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Is Nonaligned Foreign Policy for a Small Country Possible? The case of Bangladesh from 1972 to 1975 : Achievements and Contradictions

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Abstract:

How might it be possible for the foreign policy of a small country today to be part of a Nonaligned Movement(NAM) as the unipolar world ends? I do a historical geopolitical and geoeconomic case study to answer this question. How was it possible for the foreign policy of Bangladesh to be oriented toward the world as a part of an independent nonaligned movement even as the newly independent, poor, tropical country ravaged by a brutal war struggled to balance many competing internal and external demands? This becomes a complex question to answer particularly when we recall that the cold war between the US led Capitalist bloc and the USSR led Socialist bloc had already been raging for more than two decades. Only some larger mixed economies like India, Indonesia, and some revolutionary countries like Cuba and Algeria had managed to show such independence during the 1950s and 1960s. In case of Indonesia this was drowned in blood in a *coup* aided and abetted by the US. My recently developed theory of Critical TransNeoclassical Realism for geopolitics and geoeconomics helps answer these questions and raise the possibility of a new NAM.

Keyword: Foreign policy, Geopolitics and Geoeconomics, New NAM, foreign policy of a small country and NAM, Bangladesh after liberation, Critical TransNeoclassical Realism for geopolitics and geoeconomics

1. Introduction:

How might it be possible for the foreign policy of a small country today to be part of a Nonaligned Movement(NAM) as the unipolar world ends? I do a historical geopolitical and geoeconomic case study---namely Bangladesh after its liberation--- to answer this question. As a rigorous theoretical framework of the international system of geoeconomics and geopolitics, I use recently developed theory of Critical TransNeoclassical Realism(CTNR) for geopolitics and geoeconomics helps answer these questions and raise the possibility of a new NAM.¹

To begin with we must ask How was it possible for the foreign policy of Bangladesh to be oriented toward the world as a part of an independent nonaligned movement even as the newly independent, poor, tropical country ravaged by a brutal war struggled to balance many competing internal and external demands?

This becomes a complex question to answer particularly when we recall that the cold war between the US led Capitalist bloc and the USSR led Socialist bloc had already been raging for more than two decades. Only some larger mixed economies like India, Indonesia, and some revolutionary countries like Cuba and Algeria had managed to show such independence during the 1950s and 1960s. In case of Indonesia this was drowned in blood in a *coup* aided and abetted by the US.

We also have to remember that the two contending sides in the cold war used every conceivable weapon: alliances, economic and military aid, espionage, covert operations, targeted assassinations, proxy wars, and a dark, menacing arms race in both conventional and nuclear weapons. Clearly, *Bangabandhu* and his close associates including the communists with whom he formed close bonds during his many years in jail², had to find the political wisdom and courage to first formulate such a policy and then execute this with enough political skill in a turbulent period in both domestic and world politics.

Furthermore, analyzing the background conditions and the actual formulation of foreign policy in a peripheral country contra the major imperialist metropolitan bloc requires not just a realist analysis of the international power politics, but also an analysis of the internal political forces and their often conflicting agendas. In effect, this leads to what international relations theorists call a neoclassical realism. However, there is more to the foreign policy formulation and implementation process that organically flows from a genuinely anti-imperialist national liberation movement. Given the opposition to metropolitan imperialism both in moral and

¹ The interested theoretically minded reader will find a thorough exposition in Khan(forthcoming)

² Among other sources pls. see Sarkar Vol.2 chapter 4, and also Bangabandhu's unfinished autobiography.

practical terms, a nuanced and critical neoclassical realism is required. Starting with my first two political-cultural published essays in *Bangla* (Khan 1969; 1971), I have engaged with the complex related issues continuously in my various previous works (Khan 1983; 1985; 1994; 1997; 1998; 2006; 2009; 2014; 2017; 2021; 2022), and have coined the term *Trans Neoclassical Critical Realism (TNCR)* to describe this theory of international relations in an uneven and unjust world dominated by imperialist great powers with occasional opposition in this imperialist epoch of global capitalist development. This is the theory implicit in the analysis that follows.

In this way, apart from the common theme of integrating dialectically the roles of both nationalism and internationalism in *Bangabandhu's* thought and activism, this chapter, I hope, will also offer some novel theoretical insights particularly with respect to the complex origins of the bold foreign policy of Bangladesh during *Bangabandhu's* leadership. Within a limited space, I want to paint a large panoramic historical canvas to cover as much as I can of this large and complex array of forces---objective and subjective--- that can approximate a deep enough explanation in light of relevant evidence.

Clearly, *Bangabandhu* was a larger-than-life historical figure and the struggle for the liberation of the land now known as Bangladesh and all its people is an even larger subject. So is the dialectical relation between their struggle for self-determination and a larger democratic internationalism transcending national borders and consciousness. The word “glocal” coined in the late 20th century indicates an essential connection between the global and local. A glocal history pays attention to both global aspects and local aspects and the links between them.

The internationalism of *Bangabandhu* which was not without contradictions, reflected some of these these essential links. We know today since the publication of *Bangabandhu's* book on visiting the PRC in the 1950s, his unfinished biography and his days in jail in the then East Pakistan as well as meticulous reports by the secret police or IB (The Intelligence Branch) in Pakistan that *Bangabandhu* was a progressive democratic internationalist right from the beginning of his political involvements.³ Keeping this in mind, I will focus here on *Bangabandhu's* acceptance on the world stage after the liberation of Bangladesh culminating in his speech---the first ever in *Bangla*--- at the UN in September, 1974 with references to his other important discourses---particularly the preelection speech in October, 1970. I will also emphasize in my analysis the connections among *nationalism, internationalism, and public reasoning in Bangabandhu's political thought. Most importantly, I will try to draw some contextual logical lessons for our turbulent time* from a novel Post-Bakhtin and Post-Badiou dynamic theory of polyphonic mass movements that I have developed.⁴ Emphasizing polyphonic mass movements, I begin my narrative by describing a mass meeting on 3 January, 1971 in which I myself was present.

³ One important police document that summarizes *Bangabandhu's* activities from 1948 through 1958 is Govt. of East Pakistan, Home Poll. F/N 606.48 PF Part-7. Points 3 and 12 in particular refer to *Bangabandhu's* democratic internationalism.

⁴ For details pls. see Khan (2022)---particularly Annexes 2.1 and 2.2

Contrary to the dictator Yahya's military intelligence assessment and the predictions of political pundits⁵, in December of 1970, the Awami League⁶ gained a stunning majority of the seats in the National Assembly. However, despite winning a majority, they were not permitted to establish a government which pushed further the already politically awakened and militant masses towards a truly revolutionary upheaval. *Bangabandhu* used his political leverage under the circumstances that developed mainly because of the intransigence of Bhutto, the leader of the main party in West Pakistan the PPP(Pakistan People's Party) and Yahya Khan, the military dictator. *Bangabandhu* Sheikh Mujibur Rahman acted as leader of the majority that has been denied its legitimate political demands to launch support his goal to bring East Pakistan to independence. Along with only the minimum relative domestic aspects, I will focus on the international aspects of his post-liberation activities culminating in the famous UN speech in September, 1974 which he gave in Bangla.

Before describing these circumstances, we need to pause and see how *the chronotope of history* in the process of creation led to ever louder crescendos of *polyphony* by the masses. *Bangabandhu* through the electoral mandate became the conductor of this symphony of the people. I had the good fortune to observe this phase in person also as I did the earlier phases of the unfolding of *the eventualizing dynamics*.⁷ Here I will confine myself to describing only the mass meeting of January 3, 1971 which turned out to be an oath-taking ceremony of historic importance. In my view, for Bangladesh it is just as important as the tennis court oath before the French revolution.

I was lucky to be invited---indeed transported physically--- to this meeting by some young AL activists who were very close to *Bangabandhu*. From my perch where I was put by these leading activists, I could observe the events unfolding from the ground near the stage. The stage itself was constructed in the shape of a huge boat⁸ which was the electoral symbol of the AL. The boat was also symbolic of the United Front of 1954 and thus unified many episodes of people's struggles for self-determination in one semiotic moment.

I could see that people had poured in from all directions. The flood of people coming would not cease throughout the duration of the meeting. I did not see a single person leave. All were transfixed, almost mesmerized by the immensity of this event. There were many women who were safely seated in a special area well protected by volunteer forces. Among them were many activists and leaders I knew well. It may come as a surprise to today's feminists---particularly white western middle class feminists---that women from the whole spectrum of society were galvanized into participation as the mass movement unfolded.

The meeting began with the singing of what was already becoming the unofficial national anthem, a song with lyrics by the great poet Rabindranath Tagore with a melody that he

⁵ Most of these experts were trained either in the best political science departments in the US or by the CIA. Some were trained in both the establishments.

⁶ *The People's Party* when translated into English fully.

⁷ This is a technical ontological concept in general---and a concept of political ontology in particular--- that I have developed from my critique of Badiou and my analysis of actual postcolonial mass movements and literary and aesthetic developments. The rigorous critiques and mathematical arguments are in several technical papers. A nonmathematical but rigorous argument s given in Annex 2.2 in Khan(2020b). See also Khan(1970,1971) for the youthful origins of my current(sympathetic) critiques of Badiou (and Lacan) as well as the poststructuralists and postmodernists.

⁸ This area is currently the site of the children's park.

borrowed from a beautiful Baul song.⁹ I had been singing this song and leading others to sing it in unison in many protest meetings and marches. I have to confess that it was a very proud moment for me personally as it was for the others active on the cultural side of the liberation movement as well. Then *Bangabandhu* himself led the crowd into chanting our revolutionary slogans that had emerged through *the eventualizing dynamics*¹⁰ of the mass movement: *Amar Desh, Tomar Desh--- Bangladesh! Bangladesh!(My country, your country---Bangladesh! Bangladesh!), Jago, Jago---Bangalee Jago(Awaken, Oh Bangalees!), Joi Bangla!(Victory to Bangla).*

Not only this song with lyrics by Tagore which is now officially the national anthem of Bangladesh but we sang the other song also after the oath-taking ceremony by the elected MNAs and MPAs. This second song would become the signature song for the *Free Bangla Radio Center* during the liberation war. This song was *Joi Bangla, Banglar Joi*(Victory, Yes Victory to Bangla!). After so many years, I can still feel the pulses quicken as they did in the immense crowd then. Indeed, as the English poet William Wordsworth wrote thinking of the French Revolution more than 180 years ago:

*“Bliss it was in that dawn to be alive
But to be young was very heaven.”¹¹*

I will argue that the historic liberation struggle that created Bangladesh has lessons not just for Bangladesh but for oppressed people everywhere. Therefore, the main thesis is that the Bangladesh liberation struggle in its many phases leading to the emergence of *Bangabandhu*¹² Sheikh Mujibur Rahman as the undisputed leader in 1969-70 holds many lessons for the young people all over the world including Bangladesh from a democratic internationalist perspective. The deeply sincere and deftly dialectical synthesis of ideas of national liberation and democratic internationalism in *Bangabandhu* as a leader of an extraordinary movement is thus particularly relevant today and rewarding to study.¹³ There were many contradictions in this movement and in all the major parties including the AL. Ultimately, these contradictions were partially resolved through the tragic death of Bangabandhu and other progressive leaders, and a temporary triumph of the right which lost no time in forging bonds of dependency with the neoliberal ruling classes in the US, EU and Japan that were also consolidating their hold against social democracies of both traditional and more radical varieties. Therefore, we must analyze Bangladesh’s foreign policy from 1972 to August 1975 against the larger cold war and capitalist crises as contexts.

⁹ I have given my translation of the lyrics in my forthcoming book, *“When the Earth Trembled: How Mass Movements Can Win”*.

¹⁰This is a technical ontological concept in general---and a concept of political ontology in particular--- that I have developed from my critique of Badiou and my analysis of actual postcolonial mass movements and literary and aesthetic developments. The rigorous critiques and mathematical arguments are in several technical papers. A nonmathematical but rigorous argument s given in Annex 2.2 in Khan(2020b). See also Khan(1970,1971) for the youthful origins of my current(sympathetic) critiques of Badiou (and Lacan) as well as the poststructuralists and postmodernists.

¹¹ William Wordsworth, *The Prelude*, Book IX

¹² The friend of Bengal---a title conferred upon Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at a mass meeting of more than half a million people on February 23, 1969---two days after mass rebellions by the people secured his release from the military prison where he and his colleagues were on trial under a military tribunal. They were charged with treason, an offense that carried the penalty of capital punishment.

¹³ On the nature of nationalism of the oppressed against imperialism via a critique of “imagined communities” thesis of Anderson, see Mofidul Hoque(2017).

We must also recognize clearly the present global context. The forces of racism and neo-fascism that are once again on the march can only be defeated by mass popular struggles of the kind that *Bangabandhu* and others led in the past. But the ultimate victory for the anti-racist and anti-fascist struggles developing today all over the world must at the end also lead to a more people-oriented economy, society and polity as happened at least in part after the defeat of fascism in WW2. The heroic sacrifices made by people everywhere during WW2 led to various forms of social democracy and decolonization after the war.¹⁴ Likewise, in spite of its many limitations, the Bangladesh liberation movement, I argue, can be seen as a historical marker not just for the young people in Bangladesh today but also for the youth everywhere dreaming of a better world who are awakening all over our crisis-ridden planetary civilization.

This essay summarizes my several decades long project towards writing a truly global history of democratic internationalist liberation struggles. I have followed a particular strategy in trying to capture the global within the local here. I have also endeavored to present the macrocosm of tumultuous postcolonial politics in South Asia since 1947 through the independence of Bangladesh and its recognition by the World by 1974 mainly---- but not exclusively----through the political life of one key actor, *Bangabandhu* Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and his progressive democratic revolutionary companions from all sectors of today's Bangladesh. One of the conclusions of my work is that *Bangabandhu* was an emotionally mature, thoughtful and courageous human being who valued fearless, honest and democratic public reasoning deeply.

My main purpose is to let an international readership---especially young people who are looking for a way out of the present global crisis---know that the political ideas, strategies and tactics of *Bangabondhu* are relevant--- within proper historical limits--- for our crisis-ridden period of struggle. Therefore, my aim here is also to extend the discussion in several useful directions for the future.

Finally, the present effort may also be considered in light of the emerging frontier areas of research on mainstream narrative politics (Mayer, 2014) as well as the more radical post-Bakhtin analytical approach to narrative form as a *polyphonic*¹⁵ and *dialogical* discourse of the people with necessary, inevitable *heteroglossia* and specific types of *chronotopes*. My research emphasizes the construction of public and collective goods through the use of common narratives and original more radical interpretations for advancing the common good. In the East Pakistan of the 1960s the construction of the six points and 11 points programs in light of the theory of two economies advanced in the 1950s and 1960s by a group of Bengali economists can be insightfully seen from this new perspective of narrative politics. It is by no means certain that the more progressive narratives will win. This is demonstrated by the dominance of autocracies and kleptocracies in the aftermath of many national liberation movements and also after the break up of bureaucratic and undemocratic structures in former USSR and Eastern Europe. In these cases one set of exploiting elites has been replaced by another. The power structure is

¹⁴ For such movements, nationalism without a democratic socialist component is severely self-limiting. Among other things, such a nationalism is often blind to other minority groups with their distinct relative identities within the nation state. Indigenous people have been particularly victimized through such blind self-limiting nationalisms of dominant groups. Khan (2020b) discusses this problem in the context of Bangladesh liberation movement and its aftermath.

¹⁵ See the Bakhtin references in this essay. Also see Khan(2014)

maintained largely through overt repression mixed with ideological narratives that are cruelly deceptive.

I also offer a post-Badiou dynamic theory of the ontology of the Event (événement).¹⁶Based on the concrete historical development of liberation movements like those in Bangladesh in the postcolonial setting, I develop the concept of *eventualization dynamic* and demonstrate the reach of a theory based on this key concept in explaining successes and failures of liberation movements. Like Badiou, I also use rigorously modern set theory for this purpose. But unlike him, I dispense with the unsatisfactory axiom of choice. I also work with the more general theory of fuzzy sets axiomatically. Finally I integrate this set theoretic approach with complexity theory via deep learning in neural networks and meshworks with multiple hidden layers.

An important methodological point also needs to be mentioned at the outset. My investigations of both the narrative and dynamic (political) ontological structures of the most significant speech acts of *Bangabondhu and others* are also attempts to present both the objective and the subjective factors that led to the victory of the liberation forces in Bangladesh on 16 December, 1971 and the foreign policy direction from 1972 to August 15, 1975. I do this schematically but through as dispassionate an analysis as possible of the objective factors within the limited space here. For the subjective factor, the reorganization and restructuring of the new AL from 1963-64 and building a base for liberation movement by going lower and deeper among the masses under the leadership of *Bangabondhu* and other progressive political forces were the most important.

I point out that in terms of political semiotics and ontology, *Bangabondhu* and the other revolutionary leaders are far greater than the persons themselves and their institutional titles. Through *Bangabondhu's* and his compatriots' consistent and courageous judgements and actions their subjectivities merged with the objective forces of the history of East Bengal, of South Asia and ultimately, the whole post WW2 world. Let us see what new insights we can gain by looking at the response to foreign policy issues by the government headed by *Bangabondhu* from 1972 to August 1975.

2. Background of Foreign Policy Issues for Independent Bangladesh

In August 1947, both Pakistan and India became independent nation states. India assumed a leadership position in the non-aligned group of countries. Pakistan started to court the USA even during Jinnah's regime in 1947-48. After the death of Jinnah, Pakistan tilted much more to supporting US foreign policy. Particularly in the Middle East and South East Asia, Pakistan joined security treaty organization launched by the cold warriors in the US. Pakistan went so far as to fly spy planes out of its secret base in Pakistan. This led to the U-2 flight debacle when the USSR defense shot down a US plane piloted by an American. Here I will give a very brief

¹⁶ See the Badiou references in this essay. Also see Khan(2021a,b)

history of the two US-initiated anti-socialist and anti-nonaligned movement treaty organizations in Asia that Pakistani ruling elites had joined quite willingly.

