

# **Imperialism and Revolution in South Asia**

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## Contents

### Preface

vii

### Part I

#### *Historical Background and the Impact of Imperialism and Capitalism*

1. Imperialism and Revolutionary Potential in South Asia by Kathleen Gough	3
2. Foreign Capital and Economic Development in India: A Schematic View by Amiya Kumar Bagchi	43
3. The Green Revolution in India: Prelude to a Red One? by Hari P. Sharma	77
4. Some Trends in India's Economic Development by Paresh Chattopadhyay	103
5. Neocolonial Alliances and the Crisis of Pakistan by Hassan N. Gardezi	130
6. The State in Postcolonial Societies: Pakistan and Bangladesh by Hamza Alavi	145
7. Structure and Contradiction in Pakistan by Feroz Ahmed	174

### Part II

#### *The Roots of Struggle in the Villages*

1. Peasant Classes in Pakistan by Saghir Ahmad	203
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2. Harijans in Thanjavur by Kathleen Gough	222
3. Thanjavur: Rumblings of Class Struggle in Tamil Nadu by Mythily Shivaraman	246

*Part III**The Rise of Revolutionary Movements*

1. The Songs and Revolution of Bharathi by David Ludden	267
2. Peasants and Revolution by Hamza Alavi	291
3. The Communist Movement in India by Mohan Ram	338
4. The Red Sun Is Rising: Revolutionary Struggle in India by Inquilab Zindabad	359
5. Revolutionary Movements in Ceylon by Jayasumana Obeysekara	368

*Part IV**Bangladesh and the South Asian Crisis*

1. The Social Background of Bangladesh by Ramkrishna Mukherjee	399
2. The Structural Matrix of the Struggle in Bangladesh by Feroz Ahmed	419
3. Explosion in South Asia by Tariq Ali	449
<i>Notes on the Contributors</i>	467

**Preface**

American social science research on South Asia is remarkably lacking in studies dealing with the dynamics of imperialism as well as with the revolutionary movements that have arisen to destroy this system. This book is a modest attempt toward meeting that lack. It is intended for general readers in Western countries and for students in the early stages of South Asian studies.

The book was planned and the essays solicited by Saghir Ahmad, Kathleen Gough, and Hari Sharma in response to a request by the editors of the *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* for a collection of South Asian studies. We are especially grateful to Jim Peck, Mark Selden, and Perry Link of the Committee of Concerned Asian Scholars and to Susan Lowes of Monthly Review Press for their advice and generous editorial help. We also warmly thank the contributors to the volume, who corresponded with us over long distances and periods of time. Many of the authors rewrote their essays in light of the momentous events of 1971, while themselves under heavy pressure of scholarly or revolutionary work.

The contributors to this volume come from diverse fields and political tendencies. They include academic researchers, journalists, and revolutionary partisans. Among them are representatives or supporters of several different Marxist parties, in addition to writers unaffiliated with any organized political group. Therefore the essays contain different theories and conclusions on such important questions as the nature of the state and of the class relations in South Asian countries, as well as the character of these countries' relations with the advanced capitalist powers, with the Soviet bloc, and with China. Such differences of theory are linked with differences over strategy and tactics for revolution. The authors are, however, united both in approaching social problems from within the Marxist tradi-

## 7. Structure and Contradiction in Pakistan

Feroz Ahmed

I am a believer in socialism; that is why, leaving my class and the government, I have come back to workers, peasants, students, and poor people. What can I get from my deprived people except love? I am the follower of socialism because I know that only in this economic system lies the salvation, progress and well-being of the people. No power on earth can prevent the establishment of this system of truth and justice, equality and human dignity, in Pakistan. This is the call of time and history. Come and see. Bearing the great revolutionary flag of socialism, I have come in the field to serve the people. I have no greed or lust for gain. I am a socialist and as an honest socialist I would fight for the revolution of the poor till my last breath.

