

Afghanistan: Aloof, Friendly, Old, New

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Special Writer

Afghanistan, the high mountainous land of the Afghans (average altitude, 4,000 feet) which descends to the Great Persian Desert in the south, was known in earliest times as "Aryana" from which the main tribes of the Aryans migrated eastward to the sub-continent of India, then westward through Persia.

The remainder inhabited the area around the famous range of mountains known as the Hindu Kush, peaks up to 25,000 feet, and Balkh the capital of the Bactrian Empire has been considered by many as the cradle of civilization. It is also considered the cradle of culture for present-day Afghanistan.

SO FAR, recorded history goes back to 3500 BC revealing prayers and Aryan tales, and including Aryan place names which correspond to certain place names of today. Zoroaster, Zarathustra, the religious teacher who lived about 1000 BC, Alexander the Great, Genghis Khan and Tamerlane have left their historical marks on Afghanistan of today, as well as the Buddhists and finally the Muslims.

The present 12 million Afghans, the majority of whom are Muslims of the Sunni Hanafi sect of Islam, speak both Pushto and Farsi, the Indo-European language

tributaries occupies nearly half of the total 265,000 square miles of Afghanistan. After the rains, the rivers indicate that parts of the valley were extensively cultivated for crops or meadows. Successive hordes of invaders have destroyed large cities and major irrigation canals. In the north, the area desolate.

Slow Desolation

The Persian Desert has encroached, and each year millions of acres of water flows unused and is absorbed. So one of Afghanistan's first reclamation jobs has been to provide storage reservoirs on the Helmand and Argandah rivers to augment and regulate a supply of water for irrigation.

THIS PROJECT in accordance with American construction standards through ICA cooperation with the Afghan government, is providing not only canals, roads, main drainage ditches and irrigation canals but also land development and provisions for flood control and power development, as well as improvement in agriculture (this is a big fruit-growing area), settlement of nomad farmers, rural development, health, and education.

KHANDAHAR IS the center now of all this activity, where Ariana-Pan American Airways has a Point Four contract to build the new Khandahar International airport for jets. It promises to be unique and one of the most modern air terminals in the world. Ariana Airlines also uses American ground and maintenance methods, with headquarters in Kabul.

However, the surprise is that 35 miles north of the capital, at Bagram, the site of one of Afghanistan's ancient cities, which has provided Kabul's National Museum with unique coins, ivory and other objects and seal things, the Russians are building and have almost completed an air field for jets (so far visitors not allowed). They have built a show-piece on this side of town which one can see flying in and out of Kabul, a tremendous site of some 14 floors.

From, on 2 Sides

This Afghanistan pursues the policy of co-existence with both Russian and American technicians working on similar although respective Afghan government projects, and accepting financial help on all sides.

THE TWO roads from the USSR borders to Kabul are being built by Russian engineers, one from Kabul to Khandahar and on to Quetta (to connect with the port of Karachi) and the other from Kabul to Torkham (and on to Peshawar, a big commercial center for Afghan trades are being built by the Americans. Afghanistan by all stated policies wishes to keep her own borders intact and be at peace with all neighbors although for some years there has been an agitation within her country to claim back the land of the Pushtians along the Pakistan frontiers. This claim, however, is said to have no reality according to international law and the historical securing of the Afghan borders.

A FIVE-YEAR development plan, however, is absorbing the energies of the Afghan government launched in September, 1956, and the government is making valiant efforts to meet development

penditures and contracts.

Schools and colleges and a new Kabul university are also being added to meet the problem of much needed trained Afghan personnel.

Lots to do in Kabul

Kabul the capital, on the Kabul river, provides the traveler with much to do—mosques to see, many palaces and gardens, and a most interesting Bazaar through which to wander.

KABUL IS also the center of the activities of the Afghan government, which arranges trips to some dozen interesting places, such as Istaif on a picturesque mountainside, which manufactures a blue local pottery by hand, which is most sought after. Ghazni, ancient capital of Islam, which rivaled Baghdad, a walled fortress city which is a living museum today. Herat, founded by Alexander the Great, and the capital of Khurasan, now a holy city, with very beautiful monuments, gardens, libraries, madrasahs, and old winding streets. Marzari-Sharif, replacing the ancient capital of Balkh, where the karakul wool and the carpet weavers very skillful and others. Two of the most unusual things to do in Afghanistan are to visit Bamian, the site of a Buddhist

4-D THE BIRMINGHAM (MICH.) ECCENTRIC Nov. 12, 1959

city 153 miles north of Kabul by car or better by jeep, with two large Buddhas cut into the cliffs of the deep valley, and to arrange to hunt for Marco Polo sheep in the Pamir mountains, section of the Hindu Kush into the Wakhan corridor which is bordered by the USSR to the north, Communist China to the east, and Pakistan to the south.