First came the **Middle East Treaty Organization (METO)**, also known as the **Baghdad Pact** and subsequently known as the **Central Treaty Organization (CENTO)**. This was an anti-socialist military alliance of the post WW2 Cold War initiated and guided at each step by the US. It was formed in 1955 by Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, Turkey and the United Kingdom. It was still in existence in 1971 and throughout the rest of Bangabandhu's life. CENTO was finally dissolved in 1979 during the Carter Administration.

The US was also instrumental in pushing the **Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO)** agenda articulated by the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty, or Manila Pact, signed in September 1954. The formal institution of SEATO was established on 19 February 1955 at a meeting of treaty partners in Bangkok, Thailand. Pakistan joined SEATO also although only East Pakistan could be tendentiously described as belonging to the **Southeast Asia region**.

In the 1950s Bangabandhu was close to both Bhashani and Suhrawardy. The former was actually the founder of AL; but the latter was in some sense Bangabandhu's political guru when Bangabandhu was a student leader in Kolkata. Although Bangabandhu stayed in the part of AL led by Suhrawardy when Bhashani led the more left wing segments to form the National Awami Party (NAP), it is not clear whether Bangabandhu accepted completely Suhrawardy's explicit pro-US foreign policy position. Judging from Bangabandhu's observations in his book on China and his support for democratic struggles of all the people of Pakistan, it is likely that he viewed foreign policy issues mostly from the struggle for autonomy. Hence, it will be fair to say that his foreign policy stance which was never made explicit during Suhrawardy's life time was most likely a pragmatic one. The struggle for autonomy would guide possible alliances. Viewed in this light, his cordial relations with US officials, and openness to India and USSR would no longer seem completely paradoxical. This is clearly a promising avenue for further historical research by competent diplomatic and political historians.

What seems confirmed by historical facts is that after his leader's death, Sk. Mujib did two things that were significant politically. One was to follow the student movements that started some what spontaneously led by courageous leaders of EPSL and EPSU. The other was to meet with communist leaders like Khoka Roy to discuss autonomy or even independence of Bangladesh. Organizationally, he with the support of only one senior AL leader, Abdur Rashid Tarkabageesh revived AL as an effective political organization. By 1966, *Bangabandhu* turned the situation around in a direction that the activist students would welcome. At this time, he held many powerful leadership positions within the Awami League including the posts of joint secretary, general secretary and president. Working with dedicated pro-autonomy intellectuals like Prof. Nurul Islam and Prof. Rehman Sobhan among others, as the President of the AL, in 1966 Sheikh Mujib announced a six-point program that--- combined with the later 11-point program of other progressives--- would culminate in a movement not just for political autonomy but also for substantive social and economic justice for all. Here it should also be mentioned that contrary to some dogmatic leftist's characterization of Mujib as a bourgeois leader, from the beginning of his political career in 1940, *Bangabandhu* always fought for the interests of the lower strata in society. His political approach was constitutionalist like his mentor Suhrawardy's

to practice parliamentary democracy. But like his other mentor Maulana Bhashani he believed in engaging with the masses in bold, forthright manner. However, a party like the AL led by various members of the intermediate classes representing many different interests presents unavoidable contradictions. We will discuss many of these in the context of the challenges Bangabandhu would face from 1972 to 1975 when we discuss his balancing act from the nonaligned camp leading to his becoming Viswabandhu type progressive internationalist culminating in his remarkable UN third speech . My purpose here is to underline the democratic and economic justice elements in Bangabodhu's thinking and political program in a complex and contradictory set of historical processes.

In order to show that programmatically by 1969 when the 11-points were formulated and were accepted almost immediately and completely---including their *anti-imperialist foreign policy stance*--- by Bangabandhu even from his captivity, it is sufficient to present the two sets of overlapping and complementary demands.

In their briefest formulation, the six points simply demanded the following:

1. Pakistan must have a federal system of government, parliamentary in form based on adult universal franchise;
2. The federal government will deal with Defence and Foreign Affairs. All other subjects will be handled by the provinces with full autonomy;
3. There will be two convertible separate currencies for East and West Pakistan. Alternatively, under the same currency there must be firm safeguards against flight of capital between the two wings;
4. Power of taxation and revenue collection will be vested in the federating units---not in the center;
5. There shall be separate accounts for foreign exchange earnings of the two wings. The financing of the federal government will be met by the two wings in equal or some other proportion mutually agreed upon by the two wings;
6. There shall be self-sufficiency in defence matters. An ordnance factory and military academy shall be set up in East Pakistan. The naval headquarters shall be set up in East Pakistan.

So these were the essential six points. It is firm on interwing equity but does not mention class divisions and economic and other forms of exploitation within each wing. Nor does it discuss the role of state in equitable (or following Sen and Others' development of the modern human capabilities theory, the human capabilities-enhancing) development. It also does not mention the socio-economic demands of students, peasants and workers. 11-point filled in these lacunae and thus was a more adequate program for the needs of ordinary people. Furthermore, it was staunchly anti-imperialist in foreign policy orientation.

The following is a summary of the historic 11-Points Demands of Progressive Students of East Pakistan in 1969:

1. The first point was the state of the entire educational system. The demands of the students were also included in this first point.

In fact seventeen items were presented in the first point, including the expansion of school and college education by increasing the number of schools and colleges and technical institutions, the reduction of school and college fees by 50 per cent, a food subsidy for the dining halls and canteen expenses, the introduction of education in the mother tongue at all stages, free and compulsory education up to class eight, the expansion of female education an increase in the number of medical, agricultural, and technical colleges, universities, travel subsidies to students in all forms of transport as was being extended to students in West Pakistan, a guarantee of jobs, the cancellation of the black university ordinance and a guarantee of the autonomy of the universities and other educational institutions and the scrapping of the National Education Commission Report and the Report of the Hamodur Rahman Commission

The other points were:

2. Direct election on the basis of adult franchise for establishing parliamentary democracy and ensuring the freedom of speech and of the newspapers.
3. Full autonomy for East Pakistan within the framework of a Federal Constitution.
4. Sub-federation in West Pakistan with regional autonomy for all provinces including Balochistan, North-West Frontier Province and Sind.
5. Nationalization of banks and insurance companies, the jute trade and big industries.
6. Reduction of rents and taxes on peasants, remission of all area rents and loans, abolition of the certification system, etc.
7. Guarantee of fair wages and bonus for Workers and provision for their education, housing, medical facilities; withdrawal of all anti-worker black laws and the granting of the right to strike and form trade unions.
8. Flood control and provision for proper use of water resources in East Pakistan.
9. Withdrawal of the Emergency Ordinance Security Act and all Preventive Detention Acts.
10. Abrogation of SEATO, CENTO and Pak-American military pacts and formulation of a nonaligned and independent foreign policy.
11. Release of all students, workers, peasants and political leaders and activists from various jails of the country, and withdrawal of all warrants of arrest and cases; including the Agartala Conspiracy Case.

This Eleven-Point program was formulated and placed before the student community and the people in-general as a basis for a broad-based democratic mass movement by a political student

Alliance called the 'Student Action Committee' (SAC). In the formation of its alliance the different factions of the East Pakistan Communist Party played an effective role. Thus the two groups of the East Pakistan Students' Union and the student group of the pro-Six-

Point Awami League, the Students' League, constituted the main strength of this alliance.

The document which was formally circulated in January 1969 was signed on behalf of the alliance by the following: Abdur Rouf (President of the East Pakistan Students' League), Khaled

Mohammad Ali (General Secretary of the East Pakistan Students' League), Sharfuddin Ahmad (President of the East Pakistan Students' Union), Shamsudduha (General Secretary of the East Pakistan Students' Union), Mustafa Jamal Hyder (President of the East Pakistan Students' Union), Dipa Datta (Assistant Secretary of the East Pakistan. Students' Union), Tofail Ahmed (Vice-President of the Dhaka University Students' Union [DUCSU]), and Nazim

Kamran Chowdhury (General Secretary of the DUCSU). Apart from these student leaders, the General Secretary of the Students' Union (pro-Peking group), Mahbubullah, was a leading member of this alliance.

As Umar(2006) puts it:

The Eleven Point program can be easily seen as a much more democratic program than the Six-Point program of the Awami League in that it contained certain specific demands of the peasants and workers, and it demanded the abrogation of all military pacts and alliances with imperialist countries. It also demanded the annulment of all black laws like the Public Security Act and the release of all political prisoners detained without trial under such undemocratic Acts.¹⁷

Umar (2006 Vol.2) presents an insightful analysis of the 11-point program including its origins. It is pertinent to quote his analysis here:

¹⁷ Badruddin Umar, *The Emergence of Bangladesh Vol. 2* (Karachi: Oxford University Press,2006) pp.148-49

This Eleven-Point programme was formulated and placed before the student community and the people in general as a basis for a broad-based democratic mass movement by a political student alliance called 'Student Action Committee' (SAC). In the formation of its alliance the different factions of the East Pakistan Communist Party played an effective role. Thus, the two groups of the East Pakistan Students' Union and the (student group) of the pro-Six-Point Awami League, 'the Students' League,' constituted the main strength of this alliance.

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Both the Six-Point and the Eleven-Point programmes reflected the class interests, of the rising bourgeoisie in East Pakistan, but whereas the former represented the very narrow interests of the rightist section-of this bourgeoisie, the latter reflected the interest of a much broader and liberal section of the same class.¹⁸

Haider Akbar Khan Rano who was no longer a student leader or even formally enrolled kept in close touch with the student leaders even as he put most of his energy into organizing the workers in the Tongi area. In his 2005 book, *Shotabdi Periye*, he gives the following assessment of the 11-points:

¹⁸ Umar(2006 Vol. 2):149.

The 11-points resulted from intense inter-group discussions among the students. The Students' League pressured to accept the 6-points. The Menon group pressured to include anti-imperialist demands and demands from the workers and peasants. At the end...6-points were included completely. Another point included the cancellation of SEATO, CENTO etc. Pak-American pacts. Demands for nationalizing banks, insurance companies and large-scale industry were also included. That is to say, the 11-points were radical in many respects. Two points addressed issues related to the interests of the workers and peasants. But subsequently, I have concluded that these were not specific. For example, just wages are mentioned but nothing is specified. There is mention of repealing repressive black laws and regulations. But nothing specific was mentioned.

For peasants, the issue of land reform was conspicuous by its total absence. There was no mention of the *tebhaga* movement, the landmark struggle from 1946. There was mention of the minimum price for jute, reduction of taxes, repeal of debt and stopping the oppression of the tax collectors. But all of these were non-specific and superficially stated.¹⁹

As stated before, the Eleven-Point program was, in reality, a logical development of student activism which had emerged since the early part of December 1968 throughout Pakistan. The student activism continued in both wings but gained increased momentum partly as a result of the consensus around these 11-points and coordination through DUCSU and other student organizations in other colleges and universities in East Pakistan in particular. But West Pakistan was not left behind either. In the first week of January 1969, students in various areas of West Pakistan demonstrated against government repression. This followed the police firing on demonstrators from the Navy in Rawalpindi and on students of the Punjab University.

The movement in both the wings was supported by many eminent literary figures and artists some of whom were also arrested. In protest against these arrests a joint statement was issued by various-student organizations of West Pakistan. On 7 January about a thousand female students from various schools and colleges of Rawalpindi participated in a militant demonstration against the repression of students and the people at large. The students remained on the streets for three hours with other women from different strata also joining in solidarity. Even the *madrassa* students in both East and West Pakistan called upon the opposition parties to organize a united anti-Ayub government pro-democratic movement.

The 4 January 1969 resolution of the Working Committee of NAP (pro-Peking) under the presidency of Mowlana Bhashani called for boycotting the election. The positions at this point, of the other political parties were very different. They called a meeting of the opposition parties at the residence of Ahmedul Kabir of the NAP (pro-Moscow) on 5 January. This meeting was

¹⁹ Rano(2005):165. He also states self-critically that the leftist leaders like he himself did not pay enough attention to these matters. Such timely attention could have helped make the document more complete.

attended by the five parties that comprised the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) and the National Democratic Front (NDF). These were: the Jamaat-i-Islami, Nezam-i-Islam, pro-PDM Awami League, Council Muslim League and pro-Moscow NAP, pro-Six-Point Awami League and Jamiat-i-Ulema-i-Islam. The pro-Peking NAP was not present at the meeting.

As Umar (2006) describes this meeting:

The eight parties in their 5 January meeting agreed to form a United Front, which was formed in a meeting on the following day and was called the Democratic Action Committee (DAC). They reached an agreement on universal adult franchise and a parliamentary system of government but were divided on the question of boycotting the election. Mahmudul Huq Usmani of the West Pakistan NAP (pro-Moscow) strongly opposed the idea of a boycott. However, the pro-Six-Point Awami League decided to boycott the announced election and put forward a Four-Point programme for the consideration of the DAC—universal adult franchise, federal system of government, release of all political prisoners including Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Wali Khan, the withdrawal of all warrants of arrest against political persons, and the withdrawal of cases including the cases which were being tried by the tribunal.²⁰

He goes on to add:

The DAC declared an Eight-Point programme and Mahmudul Huq Usmani of the pro-Moscow NAP (Wali Khan) declared on behalf of the new united front, a programme of meetings and demonstrations throughout the country starting on 17 January as the first step of a wider movement. The Eight-Point programme did not include most of the major demands included in the Eleven-Point programme. Due to this and the absence of Bhashani and the NAP (pro-Peking), there was not much enthusiasm among a large, section of students for it. Moreover, the Usmani announcement that after the 17 January programme they would wait two months before announcing their next programme, was a great disappointment. However, they also declared a programme of action for 17 January for their Eleven-Point programme.

The DAC-programme on 17 January began after the Friday prayer meeting at *Baitul Mokarram*. In spite of some opposition by the police and

²⁰ Umar(2006)

occasional skirmishes with them, a loosely connected and thinly manned procession passed through the Nawabpur Road without seriously defying Section 144 and finally reached the Bar Library Hall, where a meeting was held. The previously announced programme of a public meeting was cancelled and the DAC procession did not -take the form of an angry demonstration.²¹

By accepting the 11-points without reservation, Bangabandhu demonstrated ---unlike Suhrawardy--- that he was committed to a principled democratic socialist or social democratic path with strategic clarity but tactical flexibility.

Here it is also pertinent to mention the role of Tajuddin Ahmad as an organizer and as a close partner of Bangabandhu since 1948. Prof. Rehman Sobhan has given the best summary account of this remarkable relationship:

From as far back as 1948 Tajuddin had developed a close working relationship with Bangabandhu. When Bangabandhu eventually assumed the Presidency of the AL in 1966, in the wake of Suhrawardy's death in November 1963, his trusted colleague Tajuddin who strongly supported the six points program, was elected as the General Secretary of the party. Tajuddin was by temperament a worker and an activist, his political intelligence, commitment and organisational skill were exceptional but he never aspired to use this to seek elevation to the highest rank of public office. It was this quality which specially attracted him to Bangabandhu and made them natural political allies whose diverse complementary talents could be melded to produce a unique political partnership which was of vital significance in mobilising the nation behind the struggle for self-rule.

Tajuddin, as the General Secretary of the AL, played a crucial role in reorganising the AL which had for the period 1966-68 been exposed to ruthless repression by the regime of Governor Monem Khan, with workers from the lowest tier to the highest echelons of the party in jail. He worked tirelessly to reconstruct the AL into an election fighting machine which could deliver Bangabandhu's message of Six Points to every corner of Bangladesh. Bangabandhu provided the inspiration for the party to launch and sustain the struggle. But Bangabandhu in turn, needed a person with the political skills, capacity for creative thinking, dedication to the cause and above all, complete confidence that he would never betray him, to handle party affairs.

Bangabandhu invested Tajuddin with the authority to interact with his intellectual advisers to prepare the AL's manifesto for the 1970 election and to work with them in detailing the negotiating position of the party for preparing a constitution based on Six Points. At a later stage Tajuddin was involved by Bangabandhu in all his political negotiations with Yahya and Bhutto. Finally, Bangabandhu entrusted Tajuddin to assume the day to day responsibility of running the administration of an independent Bangladesh during the crucial month of March 1971 when Bangabandhu effectively ruled the country. These major responsibilities invested in Tajuddin by Bangabandhu indicated his deep confidence in him and made it evident that in his absence Tajuddin could be trusted to deputise for him.

²¹ Ibid.

For all his unique qualities, Tajuddin was a person of great modesty and humility. During the nine months of the liberation war when Bangabandhu was incarcerated in Mianwali jail in West Pakistan by the Military junta, Tajuddin was compelled to assume leadership of the first government of an independent Bangladesh based in Kolkata which oversaw the direction of the Liberation War. He took on this task with reluctance since he never aspired to elevate himself above the other AL leaders who served as Bangabandhu's lieutenants. For those who had, up close, witnessed the interaction of Bangabandhu with Tajuddin and other close colleagues, there was never any doubt as to who was the most talented among them and who Bangabandhu could trust to deputise for him if he was not to be on the scene. It was fortunate for the direction of Bangladesh's liberation struggle that Indira Gandhi also recognised these qualities of Tajuddin and accepted him as the leader of the Bangladesh interim government.²²

These two great leaders worked together for many decades and it may be surmised that by the time of the great mass movement in late 1960s Bangabandhu had come to appreciate his progressive comrade's political and economic policy positions. This may explain why Bangabandhu's remarkable pre-election speech in 1970 already contained many democratic socialist positions. As we shall see in our analysis of the March 7 speech, Bangabandhu relied on Tajuddin with complete confidence particularly during the noncooperation movement during March 1971.

