

VLUK 749  
GRS 220  
FDW G 248 25

**IMMEDIATE**

RECEIVED  
BRITISH HIGH COMMISSION  
NEW DELHI  
CHANDRY INDUSTRY

26 NOV 1983  
DUPLICATES

OF LETTER .....  
OF ENCLOSURES .....  
LOCATION .....

OO ISLAMABAD  
OO NEW DELHI  
OO KABUL  
OO MOSCOW  
GRS

UNCLASSIFIED

FM FCO 251253Z NOV 83

TO IMMEDIATE ISLAMABAD

TELEGRAM NUMBER 447 OF 25 NOVEMBER

INFO IMMEDIATE NEW DELHI (ALSO FOR PS NO 10 AND CHOQM DELEGATION), KABUL, WASHINGTON, MOSCOW, BRUSSELS

**SOVIET DEFECTORS FROM AFGHANISTAN: DAILY MAIL**

1. DAILY MAIL OF 25 NOVEMBER CARRIED A FRONT PAGE QUOTE WORD EXCLUSIVE UNQUOTE ARTICLE BY LORD BETHELL ENTITLED QUOTE RUSSIA'S AFGHAN TROOPS DEFECT UNQUOTE.
  2. ARTICLE IS BASED ON AN INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY BETHELL IN BRUSSELS ON 24 NOVEMBER WITH NIKOLAI RYZHKOV AND ALEXANDER VORONOV, TWO PRIVATES FROM THE SOVIET ARMY IN AFGHANISTAN WHO HAVE BEEN EXTRUDED TO THE WEST AFTER DEFECTING TO THE RESISTANCE. THEY REPORTED TO BE FLYING TO NEW YORK THIS WEEKEND TO START QUOTE A NEW LIFE UNQUOTE, AND HOPE TO BECOME US CITIZENS.
  2. MAIN POINTS MADE BY BETHELL ARE AS FOLLOWS:
    - A) RYZHKOV AND BORONOV REACHED THE WEST THROUGH A HIGHLY ORGANISED QUOTE UNDERGROUND RAILWAY UNQUOTE (BUT THEY WOULD NOT GIVE DETAILS):
    - B) THEY ARE ONLY THE FIRST OF QUOTE SEVERAL HUNDRED UNQUOTE SOVIET TROOPS WHO ARE SAID TO HAVE DEFECTED TO THE RESISTANCE.
    - C) THOUGH IT TOOK THE TWO SOLDIERS FIVE MONTHS TO REACH EUROPE, OTHERS ARE EXPECTED TO FOLLOW MORE QUICKLY.
  3. REMAINDER OF ARTICLE IS A VIVID ACCOUNT OF CONDITIONS FACING SOVIET TROOPS IN AFGHANISTAN: LOW MORALE, CORRUPTION, WAR WEARINESS, AND DISEASE. FULL TEXT FOLLOWS BY BAG.
  4. SEE MIFT.
- HOWE

NNNNS

# RUSSIA'S AFGHAN TROOPS DEFECT

BY NICHOLAS BETHELL

**TWO defectors from the Soviet Army fighting in Afghanistan have reached safety in the West, travelling through a highly organised 'underground railway'.**

They are the first of hundreds of Soviet troops who are said to have gone over to the Afghans.

Yesterday, Private Nikolai Ryzhkov and Private Alexander Voronov, who until this summer worked in Soviet Army headquarters in Kabul, arrived in Brussels on their way to a new life in the United States.

There I became the first Western journalist to interview them.

'We left the Soviet Army because we realised that we were not there to protect our own country. We realised that we were the invaders and the Afghans themselves, who fought so hard, were only defending their own country as we Russians did in 1941,' said Nikolai Ryzhkov.

He added: 'Many of our comrades came to the same decision. We are the first of a large number who are on their way to the West.'

Several hundred Soviet troops

have defected to the Afghans as the result of the guerilla fighters' decision not to shoot or kill prisoners. An equal number, or more, they said had converted or reaffirmed their Moslem faith and were now fighting with the guerillas against the Red Army.

