

people are achieving substantial progress under the PDPA's leadership. The security and military situation is improving. Daily victories are scored by the DRA's army, assisted by Soviet troops. Many people who were misled to join the terrorist gangs are returning to their homes and changing sides.

Accomplishments on the economic, social and political levels are also great. In the field of education, the DRA has repaired 50% of the 1800 schools that had been burnt by the gangs. Thirty new schools have been built and 20 are under construction. Of school-age children and youth, 80% now attend school, compared to 30% before the revolution. In Kabul alone, there are 30,000 students, one-third of them women. In a country that was 90% illiterate, the literacy campaign has great importance. At present, 1.5 million people have graduated from literacy programs, and half a million are currently enrolled. Prior to the revolution, higher education was limited to the rich, most of whom fled to capitalist countries with their money. In this context, higher education assumes strategic importance in the DRA. There are now 10,000 Afghanis studying in socialist countries. All education is free of charge.

More than 84% of Afghanistan's settled population lives in rural areas. Land reform was one of the most important issues in the country. Since the revolution, 700,000 hectares have been distributed among 320,000 landless peasants. There are 64,700 peasants farming in cooperatives. More than 34,500 peasants acquired land in 1985 alone.

In the field of industry, out of 213 projects built or planned with the help of the Soviet Union, there are more than 100 projects operating successfully; 40 of these were built after 1978. Sixty percent of industrial products are from institutions built with the assistance of the Soviet Union. The hydroelectric station in Najlo is one of the biggest projects, producing 100,000 kilowatt electricity. There is also a big prefab housing factory in Kabul. Research is underway for building the first railway network in Afghanistan. In the north of the country, a large fertilizer plant is functioning well, producing enough fertilizer to cover all the needs of the country.

Last year, agricultural products increased by 7.7%, while industrial products increased by 4.5%. In the last five years, the gross national product increased by 11%; electricity production



*Afghani textile worker*

by 48%; and cement production by 10%. The five-year plan which starts in March 1986 projects a 25% increase in the GNP; 28% in industrial production; and 15% in agricultural production.

In the social field, hundreds of thousands of square meters of housing space have been distributed to poor workers since the revolution. The situation of women has improved dramatically in the last eight years. The cooperative movement is growing; there are now 556 agricultural, consumer and craft cooperatives and 200 cooperative stores. There are 125,000 people involved in the cooperative movement.

The PDPA is also growing. At the beginning of the revolution, it had 19,000 members. There are now 140,000 members in the party. The trade union movement has 200,000 members. The Youth Organization has 150,000 members. The National Fatherland Front has more than 700,000 members.

The DRA is a popular democracy. People are encouraged to participate in governing themselves. People's councils, called jirgahs, have spread to all areas of the country. The Great National Council, which is a tradition in Afghanistan, plays a big role in the government. It is composed of members of the previous council, tribal chiefs, representatives of the different nationalities and respected

personalities. The majority of the council members are not PDPA members, but the council has supported the party's policy and the assistance of the Soviet troops. The Revolutionary Council recently expanded its membership by 79, most of them non-party members. The policy of democracy has solidified the PDPA as the vanguard of the masses and the revolution. The army and the popular militias are more motivated than ever to smash the CIA-backed gangs. Even Islamic leaders support the revolution. Mawlawi Mohammad Hashim, head of the Association of Religious Scholars, had this to say about the CIA gangs: «The fact that the Afghan fugitives clandestinely infiltrate into Afghanistan, kill people, plunder their goods, destroy houses and mosques, indicates that their deeds are not for the sake of Islam, but in the interests of the US and its mercenary Pakistani generals.»

In foreign policy, the DRA follows a policy for peace as described by Comrade Babrak Karmal: «The principles of our peaceful foreign policy are clear to all peoples of the world. This policy is based on the principles of peaceful coexistence, non-alignment, patriotism and internationalism. In international relations, we are in support of mutual respect, non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries and consolidation of relations with all countries of the world. The Democratic Republic of Afghanistan, being a peace-loving country, is actively defending peace, security and detente in the region and the world and is against all kinds of wars, either nuclear or non-nuclear.»

The DRA has a clear policy of support to the Palestinian people and revolution, and supports progressive forces internationally. 1986 is a year of escalating US aggression and Afghanistan is one target of this aggression. A position in support of the DRA is an imperative for all progressive forces. No one can be neutral.

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As we were going to press, we received news that the Central Committee of the PDPA had elected comrade Mohammed Najeebullah as General Secretary, after the resignation of comrade Babrak Karmal, due to health reasons. Comrade Karmal retains his posts in the PDPA Politbureau and as President of the Revolutionary Council.

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