Because of Sheikh Mujib's bold leadership with able lieutenants like Tajuddin and support from all progressives in East Pakistan, the Ayub regime arrested him and his supporters accusing them of conspiring with India to break up Pakistan. For a while, it seemed that this tyrannical move by an illegitimate and oppressive regime might succeed. However, the heroic mass movement that took shape from December 1968 onwards and culminated in the most powerful mass rebellion in Pakistan in the early months of 1969 led to the release of Sheikh Mujib in February.²³

Here it is pertinent to give credit to Maulana Bhashani--- who remains a controversial figure in South Asian politics to this day---for opposing in late 1950s Pakistan's policy of joining the US in its crusade against communism to the point of joining the Baghdad pact (CENTO) and SEATO, and also later for initially leading the movement against the Ayubshahi or the Ayub dictatorship. After visiting PRC in early 1960s and discussions with Mao, Bhashani had infamously proclaimed "do not disturb Ayub" policy. However, by the time of the Agartala Conspiracy trials and especially with the first stirrings of the student mobilizations against Ayub in 1968, Bhashani took the leading role in organizing protests. Thus, it was he who led the protests on Dec. 6, 1968 and proclaimed his determination to free Mujib and all other political prisoners. Outside of organized student movement part of which his student followers also led, Bhashani was the key leader of the movement until Mujib's release on February 22, 1969. The prominent left leader Haider Akbar Khan Rano in his book *Shatabdi Periy*e has an interesting account of

²² Rehman Sobhan, *Sustaining democracy in Bangladesh: The political legacy of Tajuddin Ahmad* (Dhaka: Dec., 2019):3-4

²³ It is also pertinent to mention here the sacrifice of Begum Mujib. The unfinished autobiography of Bangabandhu acknowledges this. One can also listen to HE Hasina Wajed's following most moving tribute to her mother: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HKJ1ZJyFUh0> Inter alia, her interview in English by David Frost which also shows flashbacks of her father's earlier interview and past events reveals HE Sheikh Hasina's human side. I have been surprised by the inability of some to understand both the grief of a daughter and the contributions of a great mother, wife and freedom fighter.

Mujib's sudden release. According to Rano, even the leaders outside including students' movement leaders were completely taken by surprise. Ultimately, as he and others in the movement concluded, it really attested to the tremendous force and power of organized people's movement.²⁴

But the release was so sudden that even the papers on 21 February could not carry this news²⁵. As Rano describes how his parents discovered the Sheikh's release when they were coming to their new home on Road No. 32 in Dhanmondi next to the Mujib residence. Apparently, they spotted a military vehicle as they were near their home on Road 32. Their driver was trying to overtake the military jeep but was forbidden to do so by Rano's father. Suddenly, the jeep stopped startling the passengers in the car following who were Rano's parents. They could not believe their own eyes when they saw Sheikh Mujib and his military escorts get out of the car. This was the scene of something very human for all of them. Needless to say, Rano's parents got off their car and walked towards the recently released Sheikh Mujib. Sheikh Mujib knew them as neighbors. He embraced Rano's father warmly. Rano's parents then let Rano know of this event which to them was nothing short of a miracle. Rano ran to the Mujib residence as his parents proceeded to give the great news to the others at the Dhaka University.²⁶

After Rano got to the Sheikh's house, he had to wait while more people gathered. When there were more than a thousand people on the street, Sheikh Mujib appeared on his balcony with a mike at hand. From there he addressed people briefly. This prefigured March, 1971 when the crowds will be much larger and Sheikh Mujib would virtually run an independent government of Bangladesh. It is significant that Sheikh Mujib in this brief speech mainly talked about all kinds of exploitation and oppression. He also avoided a narrow provincial nationalism. Infact, he emphasized that there were indeed exploited and oppressed people in West Pakistan with whom he was in solidarity.

Not only was Sheikh Mujib playing the role of a legitimate popular leader he was also even then cognizant of his neighbor and younger leader in front of his house. He greeted Rano and asked him how he was. Rano states that he was not known to the crowd; but after Sheikh Mujib Greeted him Rano attracted much curious attention from the crowd.

By coincidence, it seems Rano was also at the NAP leader Sayeedul Hasan's house when on the same day, Sheikh Mujib went to visit Maulana Bhashani who was staying with Hasan. It is perhaps not known to many readers of this book that in a sense Sheikh Mujib always acknowledged the Maulana who founded the AL in 1949--- four years before Suhrawardy joined--- as a senior leader and mentor. Sheikh Mujib always greeted Maulana Bhashani in the traditional respectful way by touching the Maulana's feet. The two leaders talked on this

²⁴ Haider Akbar Khan Rano in his book *Shatabdi Periye* (Dhaka: Tarafdar Prokashoni).2005:183

²⁵ One can listen to the relevant part of Prime Minister HE Sheikh Hasina's talk to the young people on Dec. 13, 2018 in Channel I and also her recollections about her mother: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WfJj6EX5fhQ> and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HKJ1ZJyFUh0> Hon. Tofail Ahmed's recollections in *Tritiya Matra*, Oct. 31, 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tYGYvi0M2yk> See also Sobhan(2016) from Chapter11 onwards.

²⁶ Ibid. pp.183-84

occasion for about 20 minutes. After leaving the Maulana in his room, Sheikh Mujib saw Mohammad Toaha who was Sheikh Mujib's friend since the late 1940s. Although Toaha and Sheikh Mujib had political differences they remained close friends. Rano describes the very human scene briefly but vividly:

Sheikh Mujib after leaving Maulana Bhashani did not stay at that place too long. I only saw him drawing Toaha close to him. Sheikh Mujib whispered something in Toaha's ears. Toaha also responded in the same way. I understood from their reactions that they were not discussing anything serious. It seemed more like a friendly banter. Perhaps a conversation that can occur only between two close friends.²⁷

3.October, 1970 Preelection Speech of BB prefigures many policy stances including the shape of foreign policy:

On February 23, 1969 at a mass meeting Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was garlanded and publicly given the title *Bangabandhu* or the friend of Bengal. A month later Ayub abdicated declaring another martial law regime under his deputy Agha Mohammad Yahya Khan. Under public pressure Yahya granted political parties to organize for free elections. This was the background of the October 1970 Radio Speech for election by *Bangabandhu*. Under popular pressure, the government of Pakistan itself was forced to arrange a series of Radio and Television speeches by leaders of the major political parties. The official government rationale was that it was for the benefit of the political leaders to enable them to inform the people of their party manifestos and programs. On 28 October 1970, *Bangabandhu* Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, President of the Awami League, was the first to make this Radio and TV broadcast for the electronic media in Pakistan. Sheikh Mujib had been presenting both 6-point and 11-point demands for autonomy and social justice relentlessly throughout 1969 and 1970 to his people. His electoral speech reflected honestly in a forthright manner his political, economic and social thinking as a progressive social democrat. In fact, as historical sources establish, he would increasingly come around to a program of democratic socialism from now on.

In the speech, the translation of which follows, he begins by clearly identifying three principal aspects of our problem:

We must overcome the crises that are about to destroy our nation. The primary and number one reason for the crises is that fact that our people do not have their political rights. Secondly, the majority of our people has become a victim of discrimination. Thirdly, increasing regional disparities have created the feeling of endless injustice. In the main, these are the main reasons for the resentment and unhappiness of the *Bangalees*. But the ignored public in the West Pakistan also share the same sentiments.

²⁷ Ibid. pp.184-85. M.R. Akhter Mukul in vol. 2 of his book *Abba Huzurer Deshe* (Dhaka:Sagar Publishers, 1987):172-73 confirms this visit and encounter but chooses to embellish his account by a conversation between the two leaders that could have taken place. But by Rano's account which seems more factual no one else was present in the room where the conversation took place.

The last sentence shows Bangabandhu's awareness of exploitation in West Pakistan also. Hence, the revolt he was about to lead would be the revolt of the exploited masses against their exploiters. But Bangabandhu emphasized the greater injustice towards East Pakistan in detail. Also showing much political wisdom he made a bid on the basis of objective conditions to unite the great majority of the Bengalis by underlining different kinds of deprivation for different strata as well as the common suffering of all:

We must overturn the intolerable framework of exploitation and miscarriage of justice that has been created. Only two families control more than sixty percent of our national wealth. More than eighty percent of banking assets and seventy percent of insurance assets are also controlled by two families. The loaned-out investment capital from the banks are enjoyed by only three percent of our people. Other developing countries raise six percent of their GDP as taxes while we raise only two percent. On the other hand, we have indirect tax on an essential item like salt. The rulers have created a monopolistic cartelization by following policies of protected markets, tax holiday, bonus voucher etc. With minimal land reform that is an eyewash the feudal landlords still have princely unearned wealth. These classes enjoy unlimited opportunities. Their wealth keeps increasing. At the same time, the poor peasants' condition keeps deteriorating. Just to survive, our rural folks are migrating to the towns. According to official statistics, one fifth of the labor force or 900,000 workers are unemployed. The rapid increase in cost of living is felt primarily by the toiling masses. The pressure is intense for teachers, low income white collar workers, especially the fourth-class government workers as well.

Looking at horrifying picture of economic inequalities, we can see that during the last twenty years, out of the total expenditure out of the government revenue, only about Rs. 1,500 crores (that is only one fifth of the total expenditures) was spent in Bangladesh, as against Rs. 5,000 crores in West Pakistan. Of the total development expenditure during the same period, Rs. 3000 crores (that is only a third of the total) was spent in Bangladesh, as against over Rs. 6,000 crores in West Pakistan.

Over twenty years, West Pakistan imported goods worth more than Rs. 3,000 crores as against its own foreign exchange earnings of barely Rs. 1300 crores. Imports into West Pakistan have been three times the value of the imports into Bangladesh. It was made possible for West Pakistan to import goods worth Rs. 2,000 crores in excess of its export earnings by allocating to it Rs. 500 crores of the foreign exchange earnings of Bangladesh and allowing it to utilize over 80 per cent of all foreign aid.

The record in the field of government services is just as deplorable after twenty-two years since our independence. Even today, Bengalis account for only 15 per cent in Central Government Services and less than 10 per cent in the defense services.

The total economic impact of such discrimination has been that the economy of Bengal is today in a state of imminent collapse. Near famine conditions are prevailing in the majority of the villages. Some fifteen lakh tons of rice has had to be imported only to save the people from starvation. The powerless people of Bangladesh are victims of the rising trends of inflation in our country. Prices of necessities are 50 to 100 percent more than the prices in West Pakistan. About 40 Kg of coarse rice will cost you between 20 and 25 rupees whereas in Bangladesh the same amount costs between 45 and 50 rupees. The flour that costs 30 to 35 rupees costs only 15

to 20 rupees in West Pakistan. There each Kg of mustard oil is only two and a half rupees, and here it is 5 rupees. In Karachi gold costs 135 to 140 rupees and here the same weight of gold costs 160 to 165 rupees. Even so, we can not bring gold from West Pakistan to East Pakistan. Even the central government can not change this economic structure that has been erected over the last 22 years. This truth was demonstrated during the 4th five-year plan.

The Six-Point program of the Awami League which is included in the 11-point program, points to the path for overcoming the regional disparities. It presents a rational solution to this problem of regional injustice. With a central bureaucracy in which Bangalees account for just 15 per cent, and with the nature of the power structure being what it is, to expect justice from a centralized system of economic management would be to expect the impossible. If Bangladesh and other victimized regions attempt to secure larger allocations such efforts would only aggravate regional tensions and threaten the viability of the federal government. The only feasible solution is the re-ordering of the constitutional structure by giving full regional autonomy to the federating units on the basis of our six-point formula.

Looking at *Bangabandhu's* address to the whole nation on October 28, 1970 impresses the reader immediately by its clarity. Bangabandhu's commitment to crating a truly democratic polity and a nonexploitative economic system shines through: Here are a few short excerpts that demonstrate these two key points. Bangabandhu states forthrightly at the beginning:

The manifesto of AL has a roadmap for solving these essential problems. We must establish a true and genuinely lively democracy in our country. In this type of democracy all basic rights will have constitutional guarantee. In our manifesto, we delineate clearly the development paths for political parties, labor organizations, local self-governance institutions etc. We will restore complete freedom of press and academic freedoms. We are determined to eradicate completely the corruption that has spread like cancer in our social body.

He then addresses the problems of economic and overall justice in an equally forthright manner:

We must overturn the intolerable framework of exploitation and miscarriage of justice that has been created. Only two families control more than sixty percent of our national wealth. More than eighty percent of banking assets and seventy percent of insurance assets are also controlled by two families. The loaned-out investment capital from the banks are enjoyed by only three percent of our people. Other developing countries raise six percent of their GDP as taxes while we raise only two percent. On the other hand, we have indirect tax on an essential item like salt. The rulers have created a monopolistic cartelization by following policies of protected markets, tax holiday, bonus voucher etc. With minimal land reform that is an eyewash the feudal landlords still have princely unearned wealth. These classes enjoy unlimited opportunities. Their wealth keeps increasing. At the same time, the poor peasants' condition keeps deteriorating. Just to survive, our rural folks are migrating to the towns. According to official statistics, one fifth of the labor force or 900,000 workers are unemployed. The rapid increase in cost of living is felt primarily by the toiling masses. The pressure is intense for teachers, low income white collar workers, especially the fourth-class government workers as well.

A manifestation of such injustice was inequality both regional and within regions:

Looking at horrifying picture of economic inequalities, we can see that during the last twenty years, out of the total expenditure out of the government revenue, only about Rs. 1,500 crores (that is only one fifth of the total expenditures) was spent in Bangladesh, as against Rs. 5,000 crores in West Pakistan. Of the total development expenditure during the same period, Rs. 3000 crores (that is only a third of the total) was spent in Bangladesh, as against over Rs. 6,000 crores in West Pakistan.

On Foreign Policy issues Bangabandhu was unequivocal in his opposition to CENTO and SEATO. He also declared his firm support for peaceful coexistence with all countries in opposition to imperialism, neocolonialism and racism.

To turn to the important area of foreign policy, we believe that it is imperative for us to avoid involvement in global power conflicts. We must, therefore, pursue truly independent non-aligned foreign policy. We are committed to the immediate withdrawal from SEATO, CENTO and all other military pacts and to avoid any such involvements in the future.

We have emphasized the importance of a just settlement of the Kashmir dispute in accordance with the United Nations resolutions. The threat of grave and permanent damage to the economy of Bengal posed by the completion of Farakka Barrage must be immediately met.

....No malice towards any state, and friendship with all---based on this principle, we believe in peaceful coexistence with our neighbor states....This policy will serve the best interests of our people. That is why we put so much emphasis on this policy.

The US consul general Archer Blood was accurate about Bangabandhu's commitment to both nonalignment and democracy when he wrote:

Officially he [Bangabandhu] is for "genuine neutrality, withdrawal from CENTO and SEATO, and improved relations with India." Better relations with India will probably in fact be his most pressing concern since he sees at least partial solution for East Pak problems in expanded trade with neighboring India. Mujib, like many Bengalis, is not (except for record) particularly hard on Kashmir. Also like many Bengalis he believes the Farakka issue could be resolved in the contest of a general improvement in Pak-India relations. In conversations with Congen officers he has shown himself well disposed toward U.S. Mujib has visited China on two occasions: to attend the Peking Peace Conference and in 1957 as member Pak goodwill mission. He admits to finding the Chinese experiment impressive but notes that as a political observer the restrictive and oppressive nature of the society was very apparent to him.

Reaffirming Bangabandhu's foreign policy stance in 1971, the acting Prime Minister, Tajuddin Ahmad declared:

"we do not aspire to join any bloc or pact but will seek assistance from those who give it in a spirit of goodwill free from any desire to control our destinies. We have struggled far too long for our self-determination not to permit ourselves to become any one's satellite."²⁸

²⁸ H.H. Rahman and others edited, *Bangladesher Muktijuddho: Dolilpotro*, Vol.3 p. 32

1. The 1872 Constitution and a nonaligned democratic socialist foreign policy:

In the the 1972 constitution, Bangladesh declared unequivocally:

Respect for national sovereignty and equality, nonintervention in other states' internal affairs, peaceful resolution of international conflicts and respect for international law and the UN charter---these principles will be the foundation of our state's international relations. Besd on these principles:

- A. We will insist on avoiding the use of force in international conflict resolution and general complete disarmament.
- B. We will support the right of each state to choose its own social, economic and poltical arrangements through their freely decided intentions and paths.
- C. We will support all struggles against imperialism, colonialism and racism.

4.1972- Agust 15,1975 : *Bangabandhu* and Allies' Foreign Policy in Practice Remained Largely Consistent

Even before *Bangabandhu* returned to free Bangladesh on January 10, 1972, he indicated---- after his release from incarceration in Pakistan--- in his statements in London and a brief but significant speech in New Delhi that he would like Bangladesh to be a part of the nonaligned countries with proper attention to the genuine national interest of the people of Bangladesh. Showing great foresight with regards to the sensitivity of political class in Bangladesh regarding possible subservience to India, he decided not to use Indian transport to reach Dhaka. Showing equal sensitivity to the sentments of the people in West Bengal he postponed his earlier schedule to stop at Kolkata. The reason given was that he dd not wish the people in West Bengal to think that he was making the stop in a perfunctory way. Showing his sincerity and good faith he made his first trip abroad to Kolkata on February 6, 1972 after officially accepting the responsibilities of being the head of state of Bangladesh.

Not only did *Bangabandhu* succeed in establishing a firm and friendly relations in agenuine way, more concretely, he had discussed the issue of withdrawal of Indian troops from Bangladesh. The mutually cordian and productive meeting set the timetable for an amazingly quick departure of Indian troops in March, 1972. Upon returning to Dhaka, *Bangabandhu*'s government worked out an amicable schedule for this troop withdrawal. On March 12, 1972 *Bangabandhu* and General Aurora participated in a warm farewell ceremony. The warm relations with India was sealed firmly further when Mrs. Gandhi visited Bangladesh officially after the troop withdrawal. This demonstrated the mutual goodwill and India's genuine acknowledgement of the sovereignty of Bangladesh through a quick withdrawal of Indian army from the soil of Bangladesh.

