

Ansary - West of Kabul, East of New York: pp. 223-285, 293-300

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- Announcements
 - Midterm next Thursday, March 22. Study guide on the website. BRING A BLUE BOOK! Or two if you write a lot.
- Quiz
- Afghan and Ansary history outline (an aid, but not crucial)
- Ansary and friends form Afghan Refugee Aid Committee (ARAC) in Berkeley
 - recruits want “ministries” - i.e. assume it is a government in absentia
 - create a Ministry of Defense and Ministry of the Interior!
 - have to merge with larger group... run by older brother of ARAC founder
 - in order to oppose still larger group in Fremont
 - [segmentary lineage organization: “Me against my brother, me and my brother against our cousins; we and our cousins against invaders” p 227]
- Mujahideen (“holy warriors”) fighting USSR
 - women and children flee to Pakistan
 - live in tents, not closed compounds
 - children grow up seeing mothers shamed
 - some of these children become the Taliban
 - hyper-Islamic, longing for an imagined, idealized, exaggerated version of a lost lifestyle they never personally knew
 - defining themselves by going to the far opposite of what they opposed
 - these Taliban hyper-Muslims would eventually oppose the communists (created by the government’s westernization program) who were being supported by Soviet troops
- Subghatullah Mujadeddi visits; becomes president for a year in 1992, but just for a year
 - no one cares about fundraising or governing, just about who will bow to who
 - [Ansary should know; this sounds like the Ansary family when his father got only a “Volga-class” position]
- Radical theory of history, shared by Abdul Qayum in Istanbul and brother Riaz p. 255
 - history is the struggle between God and Satan
 - Satan works through a cabal that controls the world’s governments: the Rosicrucians
 - who became the Masons
 - the original Jews have been replaced by false Jews, really descendents of Khazars of the Caucasus, infiltrated by Masons, who then pretended to convert to Judaism
 - thus the “Jews” in Israel are actually servants of Satan, not the believers that Muhammad respected
 - [note: this is all based on descent! One is born inherently good or evil... what are the implications of that for diplomacy, understanding, or coexistence? As in El Nahra: what do you do when you try to be a cultural relativist, but the Other does not?]

- US values: supporting kids and wife, being a good citizen, succeeding in work, having friends p. 266
- Afghan values: being a good host, being a good guest, proving one's generosity, putting kinship above all p. 266
 - Ansary explains this as a strategy for survival in a harsh land
 - group comes first
 - no claim of equality
 - but generosity helps all
 - prestige counts above all
 - and generosity confers prestige
 - [culture as adaptation! Middleton]
- Taliban rule p. 269-
 - brought order after violent chaos of warlord rule (and opium production)
 - [made the trains run on time, like Mussolini?] [balancing freedom vs. order]
 - at first, back to past, with burqas and beards
 - then windows painted black, no music, kite flying
 - women not allowed out, even to beg
 - women's schools and hospitals closed
 - these are people who never knew "normal" life
 - grew up in refugee camps with no goal but to kill enemies
 - [defining themselves as the opposite of the Soviets, who in many ways were simply modern, western]
 - rich Arabs and Pakistanis buying up property in Afghanistan, displacing Afghans...
- cab driver's rant p. 275-
 - "Thank God for the Taliban. Now at last, God will help us to sweep away all this filth."
 - his friend brought his wife over; after a few months she refused to sleep with him
 - the cab driver would cruelly kill his wife for that
 - Ansary sees the Taliban's project as part of the supposed war of God vs. Satan, in which extreme actions are appropriate and every Muslim can consider himself important on a cosmic scale
- Taliban as embodying ideas growing among some Muslims p. 277
 - religion as mechanism
 - do everything right, and society runs smoothly
 - by duplicating seventh-century Medina
 - then God will support you
 - then you get to vanquish your enemies
 - and be important in a cosmic process
 - conquering your wife is firing a shot for God
- Being American makes him less Afghan p. 281
 - He is a misfit of an Afghan
 - but being Afghan does NOT make him less American

- everyone is different - that is OK; people even try to be different
- individualism is valued
- “I am a kaleidoscope of parts now ... so is the world.”
- [no longer looking for his one identity]
- [globalization - increasing communication and thus mixing of kaleidoscope parts around the world]