—Zulfikar Ali Bhutto<sup>1</sup>

A few days after Zulfikar Ali Bhutto took over as the President of Pakistan and declared that the "common man" would be the master of his destiny, inmates in Karachi and Multan jails, taken in by Bhutto's eloquence, demanded that they be given a chance to live as decent citizens in the new Pakistan. As government officials balked at the prisoners' demands and as their relatives gathered outside the prisons, chanting "Long live Chairman Bhutto" and "Long live the People's Government,"<sup>2</sup> the prisoners lost their patience and attempted a jailbreak. The government answered the uprising with police gunfire. According to official reports, seven inmates were killed in Karachi and two in Multan.<sup>3</sup> The Minister for Presidential Affairs, Mr. J. A. Rahim, warned that any attempt on the part of the prisoners to take the law into their own hands would be met with force.<sup>4</sup>

This article was first published in *Pakistan Forum*, February and March 1972, under the title "Has People's Rule Arrived in Pakistan?"

Before political observers could sit down and begin to analyze the character of Pakistan's new regime, the prisoners of Karachi and Multan, inadvertently and at great risk to themselves, had laid bare the realities hidden behind the radical and populist rhetoric of the People's Party. Lest we be accused of being unsympathetic to the grave difficulties of the regime and of reading too much into the prison affair, we shall attempt to analyze the character of the present government of Pakistan and to provide perspectives on what lies ahead.

In order to be able to explain the current (January 1972) policies of the Bhutto regime and to offer a prognosis, one must discuss briefly the origins of the People's Party and recapitulate the events leading up to the downfall of the right-wing military junta in Pakistan.

### *Protégé of a Dictator Becomes the "People's" President*

Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, a wealthy landlord of Sind and a minister in Ayub Khan's government since the military coup of 1958, fell out with his patron over the issue of the Tashkent declaration, signed by Pakistan and India in 1966 to end the hostilities in the region. Bhutto, accusing Ayub of a sellout in Kashmir, found an enthusiastic response among the West Pakistani people, who felt outraged at Ayub's capitulation before big-power pressure. After sounding out the existing left-wing National Awami Party (NAP) and finding it less than enthusiastic, Bhutto formed the Pakistan People's Party in 1967 and announced his candidacy for the scheduled 1969-70 presidential elections under the system of restricted franchise, euphemistically called "basic democracies." Ayub Khan threw Bhutto—as well as the East Pakistani leader, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman—into jail. A massive popular upsurge against the Ayub regime gripped the country from October 1968 to March 1969.<sup>5</sup> Bhutto was released because of popular pressure. While the old bourgeois opposition kept harping on the tune of a "return to parliamentary democracy," Bhutto spellbound the masses with his slogans for the abolition of feudalism and capitalism and the establishment of socialism in Pakistan. In March 1969, Ayub was forced to resign and hand over the reigns of government to Yahya Khan, Commander in Chief of the army. Yahya held the promised elections in December 1970 and Bhutto's party

emerged as the majority party in West Pakistan, with 83 of the region's 138 National Assembly (NA) seats. When the military decided to ban the overall majority party, the Awami League, and unleashed genocide in East Pakistan, Bhutto thanked God for "saving Pakistan." However, when Bhutto demanded transfer of power to his party, the military refused. Bhutto then raised the slogan of "power or prison by November 1971."<sup>6</sup> When the army regrouped the right-wing political parties, distributed the Awami League seats to them, and nominated one of their members as the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Bhutto accepted the position of Deputy Prime Minister. When the Pakistani military surrendered to the invading Indian troops in East Pakistan and accepted the cease-fire in West Pakistan, the younger military officers forced Yahya's junta to resign and asked Bhutto to assume the presidency of Pakistan with the powers of Chief Martial Law Administrator. Today, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto occupies the Presidential Palace because General Gul Hassan and his colleagues want a civilian popular figure. In a truncated Pakistan, Bhutto would still head the government if a constitution were framed and parliamentary democracy restored.

Whatever part the Tashkent declaration, Ayub's blunder in arresting Bhutto, and Pakistan's military defeat in the war with India may have played in changing the fortunes of Zulfikar Bhutto, the man and his politics cannot be separated from the social forces that have been at work during the past thirteen years. An analysis of these forces and of the class interests Mr. Bhutto represents—and not of his personality and style—is fundamental for an understanding of the character of the present regime and its future.

