

or even to agree to concessions. Totalitarian countries are much less sensitive than are democracies to public opinion, and to losses of human life as well. What are the losses in Afghanistan compared to 20 million Soviet citizens killed in World War II and at least as many under Stalin's terror?

The price in men and matériel for the acquisition of Afghanistan is one the USSR can afford. This is the cost of a network of bases that could be used against China. Afghanistan has no strategic value other than its proximity to China; and the 100,000 Soviet troops stationed there are no other than reinforcements of the million troops on the Sino-Soviet border. The Soviet Union has conceived a need for the territory of Afghanistan, though not for its population. It is a matter not of occupation but of annexation. In addition to those killed, there are three million Afghan refugees—a fifth of the population of Afghanistan. And this latter process is continuing.

As for the optimism in the American press, it benefits no one quite so much as the Soviet Union. Sympathy for Afghan refugees and indignation at Soviet actions now have been completely supplanted by admiration for the fantastic feats of the rebels. Under cover of romanticism and heroics, the leveling of Afghanistan and its people continues unabated.

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EXCURSUS 2

Thomas Land on AFRICA CONFRONTS ALCOHOLISM

The first working model for research into alcoholism throughout the African continent has been erected by specialists engaged in a long-term study at the University of Lusaka in Zambia. It may well be adapted by many other universities, for most African governments are alarmed by a disastrous increase in alcoholism within their borders in the wake of social upheavals that accompany the growing industrialization of the region.

The United Nations World Health Organization (WHO), which has assisted the Zambian project, is planning a global campaign against the makers of alcoholic beverages and the marketing of their products in the developing countries, similar in some ways to the recent drive against the marketing of infant formulas. A spokesman for WHO explains that "the evidence of increasing damage in a large number of developing countries suggests that alcohol-related problems constitute an important obstacle to their socioeconomic development and are likely to overwhelm their health resources unless appropriate measures are taken."

Specialists now talk in terms of a "worldwide epidemic" of alcoholism in both the rich and the poor countries. The developing regions—including even the Islamic world—are particularly exposed.

Alcoholism is a special health risk for vast populations living in conditions of overcrowding, poverty, and squalor. The current climate of family breakdowns and widespread migration of landless peasants away from the depressed countrysides of Africa, Asia, and Latin America and into the anonymous expanding cities may well exacerbate the problem during coming years.

Dr. Kenneth Kaunda, the teetotalling Zambian president,

has been disturbed by the spread of alcoholism in his country for many years. Nevertheless, his administration has been unable to formulate effective prevention, control, and treatment programs in the absence of adequate basic research data. Now a set of reports assembled during years of work at the Lusaka university has been published; and Professor Muyunda Mwanalushi, the former dean of humanities, expects them to lead to rapid reforms at home and a spate of related investigations based on the Zambian model in other African countries.

Beer is traditionally consumed in Zambian society, but drunkenness used to be infrequent. Drinking had a place in ceremonial occasions as an offering to ancestral and other spirits. The availability of drink was restricted to the harvest periods, and the alcohol content of beer was relatively low.

Urban pressures have now created a figure unknown in traditional African society: the lonely drinker setting out to get drunk. Statistics assembled by the Zambian investigators show that heavy drinkers are increasingly those of younger years and are becoming more violent—at a rapidly escalating cost to society. In fact, alcohol is considered a significant contributory factor in 24 per cent of all cases brought before the courts and in more than half of all traffic accidents. The problem is so acute in the entire region that the government of neighboring Zimbabwe recently was forced to order the closing of thousands of drinking establishments in an effort to cut crime.

Professor Mwanalushi proposes a set of immediate reforms that are likely to be considered a matter of urgency in the region. They include the establishment of a legally constituted commission on alcoholism and alcohol abuse to undertake continuing research and to provide advice to government departments and other concerned organizations in a broad context of national development. Significantly, the research workers urge social planners to recognize the reliance of governments on the alcohol industry for raising tax revenues and its indirect effect of encouraging alcoholism. They also seek increased restrictions on the availability of alcoholic drinks, particularly to young people, and the promotion of education and alternative social activities.

Thomas Land writes from Europe on global affairs

EXCURSUS 3

Mitzi M. Brunsdale on PSYCHIATRY AND SAMIZDAT

Evidence of growing human misery under Soviet communism continues to filter through the sad literature of *samizdat*, "self-published" material gathered, written, and circulated in the Soviet Union at a risk unthinkable to most citizens of the West. Since 1968 *A Chronicle of Current Events* has been at the fore of *samizdat* literature, edited by necessarily anonymous members of the loosely organized dissident movement in the USSR. Despite abrupt changes in its leadership—the latest in February, 1981, when the KGB confiscated all copies of *Chronicle* number 59 and arrested its editors—the publication asserts "that its strictly factual style is maintained to the greatest degree possible." Such objectivity is scrupulously preserved in English versions of numbers 1 through 11 available in Peter Reddaway's *Uncensored Russia* (American Heritage Press).