Before looking at the major foreign policy areas ranging from gaining diplomatic recgnition including membership in the UN to foreign aid and development assistance for a devastated

economy, let us quickly review some the major international events in which Bangladesh participated from 1972 onwards.

In 1972 the Simla Agreement was signed between India and Pakistan represented by Indira Gandhi and Bhutto respectively. According to this treaty Pakistan would recognize the independence of Bangladesh the quid pro quo being the return of the Pakistani Prisoners of War. *Bangabandhu* showed amazing forbearance and generosity of spirit by agreeing not to prosecute nearly 200 soldiers who were going to be tried for war crimes by Bangladesh. As a result of a nondogmatic but nonaligned and independent realism, *Bangabandhu*'s government earned the respect of the nonaligned group of nations in particular. At the same time, Bangladesh remained open to dealing with other countries on the basis of equality and mutual respect.

After his visit to Kolkata in February 1972, *Bangabandhu* led a high level delegation to USSR in early March 1972 (March 2 to 6), cementing the relationship between the two countries. The two pacts with India (1971) and USSR (1972) helped the new country overcome diplomatic isolation in a world where both US and China and together with the more reactionary Islamic countries were hostile to the newly independent Bangladesh. At the same time *Bangabandhu* would continue to pursue a policy of goodwill to all countries making continuous efforts to win diplomatic recognition from all countries. In recognition of Bangladesh's principled foreign policy positions, the Santiago meetings of the World Peace Council in October 1972 accepted the proposal to award *Bangabandhu* the prestigious Julio Curie Peace Medal. In May 1973, Bangladesh hosted the Asian Peace and Security Conference in Dhaka. On the second day of conference *Bangabandhu* officially received the prestigious Julio Curie Peace Medal. In September 1973, *Bangabandhu* and the Bangladesh delegation participated in the Algiers conference on the strategy of development of nonaligned nations on the basis of a mixed economy.

More important from a strategic foreign policy formulation angle was the earlier visit by both Tajuddin and D.P. Dhar to Kolkata in September 1972. As a result Bangladesh and India could arrive at a mutually beneficial understanding covering a wide array of areas from political and economic to broad cultural exchanges and cooperation.

Bangladesh under *Bangabandhu*'s leadership received the greatest recognition globally with his remarkable speech at the UN in September 1974. This will be covered in the next section. I now turn to a systematic discussion of the important substantive foreign policy accomplishments from 1972 to August 1975 for Bangladesh.

1. **Gaining Diplomatic Recognition:** In a relatively short period, Bangladesh succeeded in gaining recognition from over one hundred countries. It also succeeded in joining the UN by invitation. Senior diplomats from Bangladesh kept making efforts for gaining

recognition from hostile countries like China and the conservative Islamic countries led by Saudi Arabia and Shah's Iran. As early as 1972 (February 29 to March 2) Bangladesh participated in the Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Jeddah. In the 1973 nonaligned summit, Bangabandhu succeeded in having a side meeting with King Faisal of Saudi Arabia. He also met with President Gaddafi of Libya. Shortly afterwards, Bangladesh received membership in Organization for Islamic Conference (OIC). As a result of these many-sided diplomatic efforts by mid-1974, Bangladesh received diplomatic recognition from 116 countries including Pakistan. In February that year, the Mujib-Bhutto meeting in Lahore led to possibilities of further dialogues for coexistence and cooperation. The timing was significant. Pakistan recognized Bangladesh on February 22, 1974. The very next day Sheikh Mujib went to Lahore for further productive discussions with Bhutto.

2. **Relations with the Socialist Countries:** Given the sources available now about Bangabandhu's favorable view of Chinese revolution and socialism, and his direct declaration of support for socialist-leaning policies in the election of 1970, it should come as no surprise that he supported the relations with USSR and the socialist bloc right from the beginning of his term as the PM of independent Bangladesh. But he was a realist regarding economic matters also. During his trip to the USSR, he held discussions with their top leadership including Brezhnev, Kosygin and Podgorny regarding aid and trade. Subsequently an immediate 12 million dollar trade deal was agreed upon. In addition annual 435 million dollar deal ensured limited but productive openness particularly for necessary intermediate goods and capital goods. By the end of 1972, the planning commission of Bangladesh produced a list of necessary items that USSR could supply. Although Soviet aid of necessity was inadequate, during the famine of 1973 USSR sent 200,000 metric tons of food items as relief aid to Bangladesh. However, being a realist, Bangabandhu realized by that time that Bangladesh will need a donor base that will have to include countries other than the USSR and India. But politically, Bangladesh continued with close but nonaligned relations with the entire socialist bloc.
3. **South Asia as a Regional Focus:** I have already discussed the special relations and understandings with India. In addition, Bangladesh established friendly relations with Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka and the Maldives. More interestingly, Bangabandhu extended a hand of friendship to Bhutto's Pakistan in order to solve many outstanding problems and further future possibilities for mutually beneficial cooperation.
4. **Relations with Japan, and East Asia and Southeast Asia:** Bangabandhu was aware of the positive role of Japanese public opinion and the specific contributions of Japanese journalists towards coverage of the struggles of the people of Bangladesh. Viewed in this light, Bangabandhu's visit to Japan in October, 1973 was an important step for the development of a mutually beneficial bilateral relationship. Inter alia, the first high level discussion regarding the building of the Jamuna Bridge, and further assistance for infrastructure development and human development including health and education sector aid started during this important visit. Later, this author had the privilege of discussing many of these projects with influential Japanese advisors such as Prof. Ishikawa and Prof. Hayami---both affiliated with JICA and training of high level Japanese development economists--- and learned the extent of relatively nonideological and pragmatic development advice and assistance that Japan gave to Bangladesh. The

ministry of foreign affairs, however, was relatively more ideological. But even here through my discussions, I found that on the whole Japan looked at Bangladesh from both a benign humanitarian angle and medium to long term practical trade and commercial perspective.

With regards to the emerging East Asian Tigers, Bangabandhu's government realized the pragmatism in their policies. Particularly after the experience of the tragic famine, Bangladesh opened up to more countries reaching out for practical assistance without dependence.

- 5. Pragmatic Approach to China:** With respect to China, Bangabandhu kept the door for diplomatic demarche open. He sent ambassador K.M. Kaiser to Beijing informally when the latter was making a formal visit to North Korea in May 1975. There were several reasons for Bangabandhu's pragmatic approach to China. Politically, he was for balancing between the different big powers including regional big powers. Here his attitude is consistently explained by what I have called a critical neoclassical realist approach to international relations. Economically, Bangabandhu was keen to establish trade relations with China. China could also be a source of economic assistance. More importantly, a healthy trade and development link with China would help reduce dependence on India and other powers leading to a reasonable balancing act.

There is some evidence that China was softening even before ambassador Kaiser's informal visit. When in 1974, the UN security council (UNSC) approved the UN membership of Bangladesh, China merely abstained. In the previous UNSC meetings until then (June, 1974), China had repeatedly used veto against the membership of Bangladesh. Also, in 1974, China sent a redcross team to help the flood victims and contributed 1 million dollars towards their relief efforts. Furthermore, in May 1975, the two countries signed their first ever commercial treaty. These were important achievements short of formal recognition. It can be concluded reasonably enough that had Bangabandhu lived longer, the recognition would have come probably in late 1975 or in 1976.

It has to be pointed out however that there were always some contradictions in Bangladesh's foreign policy stemming from the fundamental contradictions in Bangladesh Society between the subaltern classes and nascent bourgeoisie and other intermediate classes. This was unavoidable, given the composition of AL and the dominant position of bureaucracy and the emerging comprador bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie. Had Bangabandhu survived the coup and class force balances changed in favor of the subalterns, it might have led to a truly nonaligned but pragmatic developmentalist foreign policy with an eye towards promoting growth with equity. But that was not the case.

We can give a theoretical interpretation of the discussion so far through the use of Khan's (2021) *Critical Neoclassical Realist* theory of International Relations. As we have seen, Bangabandhu was a realist in international affairs; but much of what he could achieve was

constrained by both international structure of a core-periphery dependency relations as well as domestic economic and political structures and conjunctural conflicts. However, a third factor --- this is the *critical* part of Khan's theory--- was crucial as well. Bangabandhu had a moral compass and commitment to fight against imperialism and people's rights from the positionality of a nonaligned nation. A synoptic discussion of Khan's theory in historical context appears is appended.

Bangabandhu's Foreign Policy Thought

Bangabandhu left Dhaka on 23 September, 1974 for the General Assembly Session of the UN. After reaching New York City he met with not only diplomats but also ordinary Bangladeshis abroad including some students. He greeted everyone with his characteristic warmth and engaged them in conversations. The students in particular found his presence inspiring and vowed never to betray the interests of the common people in Bangladesh. He gave his historic speech at the UN on Sep. 25.²⁹

I will analyze in this section two important logically and historically connected items. The first is a brief assessment of the internationalism of Bangabandhu as exemplified by his great speech of September 1974 at the UN. The second which follows from Bangabandhu's democratic internationalism and his lifelong struggle for human liberation, is an eleven point strategic agenda of action for our time of multiple crises.

As far as the first point is concerned, I can begin by reporting that I had the great good fortune of being present at this speech on that historic occasion at the UN. Indeed it was historic in at least two respects. Not only did it recognize Bangladesh as a member of the international society via the membership in the UN, it was also the first time ever for a speech to be delivered in Bangla by a head of state.

What we do know for sure from his UN speech is that he could and most probably would have become an international presence from the postcolonial world. Indeed, he was well on his way towards gaining such stature. Therefore, I will say a few more words about *Bangabandhu*, the internationalist from below as my final interpretive venture.

It is notable that in this speech he pays careful attention to the nonaligned movement throughout his speech right from the start when he thanks the presiding chairperson:

It is particularly gratifying that Bangladesh has joined the General Assembly while it is being led by a chair who himself is a freedom fighter. Mr. Chairman, I recall with gratitude yours and your comrades' valuable contributions to the nonaligned movements summit at Algiers last September.

He then goes onto thanking others who also supported the struggle of his people:

I would like to take this opportunity to salute all those who have sacrificed to let Bangladesh have its place in the international society. I would like to express deep gratitude to all the

²⁹ M.A. Wajed Mian(1993) p.187.

countries and people who have supported the struggle of our people. I would also like to thank those who are giving valuable aid for stabilizing the freedom of Bangladesh, for reconstructing the war-torn country, and for overcoming the many dangerous challenges facing the country. I am conveying on behalf of Bangladesh our heartfelt thanks to those who have welcomed us to the United Nations.

He then sides with all the oppressed people on the planet expressing firm solidarity and supporting the common struggle for freedom and justice everywhere:

The struggle for freedom in Bangladesh has always been the struggle for peace and justice. For this reason, from the hour of its very birth, Bangladesh has been standing in solidarity with the oppressed masses of our world. ...

We are still fighting ceaselessly against annexing other people's land by aggression, against the use of the armed forces to rob the people of their rights, and against racial discrimination and inequities. Algeria, Vietnam, Bangladesh and Gunea-Bissau have achieved tremendous success in these struggles.

While Bangabandhu is optimistic, he was not a naïve student of history. He knew that winning freedom and achieving justice are long and uncertain historical processes not predictable in advance. He also knew that solidarity among the oppressed is a must for winning at the end.

History sides with the people and justice with the ultimate victory, our many victories bear witness to this. But many parts of our world are victims of injustice and repression. Our Arab brothers are struggling continually to free their land from unlawful occupation. The rights of the Palestinian people and their national right has not been reestablished. Decolonization has made progress but this process has not reached its ultimate goal. We note this truth clearly in case of Africa. In this region the people of Zimbabwe and Namibia are still fighting with unshaken resolve for their national liberation and independence. Our conscience is continuously struck by the presence of apartheid which has time and again been characterized as an institution against humanity.

Looking back, we can see that some of these battles have been won but the war against untruth, unfreedom and injustice is far from over. We live in an unjust world with an unjust economic system where a great many are exploited by the few with wealth, power and privilege. In terms of recent movements, we still have one percent or fewer on this planet exploiting 99 percent or even a larger share of humanity.

He was also forthright in underlining the serious domestic problems in his own country. At the same time, without denying his and his people's responsibility for solving their problems, he drew the correct conclusion regarding the linkage between the unjust global system and the economic problems of poor countries. Even after decades of development the problems remain and his words ring true:

History offers evidence that unless the nations of the world can act in concert to reverse these trends, people will be thrown into a state of extreme suffering. I do not think we have evidence of such extreme suffering from the past. Of course, in this extreme scenario, side by side with such suffering there will also be the unexpected prosperity of a few. We need to think about

taking emergency measures on the basis of human solidarity and brotherhood in order to avoid the prospect of a great catastrophe.

Never before has the UN faced such a challenge in taking appropriate steps towards building a just international order. Not only should such an order ensure the control by every state of the natural resources of the country it represents but also it should enable each country to be part of a just stable economic arrangement. At this moment, we point again to the international responsibility for ensuring human rights in political, economic and cultural spheres that we all support. Honoring the declaration of universal human rights, the well-being of each individual and family must be realized without fail.

We understand fully that economic crisis can only be overcome in a peaceful environment with international understanding and cooperation. It bears mentioning in this context that we must take steps to solve the problem of international arms race. Not only will this lead towards global peace but it will also allow us to redirect the huge amount of resources now going towards armaments towards constructive efforts to enhance human well-being.

Thus, his emphasis on solving cooperatively and collectively the common problems of the postcolonial countries was absolutely correct. Towards the end he again emphasized the need for constructive nonalignment for poor countries like Bangladesh:

From the beginning, Bangladesh has adopted principles of nonalignment on the basis of friendship towards all and peaceful coexistence with all. Only a peaceful environment will enable us to enjoy the fruits of our national liberation. Only a peaceful environment will enable us to fight against poverty, disease, lack of education and unemployment by concentrating all our energy for constructive projects. From these ideas have been born our commitment to peace.

From this consideration, we welcome any efforts anywhere---Asia, Africa, Latin America, Europe---to reduce international tensions and expand peaceful coexistence. From this standpoint, we support the policy for peace in the Indian Ocean region that this assembly has carried.

We also support the move towards making Southeast Asia a peaceful, free and neutral area.

We believe that the developing countries in this assembly support resolutely the cause of peace. All these countries' representatives have expressed their firm commitments to preserving national sovereignty, peace and the institution of justice which are all supported by the great majority of the global population.

Peace is absolutely necessary for the preservation of the human race. Therefore, the yearning for peace reflects the deepest hope of humans. And peace can only stand on the foundation of justice.

Emphasizing peace along with nonalignment, Bangabandhu was offering a way for the postcolonial world to move forward together making the best use of their natural and human resources. This still remains the best strategy for genuine development by enhancing human capabilities as Amartya Sen and others have underlined.

His faith in the capacity to make great strides for humanity by strengthening the UN and international cooperation really laid the foundation for Bangladesh's foreign policy of peaceful cooperation. More importantly, it also pointed the way forward for all the nonaligned nations:

On the basis of peaceful coexistence, sovereignty, regional integrity and noninterference in other countries' internal affairs, Bangladesh will maintain good neighborly relations with all neighboring countries. We will support always all attempts to seek world peace in our region and everywhere else.

In spite of many obstacles, the UN in its 25 years of work has contributed significantly in the fields of politics, economics, social work and cultural activities. In a word, in spite of many conflicts and human suffering, the UN has kept the lamp of hope for the future burning brightly. No other country can feel as deeply about the successes and possible future achievements of the UN as Bangladesh does. Under the leadership of Dr. Kurt Waldheim, the UN undertook wide ranging activities for economic reconstruction and rehabilitation of more than 10 million refugees returning from India. I convey the gratefulness of our people for all this to the honorable secretary general and his colleagues. We believe that the constructive leadership from the UN will help greatly in solving the complex problems in our subcontinent. I have mentioned before that we appreciate deeply the help from the UN during the recent flood. Bangladesh has suffered time and again from natural disasters. In the past, we could not establish an institutional network for mobilizing international aid during such disasters. Now the UN has established an office for the coordination of disaster relief. This is to say the least, exemplary. The UN has shown that it has special responsibilities for such coordination.

At the end, Bangabandhu expressed his resolute and undying faith in the human capacity to advance human and planetary well-being in the face of great adversity:

All other countries that like us have freed themselves through struggle and sacrifice have the same faith. We may suffer, but we will not disappear. The firm resolve of the people is the ultimate power to survive. Our goal is self-reliance. Our path is the collective efforts of all the people. International cooperation and planned utilization of technical progress will lessen our suffering and make it easier to progress. I have no doubt about this. A new world is emerging. We must have faith in our own abilities. By struggling together, we will advance towards the goal of creating a beautiful future.

Looking back carefully in historical context, we can see why Bangabandhu was indeed a true friend and leader of his own people. But his activities on the world stage during the brief two and a half years after Bangladesh became independent shows that he was also *Viswabandhu* or a friend of the whole world. He fought not for just one nation but for all of humanity. In his death, his life shines more brightly than ever. It is up to us and the succeeding generations to apply the principles he left behind flexibly, wisely and cooperatively to avert the current global crises and move towards a brighter future for generations to come. At the end, we are reminded of his call for continuing the fight for freedom and justice. Only engaging in such an all around and continuous struggle can offer the prospects of leaving the barbarism of prehistory behind. This

remains the most profound lesson from *Bangabandhu*'s thought and actions amply confirmed by history during his lifetime and ours.