#### *Deepening of Contradictions During the "Decade of Development"*

The scope of this article does not permit a discussion of the power structure inherited by Pakistan at the time of independence in 1947.<sup>7</sup> It will suffice to say that under the peculiar conditions of postcolonial Pakistan, the ruling oligarchy consisted not only of the propertied classes, such as the feudal aristocracy and the bourgeoisie (especially the big monopolist bourgeoisie), but also of the bureaucracy and the military, who in spite of being drawn from the propertied classes and in spite of being their defenders, retained a great deal of autonomy to

pursue their specific interests, some of which were not complementary to the interests of the propertied classes.<sup>8</sup>

As a result of Pakistan's alignment with the United States and the flow of military and economic "aid"—accompanied by the militarization of Pakistan's political culture and the pursuance of a model of capitalist development—a handful of capitalist entrepreneurs came to control a large proportion of the country's wealth and the military became the paramount political force in the country. Pakistan, under Ayub Khan's rule, achieved significant economic growth and "political stability." However, the model of capitalist development had its contradictions, which were bound to negate the success achieved between 1958 and 1968.<sup>9</sup> In political terms, the "decade of development" not only sharpened the conflicts between the ruling groups and those outside the power structure, but created fissures within the ruling alliance itself.<sup>10</sup>

*1. Conflicts Between the Rulers and the Masses.* On the lands owned by the absentee landlords and not touched by the "green revolution," the peasants continued to groan under the traditional exploitation and oppression of the feudal lords. Population growth and increase in the prices of essential nonagricultural commodities, such as cloth, kerosene oil, and safety matches, added further impoverishment and misery to the lives of sharecroppers. During the later part of the Ayub era, the "green revolution" began to have its economic and social impact. The increase in agricultural production on the modernized farms and the consequent overall decline in farm prices adversely affected the poorer segments of rural society. An increasing number of agricultural laborers and sharecroppers were evicted from the land as a result of decreased demand for labor on the mechanized capital-intensive farms.<sup>11</sup> The small peasant-owner, who had not had the opportunity to modernize his farm, received less income for the same volume of production, while the landlord, who was responsible for the price decline, made up for it by producing and selling more. Because of their political influence and contacts with the bureaucracy, the landlords and the rich peasants were able to sell their products at the right time and price.<sup>12</sup> The governmental program of purchase, designed to stabilize prices, was also mainly used by the capitalist farmers and the big feudal lords. The poor peasants, sharecroppers, and agricultural laborers could see clearly that not

only the landlords but government policies and law-enforcing agencies were responsible for the multiplication of their hardships.

Through a policy of virtual wage freeze and a ban on labor strikes, the industrial working class was pauperized in direct proportion to the enrichment of the capitalists. These policies, added to the official repression of workers trying to form unions or to defy the strike ban, made it evident to the industrial proletariat that their aims had to transcend "economism" and brought them into the forefront of political struggle.

Some members of those lower rungs of the petty bourgeoisie who engaged in trade were ruined by governmental policies favoring the big bourgeoisie and by the mounting inflation during the Ayub era. Students, minor government employees, and other low-income white-collar workers with fixed incomes were seriously hurt by inflation and by lack of job opportunities for their family members. Wholesale corruption and nepotism in the government and the absence of civil liberties had thoroughly alienated the segment of the population known in Pakistani parlance as the "educated middle class," which consisted of professionals, teachers, students, managerial personnel, clerks, and junior functionaries in the civil service. The shameful surrender at Tashkent had profoundly shocked this segment of the petty bourgeoisie, especially in Karachi and Punjab,<sup>13</sup> which had always stood up for everything identified with Pakistan-Islam, self-determination for Kashmir, the Urdu language, and Allama Iqbal.<sup>14</sup> The upper segments of the petty bourgeoisie were also disenchanted with the regime because of its policies favoring the development of monopolies and the control of financial institutions by a closed group of industrialist-financiers who denied credit to the petty bourgeoisie.