Bamian is the easier to do, as the hunting excursion takes many permissions but is possible. As recently as last August an American hunter was granted permission to go and had the success of getting two of the famous sheep originally spotted by Marco Polo during his travels in the Pamir mountains.

BAMIYAN presents two colossal—a father Buddha 175 feet high carved from the living stone, and nearby on the same cliff, a mother Buddha 115 feet high, in better condition with the folds of her garment intact and all the little holes showing, where once hung gold and silver ornaments.

The larger Buddha was carved in the first century AD, the smaller some 200 years later. Several hundred caves for Buddhist monks give some idea of the religious significance of this religious shrine, and the Chinese traveler, Huan Tsang in 632 AD said it was a beautiful royal city with many monasteries flourishing. A new Bamian museum to open in 1960, Kong.

Traffic Safety is Weekend's Theme

Traffic Safety Sabbath, a time for sober consideration of the moral responsibilities of the individual driver, has been called for by a state committee of clergymen representing Catholic, Jewish and Protestant denominations.

By official proclamation, Governor Williams has designated the weekend of Nov. 15 for the sixth such state-wide observance. It is not the purpose of the program to try to cut accidents for one weekend, according to chairman Rev. Fr. John Slawey. The intent is to enlist the clergy of all faiths in a year-round program of counsel, teaching and preaching involving traffic on the same basis as other life situations.

Came West

Arriving corporal R. C. Wilson, USMC, son of Mrs. Cassam Wilson, 535 Hanna, returned recently after 15 months in the far east—in Okinawa, Japan and Hong Kong.

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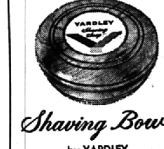
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Like Their Lot—Hard

They are hard workers, play sports hard—whether wrestling or weight-lifting, hunting or shooting—and in every way of life show their toughness.

AFGHAN WOMEN have been encouraged by their menfolk to throw off the veil and during the week of Sept. 12-19, the Prime Minister Sardar Mohammed Daoud suggested publicly that with the coming of the Minister Nehru on a state visit, women could be seen socially without their cover all "modestly."

It was also decreed that women teachers should remove their chadoris inside of a week at the latest. These women with the responsibility to work and earn an income.

The Queen of His Majesty Mohammed Zahir Shah, the King of Afghanistan, has herself designed the tailored coat as a suggested outer garment for the time-being, and many women needed no more encouragement to adopt this, with short white head-veil to cover the hair. Eyes are still demurely hidden behind dark glasses, but this whole change in dress for the modern Afghan women is a tremendous step in modernization, which may neighbor nations have not found the expediency to tackle.

AMERICAN women are helping to set up fashion and sewing centers in Kabul to introduce modern dress styles, and at the same time to help give the Afghan textile industry a boost.

Coming by air from Tehran to Khandahar, one has a box-seat to the Helmand Valley Development. The Helmand Valley in the south with its numerous

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Delinquency Prevention Plan Charter Adopted

LANSING—A Children's Charter, sponsored by 18 Michigan juvenile court judges, including Oakland county Probate Judge Arthur E. Moore, was incorporated last Thursday.

Judge Moore said the charter will pave the way for recognition of the "preventive approach" to juvenile delinquency in Michigan.

The charter provides the machinery through which youth protection committees can operate under local jurisdiction. Currently such committees are functioning in 12 Oakland county communities. First Oakland city to adopt the plan was Hazel Park, where it has been acclaimed highly successful.

JUDGE MOORE said preliminary reports from youth committees in the 18 Michigan counties now participating in the plan indicate that juvenile court cases have been reduced 40 to 50 per cent since its adoption.

"We believe in reaching the children at an earlier age," Judge Moore said.

3 Handle Medicines' UF Contributions

Heading a 32-person committee which solicits UF funds from doctors and hospital employees only are three Michigan Bell Telephone employees. One of them is Pete Case, of Birmingham, plant engineer for the Michigan Bell Royal Oak office.

The committee contacts doctors and hospital employees from Wayne, Oakland and Macomb, and has set a goal of \$117,000 for doctors and \$135,000 for hospital employees.

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