

A: 3,500 Libyan dinars.

Another worker: I lived in Tripoli for 25 years; I owned a little bake shop. I was expelled to Tunisia last week, without anything. My shop was nationalized and all my belongings had to stay in Libya.

Q: [To all]: Have you seen East German and Soviet advisers in Libya during the years you have been there?

A: Yes, we have seen wave after wave of East bloc advisers. They are especially concentrated around the base of Zawi, some 150 km west of Tripoli. They have a missile base there. We have also seen Russian soldiers a few kilometers from Ghadames. They have a base there. [Ghadames is on the border between Algeria, Tunisia, and Libya—ed.]

Q: Were they involved in your expulsions?

A: No.

Another worker: But there is trouble between the Libyan soldiers and the foreign advisers. I know that last year, there were clashes between Soviet and Libyan officers during military maneuvers which were held in Cyrenaica. The Russians were running everything, and the Libyan officers protested.

Q: How do you know that?

A: I was a chief cook in one of Tripoli's international hotels; I heard a lot there.

Q: Did you notice the arrival of more East bloc personnel in recent months?

A: When the expulsions began, a lot of North Koreans were arriving in Libya.

Q: What is the situation like within Libya?

A: **Tunisian official:** One thing you should keep in mind is that close to 50% of the Tunisian workers who were expelled, found refuge among Libyan families before leaving the country, and had the time to gather some of their belongings and to organize transportation, rather than being expelled in military trucks. We have no conflict with the Libyan people; we have a conflict only with the present regime.

A worker: The situation inside Libya is worse than in Tunisia. There are a lot of food shortages. Maybe you can find meat once a month, and in the best periods, once a week. Even if you have money, you can't buy it. And now all the Libyans have to use food coupons to buy whatever is there.

Q: When were these food coupons introduced?

A: Just in the last six months. Some time ago, Qaddafi said that his next step would be to suppress the use of money inside Libya. Tickets have been introduced for everything. . . . He also said that it is not important for the young and mature people to eat well. If you look at his *Green Book*, it says that only the old people require food; the others can do with little.

The Soviets glorify

by Rachel Douglas

The Soviet mass media, led by the military daily *Krasnaya Zvezda* (*Red Star*) and the weekly *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, have begun to make a war cult out of the so-called Limited Contingent of Soviet Forces in Afghanistan (LCSFA).

The Afghanistan War is not the "Soviet Vietnam," the military quagmire and smoldering hotbed of Islamic fundamentalist revolt, that espousers of the "crumbling Soviet Empire" thesis would have us believe. The Soviet military-political leadership has brutalized Afghanistan not only for the sake of military goals in the region, but as a bloody training ground for officers and troops, who would not otherwise have been tested under fire.

An article in the Aug. 28 issue of *Literaturnaya Gazeta* boasts that this latter purpose has been well served by the fighting in Afghanistan. The author is Aleksandr Prokhanov, a novelist whose purple prose on such topics as the intercontinental ballistic missile's umbilical-cord-like ties to its mother, the Earth, has appeared often in *Krasnaya Zvezda* and *Literaturnaya Gazeta*. Here is Prokhanov's extraordinarily frank account of what Afghanistan has meant for the Soviet Armed Forces, particularly for eliminating the phenomenon of the senior officer who has never seen combat:

"Officers and senior commanders have worked their way up to high ranks in the peacetime army—the army which, 40 years ago, crushed the enemy in a terrifying war, gained victory, accumulated experience in immense battles, and, for 40 years, has been maintaining peace through its titanic military endeavors. It—the army—flies, sails, watches with radar eyes, learns to use unprecedented equipment, rehearses alternatives for potential battles, and works strenuously with extraordinary defense efforts. All this is done right up to the limits of the possible. *There is only one thing it had not done: It had not shed any blood, neither its own, nor anyone else's. There had been no real targets to be seen exploding through the gun sights. There had been no proper automatic fire thudding against bulletproof vests, leaving traces of blood across the chest. No exploding. No thudding. Until Afghanistan.*

"Gray-haired commanders found themselves under fire for the first time in the Afghan foothills. Saw wounded for the first time. For the first time, they sent servicemen into attacks that were not exercises, but against the firing of an

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enemy who had set tanker convoys on fire. *And it was only there, in the Hindu Kush, that the commanders—some of them with an academic background—finally became soldiers* [emphasis added].”