One of the larger "groups" in the urban areas consists of the unemployed, semi-employed, beggars, part-time beggars, pimps, prostitutes, thieves, jugglers, street messengers, sidewalk palmists, knife-grinders, shoe-shine boys, and other casual workers generally known as the lumpen proletariat. The shortage of urban employment, the population growth, the fragmentation of small landholdings, and the eviction of tenants by the "green revolution" constantly add to this growing group. According to official government figures, one-fifth of the civilian labor force was out of work at the time of Ayub's fall; the actual figures must have been much larger. Indeed, during my visit

to West Pakistan in 1969 after five years' absence, the most startling change that I noticed was the stupendous growth of the beggar population and the enormous number of educated unemployed crowding cheap restaurants.<sup>15</sup>

*2. Conflicts Within the Ruling Circles.* The feudal lords, the richest class in the country at the time of independence, witnessed the growth of the urban bourgeoisie with envy. The feudal lords had joined the ruling coalition because of a lack of alternatives and were indebted to the bureaucracy and the army for keeping them in business; at the same time they resented the fact that the bourgeoisie always got preferential treatment from the army. The government policy of siphoning off agricultural surplus into private industries adversely affected not only the peasants, as pointed out by Richard Nations,<sup>16</sup> but also the landlords. The bourgeoisie, through its control of financial institutions, also prevented the landlords from becoming industrial capitalists. The feudal lords had one advantage over the bourgeoisie: they controlled a large population in the countryside because of their traditional power. The feudalists realized that that power could be harnessed at an appropriate time when the bourgeoisie faced a serious challenge from other segments in society.

Control of the commanding heights of the economy by twenty to twenty-five monopolist families was one of the most significant outcomes of the pattern of economic development pursued by the Ayub regime under American advice. The nonmonopoly sector, otherwise content with the regime's "pragmatic" policies and the inflow of American "aid," nonetheless resented the monopolistic control and therefore remained open to the possibility of alignment with groups that would challenge the monopolists. The swiftness with which they deserted Ayub's party after his fall and switched to the opposition parties was one indication of their uneasy alliance with the regime.

Although the bureaucracy had developed a symbiotic relationship with the bourgeoisie, a number of steps undertaken in the interests of the capitalists did not suit the interests of the bureaucrats. Many bureaucrats did not like the Ayub government's policy of "disinvestment," by which industries initiated at the expense of public capital were turned over to the private sector after their success. If these projects had remained under state control, the bureaucrats would have continued to be their directors. The capitalists could always win over the discontented bureaucrats by offering them jobs in their

industries or shares to their family members. Nevertheless, the slogan of nationalization remained quite attractive for certain sections of the bureaucracy.

State capitalism had had a strong appeal for many young military officers who blamed the capitalists for the country's misfortunes. Influenced by the Arab military regimes, some of them even privately suggested exemplary punishment for industrialists and traders. The same officers also held the bureaucrats responsible for corruption, inefficiency, and demoralization, and wanted to curb the powers of civil servants. It is not without significance that after the removal of Ayub Khan 304 senior bureaucrats were dismissed from the service. Those military officers who had tasted power considered these bureaucrats a hurdle in their attempt to establish the military's hegemony.

These sentiments were, of course, reciprocated by the bureaucrats. Control of certain government departments and autonomous bodies—for example, the health department, the National Shipping Corporation, and the Bureau of Natural Resources—by military officers certainly did not please the bureaucrats. The bureaucrats also observed with displeasure the fact that the members of the bourgeoisie had begun to view the army as the "ultimate authority." An industrialist failing to obtain a necessary favor from a bureaucrat could turn to a leading man in the military and have the bureaucrat's decision overruled. After their retirement, many bureaucrats went on to become business executives thanks to the friendships they had cultivated with the capitalists during their term of office. These civil servants now saw retired military officers competing with them, basically through the same mechanism. In some respects the military was building a parallel bureaucracy against the entrenched civil servants. For this reason, the demand for a return to parliamentary democracy voiced by the opposition had many sympathizers within the ranks of the bureaucracy.

In addition to the conflicts within the national ruling oligarchy, there were antagonisms between the national power structure and regional power groups. The military, which was politically paramount, was drawn largely from the Punjab province. The industrial capitalist class consisted almost entirely of Punjabis and Gujarati immigrants, settled in Karachi itself. Most of the bureaucrats came

from the Punjab and from among the Urdu-speaking refugees who had settled in Sind.