I close with the second international imperative during the current crises that follows from *Bangabandhu*'s democratic internationalist struggles. I present this in the form of an eleven point strategic agenda of action covering both the Global North and the Global South.

Lessons for Our Times---An Eleven Point Strategic Agenda for the Youth in the 21st Century:

1. Methodologically and substantively for progressive political practice, the most important lesson for young people everywhere from the lifelong political activism of *Bangabandhu* is to recognize the importance of building progressive political movements and to learn constantly from within the movement about the relationships between the local and global politics, between the complex (sometimes with many contradictory elements that need to be confronted and analyzed openly and honestly) nationalism of the oppressed and the equally complex democratic internationalism from below.
2. The post-WW2 socio-economic-political social democratic/embedded liberal consensus in the Global North is frayed. Young people need to build various types of socially oriented democratic movements
3. In the Global South, although export-led growth became possible for some countries that pursued what Khan(2013, 2017,2020a,b) has called "strategic openness" most countries did not or could not achieve this type of growth.
4. Furthermore, the gains from "globalization" when present have been unevenly distributed everywhere. Consequently, inequalities in income and wealth distribution have risen almost everywhere in the world in the late 20th and in the 21st century so far.
5. Therefore, we have a heavily polarized world both in the Global North and in the Global South. We have to build a movement for fighting to remove the root causes of polarization.
6. Building various types of socially oriented democratic movements will require courage and steadiness; but these qualities are not enough. From *Bangabandhu* and Bangladesh liberation movement, we can also learn the value of organizing in a detailed, consistent manner relentlessly, always going lower and deeper among the masses. Learning from Rosa Luxemburg's dialectical analysis which was independently rediscovered and applied creatively by *Bangabandhu*, we should fight for both broad and specific reforms everywhere, but build a base for ever deeper social and democratic revolutions dialectically within our fight for reforms.

7. One must build local and global anti-racist and anti-fascist democratic coalitions strategically; but tactics need to be flexible and adaptable according to changing internal (national) and external(international) conditions.
8. There will be no narrow one-size fits-all narrative of struggle. Instead there will be many voices necessitating the building of appropriate *polyphonic narratives* of resistance.It is crucial for all voices to be heard and all liberatory points of view to be discussed openly.
9. As *the eventualizing dynamics* unfold with multiple trajectories in specific parts of the world, the leaders of mass movements must choose carefully and optimally at each step but know that all liberation struggles must embrace to various degrees some uncertainty. It is not possible to build a progressive political movement without embracing uncertainty in a rational manner.
10. Therefore, a *polychronotope* of struggle will be the norm. But how to understand the *polychronotope* for each situation and sequence of events is an empirical matter calling also for a great deal of political judgement and maturity so that both ultra-leftist adventurism and opportunistic rightism can be avoided at crucial strategic junctures. This will truly have to be an exercise in the applied science of complex socio-economic-political systems.*Bangabandhu's* life of steadfast political engagement has many specific lessons to offer.
11. The progressive struggles themselves will be kaleidoscopic but broad qualities like anti-patriarchy, anti-racism including respecting the rights of minority groups, particularly the indigenous peoples and movement towards equalizing socially embedded capabilities for all will give an egalitarian strategic focus for deepening democracy. Together with a steady strategy of democratic internationalism, the movements of the future will be able to organize for liberation both locally and globally in an integrated manner.

6. The great tragedy and reversal--- conclusions

At the end, there are both triumphant and tragic episodes in the life of *Bangabandhu* and the political life of the country of Bangladesh. This all too brief narrative and analysis to underline the significance of both the objective factors leading to the birth of Bangladesh and the subjective factors including leadership that guided the movement towards victory from at least 1966 to 1971 with a progressive pro-people foreign policy for peace, recovery and prosperity, leads us to acknowledge the complexities of historical processes. As Marx famously pointed out in his analysis of the 18th Brumaire of Napoleon Bonaparte, the nephew of the great Napoleon, we make history but are also constrained by the circumstances in which we have to operate.

Clearly, like any set of events and processes of world-historic significance, struggles for liberation in East Pakistan and post-independence Bangladesh had multiple dimensions. However, at bottom they all stemmed from ordinary people's awareness--- which grew both

gradually and by leaps and bounds during 1969 to 71 --- connected with myriads of struggles at many different levels. These were ultimately expressed discursively and organizationally by many forces and leaders. However, from 1966 onwards, Bangabandhu gradually became the key leader who symbolized in a condensed form the deep aspirations of the masses. Discursively, he condensed these aspirations and gave expression to them through public reasoning expressed in heartfelt terms. This combination of public reasoning with genuinely deep and intense feelings of the deprived people made Bangabandhu a unique type of political leader.

Bangabandhu's speeches and the events and historical processes that led up to each one of them demonstrate the truth of Marx's observation regarding making history. They also demonstrate something that Marx did not express so clearly except perhaps in his defence of the Paris Commune of 1871. This is the ability of a leader of the people to boldly summarize the aspirations of the people, reflect the progressive popular will and with bold, meticulous organization combine reason with passion, words with action. Only this can create the circumstances that can give progressive popular movements a fighting chance leading to a genuinely democratic internationalist foreign policy agenda.

No one can deny that it was the people and their militant movements that brought the regime of Ayub Khan down and made Sheikh Mujibur Rahman the *Bangabandhu* with unparalleled hold over his people during the crucial months of 1969 through 1971. This is what makes his speeches of 1970 and 1971 so powerful. More importantly, they almost become and indeed reflect a dialectical mixture of the objective and subjective factors in making real history. The October 28 speech which has been little studied so far by historians deserves to be studied carefully. If read in the context of an unfolding of peoples' aspirations through their movements on the one hand, and also in the context of the evolution of both the ideas and practices of Bangabandhu from the 1940s onwards, it does appear that his basic intuitions about people's needs and rights were correct throughout. However, they evolved and became more sophisticated. He was also open to the advice of patriotic intellectuals and admired good analysis. Thus, he appointed Dr. Nurul Islam as the Deputy Chairman of the planning commission both because of this great economist's fine analytical prowess and because of his unwavering commitment to the cause of Bangladesh.

One can mention many other instances like the above. As I mentioned at the very beginning of this chapter in connection with the subjective factors in history, not to be forgotten are also the personal warmth and caring nature of *Bangabandhu*. His speeches were not just rhetorical devices to arouse passion. They were and still remain emblematic of a warm caring person deeply connected with the problems of ordinary people from all walks of life nationally and internationally.

Yet it must also be acknowledged that at the end he and his policies including his foreign policies suffered a tragic fate. It is a good counterfactual question as to if any other leader could have done better in his place. With the benefit of hindsight, we can point out some missteps such as the creation of the paramilitary force. Instead, if he had pushed for a productive, people oriented Costa Rican like national militia for public service, August 1975 coup might not have happened. No one can know for sure.

What we do know for sure from his great UN speech is that he could have become an international presence from the postcolonial world. Indeed, he was well on his way towards gaining such stature.

By emphasizing peace along with nonalignment in order to create an egalitarian development trajectory for the Global South, Bangabandhu was offering a way for the postcolonial world to move forward together making the best use of their natural and human resources. This still remains the best strategy for genuine development by enhancing human capabilities as Amartya Sen and others have underlined.

His faith in the capacity to make great strides for humanity by strengthening the UN and international cooperation really laid the foundation for Bangladesh's foreign policy of peaceful cooperation. More importantly, it also pointed the way forward for all the nonaligned nations:

On the basis of peaceful coexistence, sovereignty, regional integrity and noninterference in other countries' internal affairs, Bangladesh will maintain good neighborly relations with all neighboring countries. We will support always all attempts to seek world peace in our region and everywhere else.

In spite of many obstacles, the UN in its 25 years of work has contributed significantly in the fields of politics, economics, social work and cultural activities. In a word, in spite of many conflicts and human suffering, the UN has kept the lamp of hope for the future burning brightly. No other country can feel as deeply about the successes and possible future achievements of the UN as Bangladesh does. Under the leadership of Dr. Kurt Waldheim, the UN undertook wide ranging activities for economic reconstruction and rehabilitation of more than 10 million refugees returning from India. I convey the gratefulness of our people for all this to the honorable secretary general and his colleagues. We believe that the constructive leadership from the UN will help greatly in solving the complex problems in our subcontinent. I have mentioned before that we appreciate deeply the help from the UN during the recent flood. Bangladesh has suffered time and again from natural disasters. In the past, we could not establish an institutional network for mobilizing international aid during such disasters. Now the UN has established an office for the coordination of disaster relief. This is to say the least, exemplary. The UN has shown that it has special responsibilities for such coordination.

At the end, Bangabandhu expressed his resolute and undying faith in the human capacity to advance human and planetary well-being in the face of great adversity:

All other countries that like us have freed themselves through struggle and sacrifice have the same faith. We may suffer, but we will not disappear. The firm resolve of the people is the ultimate power to survive. Our goal is self-reliance. Our path is the collective efforts of all the people. International cooperation and planned utilization of technical progress will lessen our suffering and make it easier to progress. I have no doubt about this. A new world is emerging. We must have faith in our own abilities. By struggling together, we will advance towards the goal of creating a beautiful future.

Looking back and reading his UN speech carefully in historical context we can see why *Bangabandhu* was indeed a true friend and leader of his own people. But his activities on the world stage during the brief two and a half years after Bangladesh became independent shows that he was also *Viswabandhu* or a friend of the whole world. He fought not for just one nation but for all of humanity. In his death, his life shines more brightly than ever. It is upto us and the succeeding generations to apply the principles he left behind flexibly, wisely and cooperatively to avert the current global crises and move towards a brighter future for generations to come. At the end, we are reminded of his call for continuing the fight for freedom and justice. Only engaging in such an all around and continuous struggle can offer the prospects of leaving the barbarism of prehistory behind. This remains the most profound lesson from *Bangabandhu's* thought and actions amply confirmed by the history during his lifetime and ours.

Appendix 1:**The Historic 25 September, 1974 UN General Assembly Speech by *Bangabandhu* (Friend of Bengal) Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the leader of our struggle for independence****Translated into English from the Original Bangla Text by Haider A. Khan****Text of the Speech:**

Respected President, Honorable Ladies and Gentlemen:

Today I have come to this august gathering with full satisfaction because today the seventy-five million people of Bangladesh are represented here. This is a historic moment for the Bangalee nation as it marks the fullness of their struggle for self-determination. The Bangalees have struggled for many centuries for the right to live honorably as the free citizens in a free country. They have always wanted to live peacefully in friendship with the other nations. Hundreds of thousands of our people have offered the highest sacrifice for the ideals of the United Nations. I know that the Bangalee nation is firmly committed to the project of building a peaceful and just world for realizing the hopes and desires of all humankind. I know that the souls of our martyrs are also with us in this commitment. It is particularly gratifying that Bangladesh has joined the General Assembly while it is being led by a chair who himself is a freedom fighter. Mr. Chairman, I recall with gratitude yours and your comrades' valuable contributions to the nonaligned movements summit at Algiers last September.

I would like to take this opportunity to salute all those who have sacrificed to let Bangladesh have its place in the international society. I would like to express deep gratitude to all the countries and people who have supported the struggle of our people. I would also like to thank those who are giving valuable aid for stabilizing the freedom of Bangladesh, for reconstructing the war-torn country, and for overcoming the many dangerous challenges facing the country. I am conveying on behalf of Bangladesh our heartfelt thanks to those who have welcomed us to the United Nations.

The struggle for freedom in Bangladesh has always been the struggle for peace and justice. For this reason, from the hour of its very birth, Bangladesh has been standing in solidarity with the oppressed masses of our world. The experience of the last 25 years since the founding of the United Nations shows that we need to continue always an uninterrupted movement for realizing those principles. Only through the heroic sacrifices by the people of Asia, Africa and Latin America can we recover the right to self-determination recognized by the United Nations.

We are still fighting ceaselessly against annexing other people's land by aggression, against the use of the armed forces to rob the people of their rights, and against racial discrimination and inequities. Algeria, Vietnam, Bangladesh and Guinea-Bissau have achieved tremendous success in these struggles.

History sides with the people and justice with the ultimate victory, our many victories bear witness to this. But many parts of our world are victims of injustice and repression. Our Arab brothers are struggling continually to free their land from unlawful occupation. The rights of the Palestinian people and their national right has not been reestablished. Decolonization has made

progress but this process has not reached its ultimate goal. We note this truth clearly in case of Africa. In this region the people of Zimbabwe and Namibia are still fighting with unshaken resolve for their national liberation and independence. Our conscience is continuously struck by the presence of apartheid which has time and again been characterized as an institution against humanity.

On the one hand, we are engaged in ending the injustices of the past. On the other hand, we are facing the challenges of future. Today, the nations of the world are in a quandary as to which path to choose. On the correct choice of this path depends whether we will proceed with the threat of war and destruction of human race, and poverty, unemployment and hunger, or we will create a world that can use modern technology on the basis of partnership of all using our creativity to build a brighter life for all. The economic crisis that is shaking up the world today, we must respond to it by building a just international economic order. This is an urgent task. During the first part of this year, the special meeting of this assembly put particular emphasis on the complex present international economic situation.

The present economic conditions have hurt Bangladesh enormously. Created from the destructive chaos of a war, Bangladesh has faced several natural disasters one after another. The most recent disaster is the unprecedented flooding this year. We are grateful to the UN, its various agencies and to the Secretary General for the generous aid.

President Boumédiène of Algeria and its foreign minister Mr. Bouteflika have appealed to the nonaligned nations to aid Bangladesh. Our allies and humanitarian global organizations have also come forward. Not only has this natural disaster caused distress retarding the economic progress of Bangladesh, it has also created famine-like situation there. Furthermore, because of global inflation countries like ours have extra debt obligation of millions of dollars. This means that the people of those countries whose per capita income is less than one hundred dollars are facing a dangerous crisis. They are being compelled to have their living standards even lower than the current standard.

According to the WHO, there are people today who consume less than the minimum necessary amount to be just alive; these people suffer from constant hunger. The future of the poor countries is dark indeed. The prices of basic food stuff and the imports of necessities from the industrialized countries are increasing continually and thus these commodities are becoming unaffordable for the poor. Their efforts to achieve self-sufficiency in food production is being hindered because of the increase in prices of inputs into the food production. At the same time, the global stagflation leading to widespread poverty and unemployment is threatening the target of 5 to 6 percent growth rate targeted by these countries. Not only have all development projects are more expensive but also even the ability to use domestic resources for development has decreased.

History offers evidence that unless the nations of the world can act in concert to reverse these trends, people will be thrown into a state of extreme suffering. I do not think we have evidence of such extreme suffering from the past. Of course, in this extreme scenario, side by side with such suffering there will also be the unexpected prosperity of a few. We need to think about taking emergency measures on the basis of human solidarity and brotherhood in order to avoid the prospect of a great catastrophe.

Never before has the UN faced such a challenge in taking appropriate steps towards building a just international order. Not only should such an order ensure the control by every state of the natural resources of the country it represents but also it should enable each country to be part of a just stable economic arrangement. At this moment, we point again to the international responsibility for ensuring human rights in political, economic and cultural spheres that we all support. Honoring the declaration of universal human rights, the well-being of each individual and family must be realized without fail.

We understand fully that economic crisis can only be overcome in a peaceful environment with international understanding and cooperation. It bears mentioning in this context that we must take steps to solve the problem of international arms race. Not only will this lead towards global peace but it will also allow us to redirect the huge amount of resources now going towards armaments towards constructive efforts to enhance human well-being.

From the beginning, Bangladesh has adopted principles of nonalignment on the basis of friendship towards all and peaceful coexistence with all. Only a peaceful environment will enable us to enjoy the fruits of our national liberation. Only a peaceful environment will enable us to fight against poverty, disease, lack of education and unemployment by concentrating all our energy for constructive projects. From these ideas have been born our commitment to peace.

From this consideration, we welcome any efforts anywhere---Asia, Africa, Latin America, Europe---to reduce international tensions and expand peaceful coexistence. From this standpoint, we support the policy for peace in the Indian Ocean region that this assembly has carried.

We also support the move towards making Southeast Asia a peaceful, free and neutral area.

We believe that the developing countries in this assembly support resolutely the cause of peace. All these countries' representatives have expressed their firm commitments to preserving national sovereignty, peace and the institution of justice which are all supported by the great majority of the global population.

Peace is absolutely necessary for the preservation of the human race. Therefore, the yearning for peace reflects the deepest hope of humans. And peace can only stand on the foundation of justice.

In order to show our commitment to global peace we have strengthened the process of compromise and reconciliation in our subcontinent. We believe firmly that the emergence of Bangladesh will contribute positively to establish a framework for peace and stability. Furthermore, it is in the collective interest of our people to leave behind the conflicts of the past and establish relations of friendship and cooperation. Not only have we done so with our closest neighbor India from the beginning, but we have also allowed ourselves to leave all the baggage from the past with respect to Pakistan in order to start a new relationship with it. We have left no stone unturned and ultimately, we have shown mercy to 195 war criminals from Pakistan. These prisoners of war committed serious crimes against humanity. Forgiving them is our contribution to peace in our subcontinent. For this we did not impose any preconditions or engage in bargaining. We have been led solely by the desire for future well-being of our people.

We have a human problem for the 63000 Pakistani families. They have declared their allegiance for Pakistan and have listed their names with the International Red Cross Committee. They have the right to settle in the country for which they have declared their allegiance according to international law and agreement. This human problem needs to be solved without delay. Another urgent problem is the division of wealth of the erstwhile Pakistan. Bangladesh is ready to establish friendship with Pakistan again. We hope that for the good of people in both the countries these unsolved problems will be solved by mutual understanding so that the relations can be normalized successfully.

On the basis of peaceful coexistence, sovereignty, regional integrity and noninterference in other countries' internal affairs, Bangladesh will maintain good neighborly relations with all neighboring countries. We will support always all attempts to seek world peace in our region and everywhere else.