The picture they painted of the Russian Army in Afghanistan was of a demoralised force, badly supplied, in which a majority—officers and men alike—were cynical about the war. Few thought it could ever be won.

They talked of Russian dead being shipped back to the Soviet Union in 'tin coffins'. They talked of helicopter gunship pilots talking in phrases which to Western ears have an uncanny echo of what American pilots were saying in Vietnam.

'We go back day after day wiping out villages and using all that ammunition... but we



Defectors Kolya and Sasha: 'We realised we were invaders' Picture: CLIVE LIMPIN

Turn to Page 2, Col. 1

# Defectors

Continued from Page One

never kill any of the real enemy.

And they talked of the success of the guerillas who openly operate in the streets throughout the outskirts of Kabul.

The one thing they would not reveal was the cleverly organised system which had been set up to get them out of Afghanistan, then to Wester Europe and on to America. But set up it is. It took the two Russians I spoke to five months to get to Europe. Others are expected to follow more quickly.

This weekend, they fly to New York.

For Nikolai, known as Kolya, it is something he has dreamed about these last few months. 'I want to live there. It's my new world,' he said.

Kalya and Alexander, known as Sasha, have put their past behind them. Their thoughts now are about their new life, how they're going to learn English, go to college, get jobs and decent money, become Americans and eventually invite their families to join them.

Their parents, meanwhile, know nothing of what has happened. They live in small villages hundreds of miles from any big town and the only news they will have received since June (Kolya and Sasha assume) is the usual official notification: 'Your son has been reported missing, circumstances unknown.'

'I just wish my mother could see Sasha's and my picture in your newspaper,' said Kolya. 'Or I wish someone would show it to them. It will be the first news they get that I am still alive.'

'This wasn't our war—  
Pages SIX and SEVEN

# Weather

## DISTRICT FORECASTS

1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 15: Mainly cloudy, rain, heavy in places. A few clear intervals. Wind S.W. fresh or strong. Max. 12c, 54f.

2, 4, 8, 9, 10: Cloudy, rain, heavy at times. Hill and coastal fog. Wind S.W., strong with gales. Max. 14c, 57f.

11, 12, 13, 14, 16: Mainly cloudy, rain or drizzle. Hill fog patches. A few bright intervals. Wind S.W., fresh or strong. Max. 12c, 54f.

17, 18, 19, 22, 23: Cloudy, occasional rain or drizzle. Bright intervals at first. Wind S.W.,

AIR MAIL.—CHANNEL Is. 19p. BELGIUM 35

104

top  
108  
107  
106  
105  
104  
103  
102  
101  
100  
99  
98  
97  
96  
95  
94  
93  
92  
91  
90  
89  
88  
87  
86  
85  
84  
83  
82  
81  
80  
79  
78  
77  
76  
75  
74  
73  
72  
71  
70  
69  
68  
67  
66  
65  
64  
63  
62  
61  
60  
59  
58  
57  
56  
55  
54  
53  
52  
51  
50  
49  
48  
47  
46  
45  
44  
43  
42  
41  
40  
39  
38  
37  
36  
35  
34  
33  
32  
31  
30  
29  
28  
27  
26  
25  
24  
23  
22  
21  
20  
19  
18  
17  
16  
15  
14  
13  
12  
11  
10  
9  
8  
7  
6  
5  
4  
3  
2  
1

is  
one

What  
hand  
dare  
that  
can  
outer  
pped

chair-  
social-  
said  
ed to  
on tic-  
text to  
d out.

This  
confi-  
scheme.  
hat BR.  
nare of  
stability,

the in-  
ould be  
better in

Bowden  
ng to re-  
addresses

Ford

manding a  
yesterday  
ke actor  
the For  
ny from

AND 1.50 f



**FOR THE FIRST TIME, THE REAL STORY OF THE RUSSIAN CONSCRIPTS IN**



Kolya (left) and Sasha, safe in the West. They hope to become Americans

# had lied

...ents: how to get out, remembers Kolya. "I never said a word, though. You start by telling one friend, he tells another friend and before you know what's happening, you've been denounced. Discipline became harsher. Propaganda about horrific Afghan torture increased. In the Soviet Army, officers are allowed to strike their men if they are being punished."