Rotation of troops

Soviet forces from several Military Districts have been rotated into Afghanistan during the course of the war since the Soviets marched in at the close of 1979. Mark Urban's account in *Jane's Defence Weekly* (Jan. 12, 1985) corroborated what *EIR* had reported on this matter: Entire regiments of airborne forces ordinarily stationed in the Transcaucasus Military District or the Byelorussian Military District have been swapped into Afghanistan and back.

Urban wrote: “Afghanistan is now established as a key posting in the mind of the promotion-hungry Soviet officer. They serve in the LCSFA for longer than enlisted men; periods of one and two years have been recorded. The way in which talented officers can make their names in Afghanistan is illustrated by the case of Col. Yu. Pavlov. He served under Col. Gen. (now Army Gen.) Russian MD before going to Afghanistan to command an attack helicopter regiment. He won his country's highest gallantry award, the Hero of the Soviet Union, and returned to East Germany where his mentor Zaitsev had taken over command of Soviet forces there.”

As Prokhanov makes the case, Afghanistan veterans of all ranks are called upon to perform a special, catalyzing role in Soviet society: “Five years is not a brief period. Much has been understood. Much has been experienced. . . . Knowledge has been accumulated. Not only military knowledge. That is not what I have in mind. A particular ‘Afghan brotherhood’ is rooted in souls and characters, uniting everybody, military and civilian, who has been through Afghanistan. They have completed their service or work in Afghanistan, returned home, and dissolved in cities and settlements among the numberless crowds; but they have somehow remained a ‘limited contingent.’ They recognize one another immediately, by some special and imperceptible ‘Afghan’ habit, look, gesture or expression. . . .”

“I have the feeling that Afghanistan has split and cleaved our age into two parts. It has left behind the easy life, guar-

anteed personal and social prosperity, guaranteed peace. It has meant the beginning of terrible days and years involving acute danger, struggle, defense, personal sacrifice, rejection of personal prosperity for the sake of the state's common idea, and a collective sense of rebuff and sharpened civic consciousness.”

But what is this special role of the Afghanistan veteran? Obviously, the barrage of propaganda in which Prokhanov's article came, was not just designed to whip up the troops for the August-September offensive in eastern Afghanistan, in which Soviet forces aimed to smash guerrilla supply routes running out of Pakistan (while the daily *Izvestia* told Pakistan that if it ceased being a “pawn of Washington,” a peaceful settlement of “the tension around Afghanistan” might emerge).

The glorification of the Afghanistan War features a renewed emphasis on the theme of “international duty,” particularly in material directed to Soviet soldiers. In an Aug. 10 interview, *Krasnaya Zvezda* quoted Hero of the Soviet Union Maj. Ruslan Aushev on why he wished to return to Afghanistan to fight: “Don't think I'm trying to sound pompous, but this is what I'm ordered to do by my position in life as a communist and a Soviet officer, and by my patriotic and international duty. . . . Soviet troops are performing a sacred international mission in Afghanistan.”

Krasnaya Zvezda abruptly stepped up this kind of writing in July, when Gen.-Col. Aleksei Lizichev replaced Army Gen. Aleksei Yepishev (since deceased) as head of the Main Political Administration of the Soviet Armed Forces—in charge of political organization and motivation of servicemen. On July 10, the day I. M. Panov replaced N. I. Makeyev as editor of *Krasnaya Zvezda*, the military daily began serialization of another Afghanistan War-story “Bread and Gunpowder.”

Afghanistan combat experience and the leadership provided by its veterans, *Krasnaya Zvezda* drills in the message, are very important *for the training of troops who might be called upon to fight in other areas.* Gen.-Col.

pov, commander of the *Kavkaz-85* maneuvers in the Transcaucasus Military District, told *Krasnaya Zvezda* on July 16, how pleased he was to have three famous Heroes of the Soviet Union, veterans of Afghanistan, participating. Four days later, the paper reported on an artillery regiment in the Byelorussian Military District, headquarters of High Command West—the forces under Marshal Nikolai Ogarkov, facing Europe. Training in the regiment was radically toughened and upgraded last winter, reported *Krasnaya Zvezda*: “The regiment now has several officers who were brought in after completion of their service in the Limited Contingent of Soviet Troops in Afghanistan.” A young lieutenant, veteran of Afghanistan, said of the changes, “Even though our regimental commander hasn't served there, he teaches exactly what's needed, without making things too easy. Sometimes it seems like the commander is too demanding, but if you don't have that kind of demanding approach, you'll never make it in real combat.”