In spite of many obstacles, the UN in its 25 years of work has contributed significantly in the fields of politics, economics, social work and cultural activities. In a word, in spite of many conflicts and human suffering, the UN has kept the lamp of hope for the future burning brightly. No other country can feel as deeply about the successes and possible future achievements of the UN as Bangladesh does. Under the leadership of Dr. Kurt Waldheim, the UN undertook wide ranging activities for economic reconstruction and rehabilitation of more than 10 million refugees returning from India. I convey the gratefulness of our people for all this to the honorable secretary general and his colleagues. We believe that the constructive leadership from the UN will help greatly in solving the complex problems in our subcontinent. I have mentioned before that we appreciate deeply the help from the UN during the recent flood. Bangladesh has suffered time and again from natural disasters. In the past, we could not establish an institutional network for mobilizing international aid during such disasters. Now the UN has established an office for the coordination of disaster relief. This is to say the least, exemplary. The UN has shown that it has special responsibilities for such coordination.

Honorable chairperson, I want to conclude by declaring my faith in the invincible power of humanity to overcome all adverse circumstances. All other countries that like us have freed themselves through struggle and sacrifice have the same faith. We may suffer, but we will not disappear. The firm resolve of the people is the ultimate power to survive. Our goal is self-reliance. Our path is the collective efforts of all the people. International cooperation and planned utilization of technical progress will lessen our suffering and make it easier to progress. I have no doubt about this. A new world is emerging. We must have faith in our own abilities. By struggling together, we will advance towards the goal of creating a beautiful future.

Appendix 2: Thinking and Writing History Dialectically from Below

Some Thoughts on Historiography from Reflections on

Ranajit Guha, History at the limit of world-history, Columbia University Press, New York, 2002, x+ 116pp.

By Haider A. Khan

World-history, word-history, his-story: contrived passages and cunning corridors

Lamartine --- that mediocre poet but cunning politician in France during the revolutions of 1848--- once remarked that history is a trick we, the living play upon the dead. Part of Guha's argument in these extraordinary lectures is to partially invert this by showing that at least some of the eminent dead--- Hegel for example--- can play some fairly nasty historiographical tricks upon the living. As we know now, with Hegel, the philosophy of history achieved a level of rigor and grandeur that has influenced generations of philosophers and historians. Yet, the whole exercise, Guha makes plain, was an erudite and passionate attempt by the no longer revolutionary Hegel to foist upon history a certain logic of unfolding, a certain rhetorical strategy and a certain world-historical project that would justify the ascent of Europe quite "rationally"--- and therefore by the Hegelian dialectics all must be real and morally acceptable in an objective sense. Guha brings an equal and opposite rigor to the dissection of the Hegelian corpse, following the Wittgensteinian idea of approaching the limit from both sides. The limit in this instance is, naturally, world-history. Concretely, it also turns out to be a deep theoretical critique of "statist history", "the prose of history" and history as "experienced truth" centered on the narrator. Ultimately, as I will show, history also turns out to be his-story in several senses.

At the very outset Guha reminds the reader-listener the integral purpose of his life-long project--- "... the plea for historiography's self-determination..." (p. 2). It is a project of self-emancipation. " A call to expropriate the expropriators, it is radical precisely in the sense of going to the root of the matter and asking what may be involved in a historiography that is clearly an act of expropriation."(p. 2). He reminds us that 'colonialist knowledge' is collusive through and through in every field from philology to political economy. Certainly, in my own field--- economics and political economy--- the mainstream echoes of songs of praise for the capitalist economy and social formations all but obliterate any attempts at an objective inquiry

into the real causes of wealth and poverty in our world. Joan Robinson's caustic comments about young Indian economists being completely bamboozled by the so-called sophistication and rigors of modern economics, are, alas, even more apt today than when they were first made. As Guha has so tenaciously and honestly demonstrated, history and historiography suffer from similar pernicious practices.³⁰

It is to Guha's credit that he picks as his foil an intellectual giant of Hegel's stature. It could be said that this exasperatingly complex thinker waxes and wanes as he shines over the changing intellectual landscape; but he (or rather his shadow--- both in an ordinary and the Jungian sense) never disappears, never goes "gentle into that good night". Thus, Guha's rigorous critique of Hegel is all the more impressive as he leads us through a fascinating deconstruction (and ultimately destruction--- 'destruktion', in the Heideggerian sense) of '... the representation of the colonial past held in thrall by a narrowly defined politics of statism.' (p.5). A further fascinating aspect of Guha's treatment is his contrast between Hegel's approach and the approaches developed in India both in the Indian past and present. He draws upon several important sources from the Indian antiquity--- *Ramayana, Mahaabhaarata and the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* in particular. He also draws from Tagore and by extension from a critical understanding of the imposed colonial modernity in India under the British rule.

As Debesh Roy, one of the most original thinkers in *Bangla* about novel and novelization reminds us, there were at least two modernities in the 19th century Bangla literature. The modernity of *Bankim* and *Madhushudan*, based largely on European models (more specifically, romantic models) in fiction and poetry won out over a more carnivalesque, self-parodying version started by *Ishwar Gupta* and *Hutom*.³¹ This was not accidental. As Roy explains:

In his[Gupta's] construction of a poetic foot by mixing English words, we might have been able to read the secret autobiography of the *Bangalee* middleclass of Kolkata. This self-reportage is what made him so acceptable, and ultimately this same self-reportage is what became a liability. Without the literary flourishes of Romanticism, this poetry in reality was simply the alter ego of prose, a reportage where the *Bangalee* reader could not hide his own true face from himself.... However, 'the boy who has read A-B ³²in college' has become mature by then---

³⁰ For a critical discussion of orientalist, nationalist, sub-altern and other recent types of historiography leading upto a non-foundatioal post-orientalism approach, see also Prakash, Gyan.1990. "Writing Post-Orientalist Histories of the Third World", *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol.32, No.2(April 1990):383-408

³¹ Debesh Roy, *Uponnyash Niyel (On Novel)*, De's Publishing, Calcutta, 1991, p.3.

³² Refers to the degree *Ars Baccalaureate*

he no longer wants to be a figure of fun in *Ishwar Gupta*. Therefore, the modernity that started with Gupta Kavi, the account of that same modernity with honest and forceful language became unacceptable to the *Bangalee* society.³³

Although most of Tagore's own fictions and poetry also suffered from these problems, his essays and his songs stand out as important exceptions. Long before his death, in various essays on history and biography (on *Rammohan Roy*, *Bhaaratbarsher Itihaash* etc. among other pieces) Tagore had already expressed his profound dissatisfaction with the standard histories and historiography. In his poem *Bhaasha o Chondo* (Language and Rhythm) he has the sage *Narada* advise the awestruck poet *Valmiki* who is instructed to compose the epic *Ramayana* :

Shei shotto ja rochibe tumi/ ghote ja ta shob shotto nohe.

What you compose will be true/ not everything that happens is true

Guha focuses on a different text, but the position he ascribes to Tagore was an aspect (among others that were at times contradictory) that seems to have been present consistently throughout his mature creative life. Tagore's critique of the state-centric historiography and thus by implication the Hegelian "prose of history" could not have been more original, sincere or apt. Guha's presentation of this facet of Tagore to the English language readers is, in itself, a great service to critical understanding of the "East" and to the self-reflection and self-understanding of the colonial and post-colonial subject. Another figure whom Guha does not discuss, but who through his life, political acts and poetry projects the same revolt--- only at times even more forcefully than Tagore--- is Nazrul Islam.³⁴ Thus there are at

³³ Ibid. p. 8. (my translation)

³⁴ See my "Nazrul Islam: poet with many voices", *The Dawn*, Karachi, June 30, 2002 and "Nazrul's Poetics: a polyphonic discourse of the multitude", forthcoming, *The Journal of Shilpakala Academy*, Dhaka. The songs of Bauls such as Lalan Fakir also can be viewed as a rather direct, soulful and spontaneous expression of a native historicity in everyday life. For an ethics that can emphasize cultural and aesthetic differences in the postmodern context see chapters 6 and 7 in particular, of H. A. Khan, *Technology, Development and Democracy*, Edward Elgar, 1998. In the concluding chapter an interesting link is made between Tagore's observations on freedom based on the *Upanishads* and the (postmodern) idea of "social capabilities" developed by Khan through a sympathetic but critical revision of Amartya Sen's "Capabilities approach".

least two poet-representatives of Guha's position in modern Bangla literature. Their very subjectivity and directness overrides the ignorant profundities of the Hegelian world-history. But let us return to the very interesting and thorough dissection of the "prose of history" by Guha himself.

His third lecture has the dual title, "The Prose of History, or The Invention of World-History". The word invention and the distinction presented later on p. 53 between *historia rerum gestae* and *res gestae* as Hegel drew this particular distinction, and the claim by Hegel that the two meanings unite in the German word *Geschichte*, show the reader the cunning steps by which world-history finally emerges at the hand of the old master. The higher order thus signified--- one might say conjured up--- by the master-philosopher--- is like the Lacanian phallus as the master-signifier. It refers, as Guha reminds us, "... to providential design, and the "common source" to the state." In his fourth lecture from which I just cited the previous words, Guha also points to European novelization as the narrative of experience and contrasts its claims to "realism and vraisemblance" with the listener-initiated "tales within tales, relays of many voices" in the Mahaabhaarata.. The setting of the telling of this tale, the interaction between the narrator and the audience leads one gradually to a conversational exercise where the *kathaayoga* proceeds as the main connoisseurs(*mukhyaah/ aarambhaka*) act as interlocutors and an explicit dialogical principle seems to be at work.

It is thus that provenance makes for a clear distinction between the two paradigms: in the West the narrative issues from the narrator's initiative, in South Asia from the listener's. This corresponds to yet another set of distinctions that bear critically upon the question of experience. Its primacy in the long European tradition of storytelling from the Hellenic *historie* to the modern novel.... Is conspicuous for its absence in the Indian case. Here it is a certain distance between the narrator and the event rather than the immediacy of any personal experience that makes up the story for *Itihaasa*. (pp.59-60)

Closely related to the Indian narratology(or rather an anti-narratology) is the idea of wonder. Guha harnesses the idea of *adbhuta rasa* of Sanskrit aesthetics to signify this characteristic. However, since he cites perhaps the most eminent scholar in the field who argues convincingly that the idea of *rasa* is almost impossible to convey, there is some difficulty here in reaching even an Indian audience that has drifted far away from the age where the upper class culture cultivated such aesthetic modes. However, as a description of how the Indian aesthetic modes may have indeed differed from their western counterparts this may be the only available way that at least tries to do justice to both the modes. As Terry Eagleton has observed, Aesthetics as a

systematic field of inquiry really emerged in Europe with the rise of the bourgeoisie. Thus we are probably comparing several different modes of historical self-consciousness. Be that as it may, by identifying Itihaasa with a heightened sense of wonder Guha brings to light the capacity of the "...language to illuminate what is unusual about the usual in everyday life." Thus he finally manages to establish the historicity of everyday life. The playfulness and contentment of the tale of wonder is contrasted with the seriousness and heroic strivings of world-history.

Not appreciating this crucial difference, many colonial subjects themselves may have been misled into a futile deconstructive gesture of privileging the other side of a vis-a- vis, as Derrida claimed could and should be done. Tragically (or perhaps in a tragi-comic repetition of neurotic gestures)

‘...historicity... has shrewdly assimilated itself to the...[world-history’s] mode of self-representation as historiography---the dominant mode of writing the past.’ Such gestures have’...inspired the intellectuals of the “peoples without history” who had only recently been admitted to World-history, to emulate the statism of their European mentors.’

These European mentors---Hegel and the rest--- were all men whose mentality was one of imperial aloofness and superiority towards the colonized. As W. E.B. Dubois so insightfully remarked once in the African context , that relationship is also one of a male-centered White world looking at the subjugated “feminine” colored people. Tagore’s own attitude has been described as feminine by quite a few perceptive critics. His valorization of everyday experience certainly reveals a domestic quality that paradoxically can give a freer play to the imagination than the male-dominated statist historical fantasies of Hegelian inspiration. Therefore,

the prose of history and historiography turn out to be really his- story--- a “rational” reconstruction of male fantasies, myths, delusions of grandeur and illusions of heroism. W. B. Yeats--- whose complex psyche had a place for resistance against colonial oppression among other tendencies--- grasped this remarkably well in his interpretation of Shakespeare:

Shakespeare cared little for the State, the source of all our judgments, apart from its shows and splendors, its turmoils and battles, its flamings-out of the uncivilized heart.

And Shakespeare himself through that immortal creation of his, the fat knight Sir Falstaff, saw through the hypocrisy of honor and valor of statist history:

“ Honor is a mere scutcheon--- and so ends my catechism.”

And, “ Give me life, which if I can save so : if not, honor comes unlooked for, and there’s an end.’

The heroic mode, on the other hand, is the kind of his-story that leads many a young man to an untimely doom. Furthermore, and more to the point, among the colonial elite it leads to an “alazon complex”.

The results of this “alazon complex--- so called after “someone who pretends or tries to be something more than he is”---include among other things the dangerous and self-defeating tendency ‘... to produce historical accounts in which the nationalism of the colonized competes with metropolitan imperialism in its bid to uphold the primacy of the state.” Guha’s expression, “the pathos of exclusion” is exactly right, as is his spirit of *autocritique*. At the end, the book stands out as the honest expression of an attempt to come to terms with the logic and pathos of such exclusion. Like a nightmare from which we, the colonial subjects, like Joycean characters are trying to awaken, history stands as both a trap and a bridge. Tagore’s own solution was to individualize everyday events through an exercise of one’s own (feminine) creative spirit. That road is still open to us. But what are the political-social-economic conditions under which this becomes a possibility for all? This is the Marxian question in the spirit of the revolutionary side of Hegel that Hegel himself had abandoned. It is perhaps not just naïve romanticism to think that it is only through authentic acts of intellectual and political revolts--- individually and collectively--- that we come to realize our common humanity, that is to say, we make ourselves historically human by asserting our creative spirit against the dead hand of oppression. Guha has been one of those rare creative spirits whose works continue to light our path towards this common humanity by honestly exploring our historical differences.

But how can we apply these critical insights to the task of productive historical research? Guha’s critique can only take us so far. In order for a critical history beyond statism, nationalism and dependency on imperialism, I submit, at a minimum, we need to do the following:

1. Recognizing Tagore’s insights about inner individual perceptions, thoughts and feelings is an important alternative beginning. However, the social, economic and political underpinnings of the new “historical” approach must be carefully identified and brought into the narrative which will be both a description of events and processes as well as an explanation via deeper---often complex---individual and larger social, economic and political factors.

2. The importance of capitalist imperialism in our epoch must be recognized. All of its influences at various levels must be traced carefully and historically. This will apply increasingly to ecological history as well.

3. The importance of classes and class struggles in an imperialist world system must be traced out historically. This needs to be done without class reductionism. Recognizing other forms of struggle in modern/postmodern period and tracing their multiple connections and overdeterminations are crucial.

4. There has been an overemphasis on non-economic factors in sub-altern and other non-Marxist forms of alternative histories. It is important to bring back the relevant economic factors without being an economic determinist.

5. Above all, concrete analyses of concrete struggles from below in both civil society and the state must be given priority.

6. Not just postmodern surface narratives(i.e., history as “happenings”) but also causal analyses of rival historical explanations must be carried out. Dipesh Chakrabarty’s laudable attempt to bring Marx and Heidegger together in his “Provincializing Europe” can be pushed further by bringing Tagore’s insights together with critical scientific realist ideas of causal depth and confirmation of theories in history.

Appendix 3:

The Historic Twenty One Points of the United Front Before the Elections of 1954 in Pakistan

The United Front was composed of four political parties: Awami Muslim League, Krishak Sramik Party, Nezam-e-Islam and Ganatantri Dal. The Front was formed on 4 December 1953 by the initiative of AK Fazlul Huq of Krishak Sramik Party, Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhasani and Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy of Awami Muslim League.

Below are the 21-point package program in the election manifesto adopted by the United Front:

1. To recognise Bangla as one of the State Languages of Pakistan;
2. To abolish without compensation zamindari and all rent receiving interest in land, and to distribute the surplus lands amongst the cultivators; to reduce rent to a fair level and abolish the certificate system of realising rent;
3. To nationalise the jute trade and bring it under the direct control of the government of East Bengal, secure fair price of jute to the growers and to investigate into the jute-bungling during the Muslim League regime to punish those found responsible for it;
4. To introduce co-operative farming in agriculture and to develop cottage industries with full government subsidies;
5. To start salt industry (both small and large scale) to make East Bengal self-sufficient in the supply of salt, and to investigate into the salt-bungling during the Muslim League regime to punish the offenders;
6. To rehabilitate immediately all the poor refugees belonging to the artisan and technician class;
7. To protect the country from flood and famine by means of digging canals and improving irrigation system;
8. To make the country self-sufficient by modernising the method of cultivation and industrialisation, and to ensure the rights of the labourer as per ILO Convention;
9. To introduce free and compulsory primary education throughout the country and to arrange for just pay and allowances to the teachers;
10. To restructure the entire education system, introduce mother tongue as the medium of instruction, remove discrimination between government and private schools and to turn all the schools into government aided institutions;
11. To repeal all reactionary laws including those of the Dhaka and Rajshahi Universities and to make them autonomous institutions; to make education cheaper and easily available to the people;

12. To curtail the cost of administration and to rationalise the pay scale of high and low paid government servants. The ministers shall not receive more than 1000 taka as monthly salary;
13. To take steps to eradicate corruption, nepotism and bribery, and with this end in view, to take stocks of the properties of all government officers and businessmen from 1940 onward and forfeit all properties the acquisition of which is not satisfactorily accounted for;
14. To repeal all Safety and Preventive Detention Acts and release all prisoners detained without trial, and try in open court persons involved in anti-state activities; to safeguard the rights of the press and of holding meetings;
15. To separate the judiciary from the executive;
16. To locate the residence of the chief minister of the United Front at a less costly house, and to convert Burdwan House into a students hostel now, and later, into an institute for research on Bangla language and literature;
17. To erect a monument in memory of the martyrs of the Language Movement on the spot where they were shot dead, and to pay compensation to the families of the martyrs;
18. To declare 21 February as 'Shaheed Day' and a public y;
19. The Lahore Resolution proposed full autonomy of East Bengal leaving defence, foreign affairs and currency under the central government. In the matter of defence, arrangements shall be made to set the headquarters of the army in West Pakistan and the naval headquarters in East Bengal and to establish ordnance factories in East Bengal, and to transform Ansar force into a full-fledged militia equipped with arms;
20. The United Front Ministry shall on no account extend the tenure of the Legislature and shall resign six months before the general elections to facilitate free and fair elections under an Election Commission;
21. All casual vacancies in the Legislature shall be filled up through by-elections within three months of the vacancies, and if the nominees of the Front are defeated in three successive by-elections, ministry shall resign from office.

