatiar

General Nagib, tell me:
what role did the

Peoples' Democratic Party
of Afghanistan

play in the recent changes?

What can it actually do

without orders from its
Russian masters?

Instead of talking to
refugees, Nagib should ask

the Russians how long
the bombing, the massacres,

the destruction and the

expulsion of people from
their homes are to go on.

He should ask himself and
his followers how much

longer they want to remain
servants to the Russians,

foreigners' slaves.

We've had enough!

Allah is great!

If the Russians go home,
the war will be over!

Allah is great!

Never in its whole history
have our people,

as freedom-loving Moslems,
put up with

slavery and humiliation,

never have we tolerated
foreign rule.

War is the shield
that protects us!

War is our art!

The holy war will continue

till the foreign troops
are withdrawn!

Until we're free!

No peace before victory!

We shan't be content
until we have a free

independent Afghanistan,
ruled according to

Islamic principles.

We shan't lay down our arms
until the Russians

immediately and
unconditionally

withdraw their troops
from Afghanistan.

As long as just one
foreign soldier

remains on Afghan soil,

the war will continue
relentlessly.

Death to the Devils
in the East and the West!

- 75 -

Allah is great!

Allah is great!

Mrs Fahima

My name's Fahima Naseri.

After the Russian invasion
of Afghanistan

all Afghans felt
a surge of indignation,

strong nationalist feelings
arose.

Nobody could accept
the invasion,

regardless of their age
or their rank

or their family
or tribal ties.

For me, too, it was natural
to join the resistance.

We informed
our pupils and other women

and convinced them of
the need to go on strike,

we printed and distributed
leaflets, we held meetings.

The Mujahedin gave us
documents for safe keeping.

Our aim was the liberation
of our country

and the preservation
of our religion.

They found out
about my involvement

or I was denounced.
My home was searched.

I'd hidden the documents
in the ground,

but they still found them,
and arrested me.

Days later, when
the interrogation began,

I saw the TV Tower
and realized I was in the

secret service building,

in a stand-up cell
in solitary confinement.

I'll be brief so it
doesn't make you feel ill

or trouble you unduly.

For 13 days and nights
they wouldn't let me sleep.

On the 2nd or 3rd day
they gave me a little food:

some bread and some tea,
in the morning.

The interrogation began
at 10 in the evening.

They slapped my face
and pulled my hair.

For 4 nights I was
made to stand on one leg.

If I tried to change feet,
they hit me.

Normally these lackeys
of the Russians indulge

in verbal abuse, too,
while torturing you.

They ordered me
to stand on one leg.

Then they put a device
around my neck.

The noise it created
caused earache.

They wound it up
like an old gramophone.

It made such a noise
and my ears hurt so much,

I thought I was
going to die.

I was feeling
worse and worse.

Another thing they used
was bent needles.

- 80a -

The last torture
was to take me into a room

with a bath,
full of blue water.

They put me in it.

The water came up
to my hips.

It burned like fire.

Mrs Fahima, 2nd sequence

After 13 nights they threw
me into the main jail

with the other prisoners.

There were old women there,
their legs paralysed,

whether from being tortured
or from before, who knows,

for we weren't allowed
to speak to each other.

I didn't have the courage
to say what I'd done.

There was a woman
whose son they'd killed.

Her husband had disappeared.

Lots of women there were
worse off than me.

Women who'd just had babies

and who were imprisoned
together with their babies.

There were women from all
classes: illiterate and

peasant women, labourers,
teachers and school-girls

(some my own pupils),

there were women doctors
and engineers

and there were nurses.

There was a guard there
called Satar.

One day he took
the children outside.

We heard screaming.

Afterwards I asked Satar
what had happened.

He said "the children
have never seen any grass.

When they saw it,
they screamed."

Nagibullah

Comrades, the aim of the
All-Union Conference

that's just taken place

was to discuss the way
various Party groups work.

There was an atmosphere

of responsibility
and mutual understanding.

This meeting is a sign

that the people support
our party as well as

our humanitarian defence
policy, the aim of which

is peace and an end
to the aggression

and civil war that
have been imposed upon us.

Friends, look around you:

see how many of us
there are.

And that is only
1/6 of our party family!

Brothers and sisters!

The Party calls upon us
to do great things.

History has placed
the responsibility for

peace in Afghanistan
on our shoulders.

Let our hearts be filled
with fervour

and with the suffering
of our people!

One should strive to build
rather than destroy!

One should save life,
not kill!

The Central Committee
confers upon the greatest

- 86 -

warriors the title of
"Hero of the Peoples'

Democratic Party of
Afghanistan".

Mrs Fahima, 3rd sequence

The worst night was when
I was tortured mentally.

They took me to a long,
dark, narrow cell.

Just imagine the horror!

The stench was appalling,
and it was quite impossible

to get out!
It was truly awful.

It was really eerie.
Appalling and dreadful!

In one corner
there was a faint light.

Wherever I looked I saw
clumps of torn out hair,

chopped off breasts, limbs.

In the most remote corner
there was a corpse.

- 88 -

there was a corpse.

It was unbearable.

They said, "this is where
you will end up, too."

And - excuse the
expression -

"This is how we cut
you bastards down to size.

They were like you, once."

It was awful.

Seeing those limbs
lying around.

I can't bear to remember.

I'm sorry
if I've upset you.

- Afghan women today -

TEXT 16

There's still no end in sight to the struggle for power, and I wonder - with the war testing us to breaking point - whether we women will be able to keep up this balancing act till it's over.

May Allah then give us the strength to work for our own goals, the right of women to self determination and self-realisation.