"The most usual punishment was to make us run 500 metres in a crouching position with our hips a few inches off the ground. Officers would run behind hitting and kicking us. At the end, if we hadn't done it fast enough, they'd give us another 500 metres."

## Frightened

But not many officers are trusted to giving uplifting propaganda about the war. That was done by a central propaganda unit back in Russia which made special films about the "heroic conflict".

Every so often troops were marched in to watch such films. It was in mid-June when they were watching just such a film that Kolya decided that he had had enough.

After the film, he got out and, still in his army fatigues, walked into Kabul. He knew he was taking a risk... but he was prepared for it.

"I heard a skirmish going on, metres away. I walked towards the noise of the shots. I knew there must be Afghans there."

"The fighting stopped and I saw a group of Mujahidin guerrilla fighters walking towards

me fully armed quite openly in a Kabul street. At first I was frightened and I ducked down a side street to avoid them. These last few years plenty of Russian soldiers have had their throats cut with no questions asked."

"Then I reminded myself that nothing could be worse than what I had left behind. Anyway, it was too late to go back. They would have missed me already."

"So I walked out with my hands up and surrendered to the Afghan fighters."

They prodded him with their Kalashnikov rifles. He tried to communicate desperately that he wanted to surrender... fearful all the time that they would shoot him.

But they seemed to understand. And Kolya was later to realise why, he says, when in their camps he came across hundreds of other Russian soldiers who had done the same.

He was blindfolded and taken on a three-hour journey to the guerrilla camp. There he was questioned by a group of senior guerrillas who spoke Russian.

"They asked me if I wanted to embrace the faith of Islam and join in with them in the battle against Soviet imperialism," he said. "I told them no... what I really wanted to do was to go to the West."

He realises now that he was taking another serious risk with his life. Some of the extreme groups in Afghanistan would have been ready to kill him simply for that, for refusing to become a Muslim.

But the group respected his decision, though they kept him separate from their other dozen prisoners, all of whom had taken

the faith. Shortly afterwards he came together again with Sasha.

Sasha and Kolya were safe for the moment, but it was still a long way from a base in the Afghan hills to a house in Brussels where I talked to them yesterday.

But they were in danger for a long time. Afghan groups usually treat their prisoners exactly nowadays, but if a group is attacked and surrounded, they are liable to kill the prisoners, rather than let them fall into Soviet hands again and perhaps rejoin their enemy.

The two detectors say they have happy memories of life in the hills with their captors. There were no women, only fighting men, some of them very young, only 10 or 12 years old. It was five months before they could be magic carpeted from Afghanistan to Europe.

Sasha, who comes from a small village some 400 miles east of Moscow, and Kolya, who is from Kazakhstan, will be in New York next week. They hope to become Americans.

## Hopeful

As I said, they are only boys. But their story is remarkable. It shows that products of Soviet social engineering can become disaffected, demoralised and indifferent to their country if exposed abroad to a cannon fodder to take part in an unpopular political war.

The American troops in Vietnam, and the American people themselves, were exposed to all the criticism that a few press could muster in their unwinable war. It is understandable that many of them turned against it.

It is hopeful that young Russians without any bombardment of counter-propaganda can make up their minds on their own with all the risks involved.

It is clear that many of the hearts and the minds that are being changed in Afghanistan are those of the Russians themselves.

© Daily Mail 1983

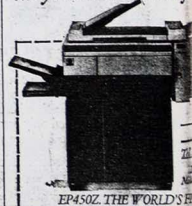
# THE C THAT REMEMBERS YOUR FAVOURITE

TO give you every view  
Minolta EP450Z zoom cap  
standard reduction/enlargement  
It also has four "open pre-set yourself into the machine"  
SO, you can go from 1/30th to 1/1000th if you want.

AND for the first time many different reduction and AS and A3.

AND that's just scratch of the EP450Z.

If you'd like us to enter really must come and see it for



EP450Z. THE WORLD'S BEST