Appendix 4:Text of the Speech: (On October 28, 1970) Radio and TV speech

In East Pakistan in Bangla)

Translation into English by Haider A. Khan

My dear citizens (of Pakistan):

Assalmu Alaikum (Let peace be upon you)!

Please accept my salutations in our common struggle.

I will begin my talk by praying for the souls of all our heroic martyrs who gave their blood--- indeed, their very lives for the freedom of our people. They sacrificed their lives in struggling against the oppression of the dictatorship in order to build our movement. Countless numbers of our people made heroic sacrifices. It is their sacrifice that has led to the great mass movement during the past year. This uninterrupted mass movement has advanced our movement for democracy. In fact, this opportunity I have today of presenting my viewpoint to you can be considered an initial victory of our democratic movement because till today such freedom of speech was monopolized by those in power.

Our struggle will go on. This is because we have not yet realized our fundamental aim. People must have power. The exploitation of man by man, by one region by another region must end. The powerful clique that has ruled Pakistan for the last 22 years will try all means to prevent the transfer of power to the people. These are the groups that are conspiring to cancel the general election. Even if the elections are held, they will continue their efforts to cancel the verdict to end exploitation. If necessary, they will mobilize their huge resources for this effort. They have money, they have influence, they have the means of repression at their disposal. But history is witness to the fact that determined popular forces have battled autocratic forces with success. And at the end the victory of people has become inevitable.

To the people of Pakistan Awami League(AL) can make a solemn promise---AL will always be on their side, leading them in their struggle against the autocratic and exploiting groups, No nation in history has ever been able to win freedom and justice without making sacrifices. AL will confront the oppressors with all our people. If the democratic process is interrupted, AL will oppose such moves with all its might. AL was born in adversity. At that time the rulers were trying to convert our political system into a one party state. It was then that AL was born under the leadership of our great leader the late Hossain Shahid Suhrawardi. This is how we started our uncompromising struggle for establishing democracy. Our struggle for democracy is still not over. Those cliques in power have tried to destroy the AL by attacking us repeatedly. They have struck against us again and again; they have thrown the leadership of the AL in jail time after time. These leaders have spent the best years of their lives full of promise incarcerated in the the dark cells. But we have defeated all these torture and suppression. We have earned a great victory. Our victory has inspired us to face all the powers that oppose democracy.

We must overcome the crises that are about to destroy our nation. The primary and number one reason for the crises is that fact that our people do not have their political rights. Secondly, the majority of our people has become a victim of discrimination. Thirdly, increasing regional disparities have created the feeling of endless injustice. In the main, these are the main reasons for the resentment and unhappiness of the Bangalees. But the ignored public in the West Pakistan also share the same sentiments.

The manifesto of ALhas a roadmap for solving these essential problems. We must establish a true and genuinely lively democracy in our country. In this type of democracy all basic rights will have constitutional guarantee. In our manifesto we delineate clearly the development paths for political parties, labor organizations, local self-governance institutions etc. We will restore complete freedom of press and academic freedoms. We are determined to eradicate completely the corruption that has spread like cancer in our social body.

We must overturn the intolerable framework of exploitation and miscarriage of justice that has been created. Only two families control more than sixty percent of our national wealth. More than eighty percent of banking assets and seventy percent of insurance assets are also controlled by two families. The loaned-out investment capital from the banks are enjoyed by only three percent of our people. Other developing countries raise six percent of their GDP as taxes while we raise only two percent. On the other hand, we have indirect tax on an essential item like salt. The rulers have created a monopolistic cartelization by following policies of protected markets, tax holiday, bonus voucher etc. With minimal land reform that is an eyewash the feudal landlords still have princely unearned wealth. These classes enjoy unlimited opportunities. Their wealth keeps increasing. At the same time, the poor peasants' condition keeps deteriorating. Just to survive, our rural folks are migrating to the towns. According to official statistics, one fifth of the labor force or 900,000 workers are unemployed. The rapid increase in cost of living is felt primarily by the toiling masses. The pressure is intense for teachers, low income white collar workers, especially the fourth-class government workers as well.

Looking at horrifying picture of economic inequalities, we can see that during the last twenty years, out of the total expenditure out of the government revenue, only about Rs. 1,500 crores (that is only one fifth of the total expenditures) was spent in Bangladesh, as against Rs. 5,000 crores in West Pakistan. Of the total development expenditure during the same period, Rs. 3000 crores (that is only a third of the total) was spent in Bangladesh, as against over Rs. 6,000 crores in West Pakistan.

Over twenty years, West Pakistan imported goods worth more than Rs. 3,000 crores as against its own foreign exchange earnings of barely Rs. 1300 crores. Imports into West Pakistan have been three times the value of the imports into Bangladesh. It was made possible for West Pakistan to import goods worth Rs. 2,000 crores in excess of its export earnings by allocating to it Rs. 500 crores of the foreign exchange earnings of Bangladesh and allowing it to utilize over 80 per cent of all foreign aid.

The record in the field of government services is just as deplorable after twenty-two years since our independence. Even today, Bengalis account for only 15 per cent in Central Government Services and less than 10 per cent in the defense services.

The total economic impact of such discrimination has been that the economy of Bengal is today in a state of imminent collapse. Near famine conditions are prevailing in the majority of the villages. Some fifteen lakh tons of rice has had to be imported only to save the people from starvation. The powerless people of Bangladesh are victims of the rising trends of inflation in our country. Prices of necessities are 50 to 100 percent more than the prices in West Pakistan. About 40 Kg of coarse rice will cost you between 20 and 25 rupees whereas in Bangladesh the same amount costs between 45 and 50 rupees. The flour that costs 30 to 35 rupees costs only 15 to 20 rupees in West Pakistan. There each Kg of mustard oil is only two and a half rupees, and here it is 5 rupees. In Karachi gold costs 135 to 140 rupees and here the same weight of gold costs 160 to 165 rupees. Even so, we can not bring gold from West Pakistan to East Pakistan. Even the central government can not change this economic structure that has been erected over the last 22 years. This truth was demonstrated during the 4th five-year plan.

The Six-Point program of the Awami League which is included in the 11-point program, points to the path for overcoming the regional disparities. It presents a rational solution to this problem of regional injustice. With a central bureaucracy in which Bangalees account for just 15 per cent, and with the nature of the power structure being what it is, to expect justice from a centralized system of economic management would be to expect the impossible. If Bangladesh and other victimized regions attempt to secure larger allocations such efforts would only aggravate regional tensions and threaten the viability of the federal government. The only feasible solution is the re-ordering of the constitutional structure by giving full regional autonomy to the federating units on the basis of our six-point formula.

Such autonomy in order to be effective must include the power of managing the economy. This is why we insist upon federating units having control over monetary and fiscal policy and foreign exchange earnings and other powers to negotiate foreign trade and aid. By giving the federating units full control over their economic destiny, while entrusting to the federal government responsibility over foreign affairs and defense and, subject to certain safeguards, currency, we believe a just federal balance will be attained. Our federal scheme envisages the abolition of all-Pakistan services and its replacement by federal services in which persons shall be recruited proportionately on the basis of population from all parts of Pakistan.

We believe further that all the regions will be able to contribute effectively to national defense by building militias and paramilitary units of their own. Our proposed federalist plan will guarantee the existence of Pakistan by ending all regional suspicions and conflicts. In the region where powerful people want to use the people of other regions in a colonial fashion, for understandable reasons such a region will be opposed to our plan. But we believe that ordinary people of all regions will support our plan. We believe that through such a constitution we can bring about a social revolution democratically. As a result, we will be able to build a just socialist economic system free from exploitation.

We need to have rapid economic development in the face of a continuously rising population. In order to make such economic development possible, our people must work hard and make sacrifices. The people will respond to our call only when the fruits of economic development can be shared by all. In order to have a more egalitarian economic system, we have to bring radical changes to our economic structure. We believe that it is imperative to place key areas

of the economy, including banking and insurance, under public ownership through nationalization. Future development in these areas should take place through the public sector. In our new economic order, workers should have share in the equity capital and management of industrial enterprises.

The private sector, also in its own sphere, must make its full contribution to the economy. Monopolies and cartels must be totally eliminated. The tax structure must be made truly progressive and drastic restrictions must be imposed on the consumption of luxuries. We must encourage small businesses and cottage industries by supporting them practically through ensuring the supply of inputs to them. Small industries should be built up as cooperatives. We will make these industries village centric and spread them in every village so that the rural people can have adequate employment. So far our Golden Fibre, Jute has suffered from unlimited neglect. The direct producers---our jute farmers---have been deprived of their just share by discrimination in investment and the parasitical middlemen. It is an urgent necessity to improve the quality of jute and increase the rate of production. Nationalization of the process of jute production, emphasis on research and development in the jute sector and increasing the production can move this sector towards playing its proper role in the national economy. We must emphasize cotton sector in the same manner. That is why we think that the cotton processing should also be nationalized. We also need to improve the quality of our cotton and increase cotton production. In the past, the government ignored our other key wealth producing sectors such as tea, sugar cane and tobacco. As a result, their outputs have declined precipitously.

In our low-income country, we can not tolerate this situation. We must take steps to increase production quickly. We must guarantee the peasants a fair and stable price for their products.

Our agricultural sector needs to be revolutionized. The jagirdari, zamindari and sardari system in West Pakistan must be abolished. The entire land system has to undergo a radical reorientation in the interest of the actual tillers of land. Ceilings must be imposed on land holdings. Land above such ceilings and government Khas land must be redistributed among the landless cultivators.

If truth be told, agriculture must be modernized. The obstacle presented by the fragmentation and sub-division of land-holding must be overcome. An immediate step in the right direction would be to induce the farmers to group their holdings under multipurpose co-operatives. Government could provide effective inducement for this purpose by funneling through such co-operatives vital inputs such as irrigation, embankment, drainage, deep tubewells, water pumps, fertilizer, improved seeds, agricultural implements and machinery, credit and instruction in modern agricultural implements and machinery, credit and instruction in modern agricultural techniques. We would abolish land revenue in respect of holdings upto 25 bighas and write off all arrears in respect of such holdings. Ultimately, we aim at abolishing the present system of land revenue. We must explore the best scientific methods for the optimal use of our natural resources. We must prioritize the development and use of our forest resources, cultivation of fruits, chicken and duck farms, fish farms etc. We need to establish without delay research institutes for developing our water resources and water transports.

We must prioritize the three basic pillars of our economy. Our first and foremost duty is to control floods. We need an integrated and workable plan for flood control to meet the emergency. We need to solve urgently problems of waterlogged lands and salinity of soil in West Pakistan. The next pillar is electricity production and distribution. There must be massive expansion in power generation and distribution. Extensive rural electrification must be launched to take electricity to the villages as to make it possible for small-scale industries to be established. We aim at attaining power generation capacity of 2, 500 megawatts in Bangladesh within five years. Every source of power must be harnessed by maximizing power generation capacity. The Rooppur Nuclear Power Project and Jamalganj Coal Project must be immediately implemented. Natural gas must be fully utilized.

The third economic pillar is transport and communication. We give the highest priority to building the bridge over the Jamuna river for connecting North Bengal directly to the rest of Bangladesh. We must also build bridges over the rivers Indus, Budiganga, Karnafuli, and Sheetalakhya. We must prioritize internal river ports and development of sea ports. We are also emphasizing the roads and railways.

In order to build a healthy, progressive society, there is no other sector that is more important than the education sector. Therefore, investment in this sector should receive the highest priority. It is an alarming fact that the number of primary schools in Bengal has declined since 1947. Only 18 per cent of our population has attained literacy and the number of illiterates is increasing by over one million persons per year. Primary education is denied to more than half of the nation's children. Only 18 per cent of our boys and 6 per cent our girls complete the first five years of elementary school. A crash program must be launched to extend free compulsory primary education to all children within five years. Secondary education should be made readily accessible to all sections of our people. New universities, including medical and technical universities, must be rapidly established. Immediate steps should be taken to ensure that Bengali and Urdu replace English in all walks of life, while every effort should be made to encourage the development of regional languages.

If we look at the problems of citizens in the urban areas, we will see that people of low-income groups were living in sub-human conditions. The so-called improvement trusts had been developing luxurious residential areas of the wealthy while the poor had been left to fend for themselves. Future urban development must concentrate on providing for the needs of the poor majority of the city-dwellers. Low cost housing must be accorded the highest priority.

The same sad situation prevails in the healthcare sector. Immediate measures should be undertaken to establish a rural medical centre at every union, and a hospital at every thana headquarters. National service in rural areas should be introduced for medical graduates, and paramedical personnel must be trained in large numbers to staff the rural health centers.

Industrial workers play as vital a role in the economy as in the people's struggle. Their basic rights to form trade unions, to bargain collectively and to strike must be guaranteed. A living wage and the basic amenities such as housing, education and medical care for themselves and their children must be assured. All labour laws which restrict the basic rights of workers must be repealed. By ensuring that workers are given a stake in the industry, they can be expected to make their full contribution towards increasing industrial productivity. The wage structure

throughout the economy must be altered in keeping with the dictates of justice. Price stabilization measures must be adopted to protect the real wages of the workers and low-paid employees against spiraling inflation. The refugees should have the same rights and join the rest of us. By working in solidarity with the local people, they will receive rights equal to those of the locals.

I am warning for the last time those who are spreading falsehoods to the effect that our economic program and the six-points are endangering Islam. They should desist from spreading such lies. Nothing that attempts to overcome regional disparities and establish just rule of law can be against Islam. We are committed most firmly to Islam and will never allow any anti-Islamic laws to be promulgated.

To turn to the important area of foreign policy, we believe that it is imperative for us to avoid involvement in global power conflicts. We must, therefore, pursue truly independent non-aligned foreign policy. We are committed to the immediate withdrawal from SEATO, CENTO and all other military pacts and to avoid any such involvements in the future.

We have emphasized the importance of a just settlement of the Kashmir dispute in accordance with the United Nations resolutions. The threat of grave and permanent damage to the economy of Bengal posed by the completion of Farakka Barrage must be immediately met.

The members of the minority community should know that we have always stood against every form of communalism. They shall enjoy equal rights with all other citizens and shall enjoy equal protection of the laws. Every effort must be made to develop our tribal areas so that these areas can be fully integrated with other areas and the tribal people are able to enjoy equal opportunities with other citizens in all walks of life. What we need is a new constitution that guarantees these opportunities

It is imperative for the security of the nation that our armed forces should not have to carry the burden of civil administration or to have to involve itself in politics. These highly trained professionals should be left free to devote themselves exclusively to the vital task of defending the nation's frontiers.

In conclusion, I would like to state that we will meet successfully the challenges facing our nation. We must establish real democracy for all. All those who are Pakistanis can live together in peace and prosper together only in a truly democratic state.

Any attempt to destroy democracy will destroy Pakistan. To avoid this, we must make certain that all units in the federation have full regional autonomy and justice according to our six-point program. We must institute a progressive economic program for making possible the beginnings of a social revolution within the framework of such a federal democratic system.

The Awami League is firmly positioned to take up this challenge. The Awami League has earned the trust and support of our people. That is why we believe that Insha'Allah, we will meet this challenge successfully.

Pakistan Zindabad

Appendix 5: Khan's Critical Neoclassical Realist Theory with a contemporary illustration of US-China rivalry

As an academic discipline, many like to define international relations as a subject matter to study 'politics between states'. This framing stresses the external relations of states so much that it often overlooks the domestic political dynamics of states. Classical realists highlight actors' struggle for power and dominance vis-à-vis others in the international system and neorealists view it as the logic of an anarchical global structure. However, foreign policy of a state is not disconnected from domestic political dynamics. Even when drawing from ancient texts, the scholars of classical and structural realism failed to grasp the internal dynamics at play for determining external course of action of state actors. Especially in the twenty-first century when countries are more connected than ever, the domestic-external divide in regional and global politics appears to be superfluous and unwarranted.

Although classical realists like to draw inspiration from Thucydides's description of the Peloponnesian war, their reading of Thucydides misses some crucial points. "This "realism" neglects the distinction between what is honorable in Athens- pride in democratic character though also dominion—and subsequent, blind pride, involved in slaughter and decline" (Gilbert 1999: 161). Sole focus on Hobbesian rivalry of a "perpetual and restless desire for power after power, that ceaseth only in death" (Hobbes 1946: 80) also misses a warning from Morgenthau

that “a man who was nothing but a ‘political man’ would be a beast, for he would be completely lacking in moral restraints” (Morgenthau 1951: 14). It is in this context Gilbert (1999) argued that “international-relations theory during the Cold War mistakenly emphasized science at the expense of ethics; it also sought a misguided reduction of a common good to *power* and denied the *potential* peacefulness of democracy” (Gilbert 1999: 110). After the Cold War too, in the name of maintaining hegemony in the international system, we have seen how the classical realist calculations of power, devoid of ethical considerations, led to major foreign policy blunders.