In order to operate as cohesive groups, the military and the bureaucracy pursued policies which kept the Sindhis, the Baluchis, and the Pathans away from influential positions in the military and the bureaucracy. Likewise, the business entrepreneurs from the minority provinces found it exceedingly difficult to obtain business and industrial licenses.

The feudal lords who had been co-opted into the ruling alliance under Ayub Khan were mainly Sindhi or Punjabi; but these feudalists were junior partners in the coalition. There were other landlords who were kept out of the national ruling oligarchy. Regionalism was the most convenient bargaining tool for these feudal lords.

The growth of capitalism had demanded an enlarged resource area and an integrated market. Thus, in 1955 it was decided to "integrate" the four provinces of West Pakistan into "one unit" and to concentrate power in the central government. These developments greatly aggravated regional tensions in the minority provinces. The petty bourgeoisie of Sind, Baluchistan, and Sarhad was particularly incensed by the policies of the central government, which denied them the opportunity to participate in the central civil and military services and systematically suppressed the regional cultures. The "intelligentsia" of Sind was particularly bitter about the regime's policies, especially that of eliminating the Sindhi language from the schools.

Thus, subordination of regional ruling groups to the national oligarchy, disparities in regional development, job discrimination against the petty bourgeoisie of the minority provinces, and the suppression of regional cultures led to the intensification of regional nationalism in Sind, Baluchistan, and Sarhad. Whereas Sind and Sarhad had their own sharp class conflicts and some representation in the national ruling oligarchy, nomadic Baluchistan had neither clear-cut class conflicts of its own nor any representation in the central government. As in East Bengal, all social strata of Baluchistan were united in their opposition to the national power structure. Led by the National Awami Party, the Baluchi nationalists were no less vehement in their demand for autonomy than the Bengalis of East Pakistan.<sup>17</sup>

*Emergence and Growth of the People's Party*

It is against this backdrop that the emergence and growth of the People's Party and the popularity of its leader, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, must be viewed. Bhutto and the handful of his friends in Ayub's Convention Muslim League clearly saw the forces that were emerging in the country. Joined by a small number of Marxist and non-Marxist leftists who were disillusioned with the National Awami Party, they formed the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) in 1967 and adopted a program that represented the interests of the petty bourgeoisie while simultaneously providing enough radical rhetoric for the consumption of the masses.

At the end of 1967 the PPP, under the influence of these elements, drafted a document that very crudely described the party's social-democratic program for solving the people's problems.

The document unhesitatingly named the Scandinavian social democracies as a model and even went so far as to praise capitalism as practiced in the United States and Western Europe:

In none of those [imperialist] countries is capitalism permitted to reign uncontrolled, and in several the public sector is very extensive indeed. Apart from that, they [the local apologists of capitalism] ignore what makes the Western countries attractive to the unbiased mind, which is the immense freedom enjoyed by the individual.<sup>18</sup>

For Pakistan, the PPP's recipe for "socialism" consisted of nationalizing the banks, insurance, heavy industry, the already partially nationalized communications, and energy resources. At the same time:

As for the private sector, it ought to flourish under conditions proper to private enterprise, that is, of competition, and not behind the shelter of high tariff walls or disguised subsidies. Only in that way can the efficient running of private enterprise be assured and the consumer protected from exploitation by monopolists.<sup>19</sup>

Further:

The private sector will play its own useful role in the kind of mixed economy envisaged, but will not be able to create monopolistic preserves.<sup>20</sup>

Once "socialism" has been established and the private sector has been given its rightful place, where does the worker fit in?

