

Juliette Fournot

Doctors Without Borders/Médecins Sans Frontières

Juliette Fournot, D.D.S., MPH, joined Doctors Without Borders/Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) in January, 1980, for an exploratory mission in the tribal zones of Pakistan-Afghanistan, two weeks after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Here she surveyed the conditions of hundreds of thousands of refugees fleeing Afghanistan.

After participating in the opening of clandestine cross-border medical operations missions within Afghanistan between 1980 and 1982, she became Head of Mission in Afghanistan in 1983. In this position, Dr. Fournot established logistical bases in Peshawar and Quetta, and organized the dozen cross-border and clandestine permanent MSF missions in the resistance-held areas of Herat, Mazar-I-Sharif, Badakhshan, Paktia, Ghazni, and Hazaradjat, through which more than 500 international aid workers rotated.

Dr. Fournot negotiated with various factions of the Afghan resistance, and was responsible for all the security aspects of the MSF programs and logistics. Her work with Afghans was facilitated by her prior intimate knowledge of Afghanistan where she grew up as a teenager in the 1960s and '70s while her father worked there as a development engineer promoting self-sufficient programs and micro-lending.

The 1980s were formative years for MSF's expansion during the Cold War, and Dr. Fournot was part of the fierce advocacy of MSF in bearing witness and speaking out about humanitarian atrocities. This naturally led Dr. Fournot to report about the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan in front of the European Parliament and the United States Senate and Congress.

Dr. Fournot left the leadership of the Afghan operation shortly before the Soviet withdrawal, and went to the US for 15 years. During this time she received an MPH at the University of Minnesota, brainstormed on the creation of MSF-USA with the leaders of MSF-France, took part in the founding of MSF-USA in 1991, and was on MSF-USA's Board of Directors until 2003. She lived in Minnesota at the time, and worked as an Associate Professor at the University of Minnesota in the hospital dental clinic working with its various programs for underserved local populations.

She moved back to France in 2003 for family reasons, and pursued several independent projects, such as the film "In the Open Sky," that depicts the very same operation illustrated in *The Photographer*.