On the other hand, neorealism, Gilbert (1999) argued, “makes a theoretical point of ignoring democratic regimes and other domestic political structures as important variables in international system” (Gilbert 1999: 150). In line with this framing, neorealism justifies American support of authoritarian regimes and military dictatorships abroad in the name of stabilizing the regional and international system, ignoring the domestic political dynamics. Gilbert (1999) further contends that “shaped by repressive American policy and a sometimes plausible, but misguided, philosophy of science- logical positivism and, in social science, behavioralism- however, neorealism as well as that version of the democratic-peace hypothesis that ignores American “interventions” against other democracies, offers ideology, not science” (Gilbert 1999: 151). The lessons from the wars in Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan guide us to think that neorealist emphasis on just the external international structure can be a trap if the domestic dynamics are not taken into account.

Neoclassical realism is a relatively recent theoretical trend which seeks to bridge the gap between external and internal dynamics of international relations. Gideon Rose, who coined the term, argued that “understanding the links between power and policy requires close examination of the contexts within which foreign policies are formulated and implemented” (Rose 1998: 147). Thus, the premises of neoclassical realism take domestic and state levels of analysis into consideration, not just the international systemic level of analysis. This helps us reorient our focus to the basic definition of foreign policy that it is an “area of politics which bridges the all-important boundary between the nation-state and its international environment” (Wallace 1971: 07).

To understand how states respond to internal and external changes in the policy making realm, neoclassical realists argue that it is essential to understand unit level intervening variables such as decision-makers' perceptions and domestic state structure (Rose 1998: 152). When we look at US-China rivalry in the twenty first century, it is wise to recall George Kennan’s warning from the past century that “these attacks (claims that the United States ‘lost China’) were an early part of the wave of anti-communist hysteria which was to become known as McCarthyism- an episode of our public life so disgraceful that one blushes today to think of it” (Kennan 1984: 165). Although we left behind the Cold War era three decades ago, some still want to espouse the wrong historical analogy between China and the Soviet Union to stoke fear of a tense global rivalry. In a *Foreign Affairs* article titled ‘Xi Jinping is not Stalin’, McFaul argued that the “U.S. foreign-policy makers must resist the impulse to check every Chinese move around the world” (McFaul 2020).

In order to make sense of the recent changes, it is important to understand the Chinese domestic variables as well. Analysts contend that the domestic appeal of nationalism led China

to become increasingly assertive abroad. Zhao argued that “enjoying an inflated sense of empowerment supported by its new quotient of wealth and military capacities, and terrified of an uncertain future due to increasing social, economic and political tensions at home, the communist state has become more willing to play to the popular nationalist gallery in pursuing the so-called core national interests” (Zhao 2013: 535). However, this does not necessarily imply that China will be a hostile global player. China also has stakes in the international system and would not necessarily benefit from creating chaos .

China does aspire to possess a more powerful position in the international system. However, this should not be interpreted as “either-or” competition for the leading role in the global order. From a neoclassical realist perspective, Schweller observed that “the future may well resemble President Xi Jinping’s proposal for a ‘new type of great power relations’ (*xinxing daguo guanxi*) ...China and the United States should share global leadership as equals and break a historical pattern of inevitable confrontation between rising and established powers” (Schweller 2018: 25). From the US point of view, rather than espousing antagonistic policy position, reaching a *balanced threat perception* would be important in this regard.

The political rhetoric of “America First” signals a growing and deeper sense of nationalism. However, when dealing with an influential actor like China, such hubris can only hasten American decline. A hot war would not benefit any actor and in this context, it would be wise to pay heed to what US Secretary of State John Quincy Adams famously advised about not going “abroad in search of monsters to destroy” (Adams, 1821). While there is overestimation of Chinese threats to the US, Benjamin Herscovitch observes soberly that “no armies are being launched into battle, no civilians are being slaughtered, and no cities are being reduced to rubble” (Herscovitch 2017: 18).

Drawing from lessons of ancient Greek history and other contemporary examples, we also see that neoclassical realism helps us understand that hubris in domestic political structure can lead to adopt imperialist adventures abroad that can be counterproductive. My Critical Neoclassical Theory shows, drawing from the case scenarios of Taiwan, North Korea and dispute over Senkaku/Diaoyu island that costly wars can be avoided if domestic and regional dimensions are deeply analyzed and appropriate policies are implemented. The optimistic scenario flows from our effort to contribute towards building a complexity theory based multiplex new global order, or CTMNGO. As illustrated above, CTMNGO will combine constructively a critical neoclassical realism(CNR) with global and regional cooperative institution building.

Although a booklength analysis is necessary to examine Bangabandhu’s efforts towards building a peaceful, cooperative and prosperous world where the nonaligned nations could thrive, enough has been documented in the main text to suggest that this was indeed most plausibly the case from 1072 to August 1975 for the new born country of Bangladesh under his leadership. It was not completely successful, and was tragically cut short by the events of August 15, 1975 and afterwards. But there are many important lessons to learn from studying this case combining both triumph and tragedy.

Appendix 6.1:

Towards a Post-Bakhtinian Theory of the Polyphonic Prose-Poetry of Revolutionary Mass Movements

Mikhail Bakhtin became recognized in the west as a theorist of novelization long after his death in the USSR. He was partly a victim of the rigidity of mediocre Stalinist party hacks who controlled the literary norms from the 1930s onwards in the former USSR. Although he was able to live in Moscow and publish with some belated recognition in the USSR in the post-Stalin period, the Euro-American literary criticism welcomed his views only after both structuralist and poststructuralist schools in the west had run into dead ends from the late 1980s onwards.

My purpose here is not to explicate Bakhtin's literary theories for which there are several good book length expositions but rather to combine and extend the idea of a dialogical approach to discourse and the idea polyphony in discourse to a somewhat novel concept of the *polyphonic prose-poetry* of revolutionary mass movements (PPP of RMM).

This will also show us how to go beyond the structuralist distinction between metaphor and metonymy proposed in Roman Jakobson's brilliant work. The text of my own book will be a running argument and demonstration of the proposition that during a revolutionary mass upheaval metonymies in both language and real-life run against one another in rapid succession and metaphors merge with metonymies to make dialectical leaps in imagining new possibilities that were absent even a few months or even weeks and days ago. These novel emergences can create a new type of polyphony that arises from the masses themselves during these extraordinary periods in history. Ontologically, I have modified Deleuze's valuable contributions that emerge from a critical understanding of Spinoza and Bergson that he acknowledges. What Deleuze and the postmodernists and poststructuralists alike fail to realize is the deeper possibilities for transformations beyond the bourgeois social formation once the dialectical approach of Marx and his method of a fundamental critique of bourgeois political economy and society is grasped properly, particularly from a close reading of *Capital*. Here I will deal with the semiotic aspects emerging from my own critique of the 20th-century thinkers, but the origins of my own critique can be traced back to Marx's analyses in the *Grundrisse* and *Capital*.

In the justly famous "Conference on Style" in 1958 Jakobson presented his "Closing statement: Linguistics and Poetics" which was published in 1960 under the title, "Style in Language." Coming from the Prague School, Jakobson based his analysis on the Saussurean theory of language and French structuralism. The idea that language was a system of signs with signifiers and signified in a chain which consisted of metaphoric and metonymic plays came from Jakobson. At the same time, Jacques Lacan was both arriving at and departing from this structural analysis of the unconscious which in his reading of Freud, was structured like language. Later Derrida in his critique of structuralism will arrive at a similar deconstructive gesture where interpretation and meaning can be constantly displaced and decentered.

Let us start with Jakobson's initial distinction following his and his Prague school colleagues' early advances over Saussurean structuralist linguistics.

Already in 1928, Jakobson, Vilem Mathesius, Nikolaj S. Trubetzkoy and S.I. Karcevskij had departed radically from the classical structural position of Ferdinand de Saussure. They claimed that the methods developed by the Prague school for studying the function of speech sounds could be applied both synchronically to a language at a point in time, and diachronically, that is dynamically, to a language as it changes over time.

Consistent with this position, Jakobson would argue in the 1950s :

“...It is the structural analysis of language in the process of development—the analysis of children's language and its general laws—and of language in the process of disintegration—aphasic language—which enables us to throw light on the selection of phonemes, the distinctive features, and their mutual relations, and to get closer to the main principles of this selection and of this interdependence so as to be in a position to establish and explain the universal laws which underlie the phonological structure of the world's languages...”³⁵

In other words, Jakobson suggests that culturally interconnected signs can be used to reconstruct systems of relationships rather than studying isolated signs. Thus, Jakobson follows Saussure and develops a structuralist approach to language as a relational system or structure that can give priority to the determining power of the language system (a principle shared by post-structuralists). They seek to describe the overall organization of sign systems as "languages," a general semiotic system in many areas besides the narrow definition of a language formed from utterances. Examples of such extensions are Claude [Lévi-Strauss](#) and myth, kinship rules, and totemism; [Jacques Lacan](#) and the unconscious; [Roland Barthes](#) and Greimas and the "grammar" of narrative. Roman Jakobson explains, “...It is once again the vexing problem of identity within variety; without a solution to this disturbing problem there can be no system, no classification...”³⁶

Although Lacan early on and post-structuralism with Derrida's seminal works in the late 1960s broke with the rigid universalism of structuralism, they remained text focused. The same can be said of Bakhtin. However, in contradistinction with both the structuralists and the post-structuralists. Bakhtin's novel theory of prose form of novelization introduced a plurality of voices, speech patterns and chronotopes along with heteroglossia. This polyphonic approach, I have argued, brings us closer towards bridging the gap between the heteroglossia and heteroformism of a radical mass movement and textuality.³⁷ Furthermore, it also allows us to bridge the gap between prose and poetry during such revolutionary moments. The roles performed by metaphor and metonymy in isolation merge just as an enormous polyphony emerges from multiple mass voices and actions.

³⁵ Jakobson, 1960

³⁶ Jakobson, 1990.

³⁷ See my Paz's Poetics: Textuality, Sexuality, Politics, The Denver Quarterly, Summer, and Khan (1992; 1998; 2009;2016)

We can pass from Jakobson's insights about the sound potential of language to a general semiotics of socio-political movements in a radical way---much more radical than either the anthropological structuralism of post-WW2 France, or the text-centered decentering of deconstructive post-structuralism.

As Jakobson pointed out:

In short, only minimal phonic means are required in order to express and communicate a wealth of conceptual, emotive and aesthetic content. Here readers are directly confronted with the mystery of the idea embodied in phonic matter, the mystery of the word, of the linguistic symbol, of the Logos, a mystery which requires elucidation. Of course, we have known for a long time that a word, like any verbal sign, is a unity of two components. The sign has two sides: the sound, or the material side on the one hand, and meaning, or the intelligible side on the other. Every word, and more generally every verbal sign, is a combination of sound and meaning, or to put it another way, a combination of signifier and signified.³⁸³⁹

In conclusion, we can use Bakhtin's own words substituting our construction of the theoretical concept of the PPP of RMM for his idea of literary prose. In this way, we are also able to close the gap between language and revolutionary practice during these special and rare periods of society-wide upheavals:

The possibility of employing on the plane of a single work [and socio-political movement] discourses of various types, with all their expressive capacities intact, without reducing them to a single common denominator--this is one of the most fundamental characteristics of ...[the PPP of

³⁸ See also Harris, Roy. *Saussure and His Interpreters*. New York: New York, UP, 2001., Jakobson, R. *Remarques sur l'évolution phonologique du russe*, 1929.

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³⁹ Jakobson, 1990

RMM]. Herein lies the profound distinction between the prose style and poetic style [in ordinary non-revolutionary moments].⁴⁰

From this point in Bakhtin, I am pointing out, we can go beyond Bakhtin with the possibility of this revolutionary fusion, the actuality of this fusion as the PPP of RMM. For the activist-artists of revolutionary moments, “the world is full of other people’s words....” Indeed, such actors must work “...with a very rich [polyphonic]...palette...” using the PPP of RMM during these rare but special episodes of history enacted by the revolutionary masses. Understanding this fusion through a revolutionary narrative form can save us from confusion. The genius of the masses along multiple dimensions at some crucial potential turning points in history is never to be underestimated. It is a major thesis of my book that 1969-70 and 1971 in East Pakistan brought forth this fusion. Another important component of the PPP of RMM particularly in the context of the struggles in Bangladesh is an extension of the Bakhtinian idea of the chronotope. I should mention here that we also find in the development of the revolutionary process through the real movements of people and ideas a compression of time and space and of the coexistence of several distinct layers of chronos in particular. For this reason, I have developed a concept going beyond the Bakhtinian chronotope. This concept needs a new name. I have termed this *polychronotopia* in order to pinpoint the multiplicity of events and processes along with the ideas and practices during revolutionary moments. Clearly, such a concept goes far beyond Bakhtin’s exclusively literary, novelization and static single layered concept of chronotope.⁴¹

⁴⁰ Bakhtin(1984) pp.200-1

⁴¹ See my discussion of the relevance of Bakhtin and the need to go beyond Bakhtin in Annex 2.2 in this book. I have also discussed these in several of my literary criticism pieces.

Appendix 6.2:

Another Way to Theorize the “Event” of Revolutionary Process Dynamically: Event Beyond Badiou (EBB) ---from the Concept of Badiouan Event to the Concept of *Eventualizing Dynamics or Dyneven*

There is another equally productive and complementary theoretical approach I have been trying to develop by taking Badiou’s *Being and Event* seriously as a starting point. We can see *Being and Event* as a continuation of his attempt--- beginning in *Théorie du Sujet*--- to reconcile a notion of the subject with ontology. The criticism of post-structuralist (PS) work which I began with in Annex 2.1 is that the PS focuses perhaps too much on semiotics and language ultimately getting trapped in the straitjacket of language. Badiou, by his own admission, tries to break out of contemporary French philosophy’s fetishism of language. Thus he arrives, in *Being and Event*, at the point where he can combine rigorous mathematical formulae with his readings of poets such as Mallarmé and Hölderlin and religious thinkers such as Pascal. He also draws upon both Anglo-American-European ‘analytical’ and European ‘continental’ traditions.

Clearly, two elements mark the thesis of *Being and Event*: the place of ontology, ‘being *qua* being’ (being in itself), and the place of the event (as a rupture in being) through which the subject finds realization and reconciliation with truth. This situation of being and the rupture which characterizes the event are thought in terms of set theory of the axiomatic Zermelo–Fraenkel_ rigorous axiomatic variety. A formally weak point here is the axiom of choice. Badiou elides the thorny issues that the axiom of choice raises. Thus, while I, too, use the axiomatic approach in my previous formal work, I jettison this particularly troublesome axiom. I also formalize in the more natural framework of fuzzy set theory which is a more lifelike perceptual setting to begin in looking for rupture.⁴²

Instead of reproducing the formal critique of Badiou which the nontechnical reader will not find helpful, I offer here a brief---perhaps too brief---one paragraph summary of my own EBB formulation of the rupture/event. The rest of the book itself will be a concrete illustration of the paragraph that follows.

The key point is that a number of fuzzy even inchoate (micro) events lead up to EBB which I will call the ***Eventualizing Dynamics (ED), or Dyneven for short which combines dynamism, uneven and event to emphasize flow that is uneven but forceful (Dyne is one of the units of force in physics)*** in order to distinguish my *continuity- with- contradictions* leading to a *dialectical qualitative leap* towards fundamental systemic change in line with the current mathematics of the dynamic systems theory. Thus, my concept of ED as the name suggests is more dynamic, less mysterious---one could even characterize Badiou’s Event as mystifying given his rather arbitrary use of set theory without an explicit dynamics---and ultimately

⁴² Khan 2004; Lin and Khan 2009; Khan 20xx

relatively more adequate for explaining novel socio-economic-political developments over historical time in real human societies.

In my more dynamic formulation of functionals that form an infinite set, I examine rigorously the fundamental break or rupture with the ontological-historical status quo. Under congeries of concrete conditions in an overdetermined revolutionary situation, the *hegemony* of the ruling class/elite in *the Gramscian sense* breaks down. In an overdetermined revolutionary situation the semiotics terms change radically. When a sufficient number of these (micro) events coalesce together, we have the necessary conditions for the (macro) Event as such. However, for a transformation of the potentiality and virtuality of microevents to become an actuality further conditions leading to a set of minimal sufficient meshwork must develop. The first chapter hints at this development in March 1971 in East Pakistan. Other examples from the 1960s and other historical slices of time can easily be found.

The network to meshwork transformation is describable by a complexity-based neural network model formally. This is done in Khan (2004) and Khan (2017 and 2020a,b). The intuitive idea here is that even in the face of severe political, economic and cultural repressions, the objective development of minimally sufficient meshwork can lead to the Event---characterized by among other things, an explosion of popular will for liberation, a mass mobilization with a contempt for death. This is exactly what happened after March 7, 1971 when East Pakistan was already being transformed into Bangladesh----symbolically through a new flag, national anthem and other transformative semiosis and substantively through the noncooperation movement and virtual day-to-day autonomy of the *Bangalees* and their allies.

More fundamentally and usefully, this paper has raised the question: How might it be possible for the foreign policy of a small country today to be part of a Nonaligned Movement(NAM) as the unipolar world ends? Our historical geopolitical and geoeconomic case study---namely Bangladesh after its liberation--- answers this question in part.My theory of CTNR provides the geopolitical and geoeconomic preconditions. As the world transits to an international system beyond unipolarity, the crisis-ridden present and future might open an uncertain but possible path towards a new NAM of which even small vcountries in the system can be important parts along with BRICS plus group of countries and a new United Nations charter.

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