The workers will be encouraged to participate in the efficient running of the factories by appropriate incentives and will by law have the right to share in the profits of companies in [the] private sector.<sup>21</sup>

Furthermore:

It is obvious that the ILO principles which represent the decent norms of relations between the state, employers and employees, must be enforced, especially as they are in consonance with fundamentals of human rights.<sup>22</sup>

On the crucial land question, the single most important problem in West Pakistan, the party document made a sweeping remark that feudalism will be abolished "in accordance with the established principles of socialism,"<sup>23</sup> but did not specify the maximum landholding it would allow.<sup>24</sup>

As the opposition to the Ayub regime intensified and the competition with the old opposition parties became fierce, the rhetoric of the People's Party also escalated. Enchanted by Bhutto's slogans and attracted by his financial resources, a growing number of leftist intellectuals, journalists, poets, writers, and student leaders flocked toward the People's Party. Others saw a distinct national bourgeois tendency in the PPP. Objectively the petty bourgeoisie was in conflict with the monopolists entangled with imperialist capital. The pursuance of its class interests required a confrontation with imperialism; Bhutto's outbursts against the United States and his pronouncements in support of national liberation struggles<sup>25</sup> were viewed in this context. The hostility of the Johnson administration and the liberal Western press toward Bhutto confirmed the thesis that Bhutto was a genuine anti-imperialist against whom the Pakistani reactionaries, in complicity with imperialists, had ganged up. A series of harsh actions against Bhutto by the Ayub regime, including a frame-up, an assassination attempt, and the disruption of his rallies, reinforced the myth surrounding him.

In Pakistan's political context, Bhutto and his petty-bourgeois supporters represented a progressive force. They had spoken for the end of dictatorship, feudalism, and monopoly capitalism; they had demanded restoration of the freedom of press; they had provided op-

portunities to the leftist intellectuals, suppressed for too long, to express themselves again; and, above all, they had legitimized the slogan of socialism, which had been taboo in Pakistan.

Those who did not believe in the socialist *bona fides* of Bhutto conceded that it was at least possible to bring about a bourgeois-democratic revolution in cooperation with the forces represented by Bhutto.

The task of organizing the party at the grass roots was shouldered mainly by these leftist political workers and by the new cadres recruited by them. They spread out in the countryside and in the urban *mohallas* (neighborhoods) to organize the party. Organization of the party and mobilization of support for it required intense political education. This function was effectively performed by the leftist journalists and writers whom Bhutto had won over. On the model of the right-wing Jamaat-e-Islami, the PPP undertook an extensive program of publishing books, pamphlets, and posters. A Lahore weekly, *Nusrat*, was acquired by the party and entrusted to an experienced leftist journalist.<sup>26</sup> The party's leftist-operated propaganda machinery effectively portrayed the miserable plight of the masses, exposed the injustices and oppression of feudalism and capitalism, debunked right-wing propaganda, and projected a revolutionary image of the PPP and its leader. Mr. Bhutto chose the title of "Chairman" rather than that of "President," as was customary in Pakistani political parties. His leftist supporters equated him with Chairman Mao. One issue of *Nusrat* carried a picture of Bhutto shaking hands with Mao Tse-tung. The caption read: "Asia's two great leaders, Chairman Mao and Chairman Bhutto." Even a  $3\frac{1}{2}$ " by  $4\frac{1}{2}$ " book of quotations of Chairman Bhutto was published.<sup>27</sup> A rather awkward-sounding slogan—"Islam is our faith. Democracy is our policy. Socialism is our economy"—was designed to appeal to the various hopes, fears, and prejudices.

As a result of the downfall of Ayub Khan and his own uncompromising stand against the Round Table Conference, arranged by Ayub to divide the pie with the opposition parties, Bhutto emerged from the crisis of 1968-69 with greatly enhanced stature and unmatched popularity. For the first time in West Pakistan's politics, co-optation was rejected and confrontation had succeeded. The laurels for this feat went to Zulfikar Bhutto.

#### *Feudal Lords Join the PPP*

The disintegration of Ayub Khan's coalition and the discrediting of his Convention Muslim League presented a serious dilemma to the feudal politicians who had supported him. The immediate reaction in the Punjab was to join forces with the old feudal-bourgeois Council Muslim League of Mumtaz Daulatana, then in opposition. In the minority provinces, feudal restoration was sought behind the slogans of the petty-bourgeois-oriented regionalist movements. This was especially true in Sind, where there were many displaced landlords as well as an intense movement for the breakup of the "one unit" and for regional autonomy. Many landlords previously associated with Ayub joined hands with the veteran Sindhi nationalist, G. M. Sayed, to form the Sind United Front (SUF), whose emotive slogan of "*Jeeye Sind*" (Long live Sind) had created a strong wave of chauvinism and frightened the large non-Sindhi minority in the province.<sup>28</sup> Others were simply marking time to determine which way the wind was going to blow.

General Yahya Khan's decision to dissolve the "one unit" administrative structure in West Pakistan and restore the four original provinces took the wind out of the sails of the SUF. The PPP in the meantime had made significant inroads among the Sindhi students and done some spade work at the local level.<sup>29</sup> Given these facts, plus the parochial rivalries in Sind, Bhutto's prospects of winning over a large group of landlords appeared bright. By the middle of 1970 the PPP's popularity in Punjab had become undisputed and many fence-sitters had begun to jump on the party's bandwagon. In Sind, the People's Party's big break came when one of the two principal *pirs* (spiritual leaders), Makhdoom Mohammad Zaman Khan of Hala, a big landlord and a poet, who uses the nom de plume of Talibul Maula, declared himself for the PPP. Soon most of the politically influential feudal lords, including Sind's former ruling family, the Talpurs, who (with the exception of Mir Rasul Bux) had supported Ayub Khan, joined the People's Party. The remaining major landlords mobilized around Makhdoom's rival, *pir* Sikander Ali Shah of Pagaro, who supported Qayum Khan's Muslim League.

The decision of the landlords to forge a united front with the Pun-

jabi petty bourgeoisie under the banner of the People's Party cannot be fully explained either by the circumstances discussed above or by the vagueness of the PPP over the land question. There was at least one area in which the class interests of the landlords coincided with those of the petty bourgeoisie. Both were victims of the monopoly capitalists. Both wanted to have easy access to credit, foreign exchange, and licenses. Many landlords had already realized that feudalism had no future and that industries were a more efficient way of accumulating wealth. If they could seize state power, weaken the monopolies, exercise control over the financial institutions, and acquire industrial and trade licenses, there would be little to prevent them from transforming themselves into industrial capitalists. Given these desiderata, land reforms would be complementary, not antagonistic, to their interests since compensation received for the lands surrendered could be invested in more lucrative factories and businesses.<sup>30</sup> This process of voluntary liquidation of landed properties and conversion of landlords into industrial capitalists has already been witnessed in Latin America.

#### *The PPP, the Military, and the Bureaucracy*

Fear—real and imaginary—of India and the aim of “liberating” Kashmir have been the main rationalizations for the growth of the Pakistani military. Among the civilian leaders, none had advocated the military's case more intelligently than the PPP chief, Zulfikar Bhutto. During the 1965 war he had implored the people to continue fighting India for a thousand years and to eat grass in order to continue arming the military. His book, *The Myth of Independence*,<sup>31</sup> is essentially an exposition of his chauvinistic and jingoistic politics. In it, he wrote:

Pakistan's security and territorial integrity are more important than economic development. Although such development and self-reliance contribute to the strengthening of the nation's defence capability, the defence requirements of her sovereignty have to be met first.<sup>32</sup>

Bhutto's advocacy of establishing an “industrial war base”<sup>33</sup> and developing a “nuclear deterrent” against India<sup>34</sup> could not but fall on receptive ears in the military. In fact there was considerable support for the PPP among some in-service army officers, and a large

number of retired officers had joined the party.<sup>35</sup> Bhutto's opposition to the Tashkent declaration won him many admirers among the junior military officers who, like the Punjabi public, felt very bitter at the fact that the top brass had had numerous majors, captains, and lieutenants massacred because of its own strategic blunders in the 1965 war and that it had no moral courage to stand up to the big powers.

The People's Party's slogan of nationalization was received enthusiastically by a good many bureaucrats who saw in this scheme an opportunity to exercise greater control over the means of production. Mr. Bhutto's jibes against the *kamora shahi* (bureaucracy) notwithstanding, the bureaucracy as a whole had nothing to fear from him.<sup>36</sup> A party whose lifeblood comes from the so-called “educated middle class” can never be averse to the bureaucracy. After all, the children of the bureaucrats join the ranks of the “educated middle class,” and almost every male member of the “educated middle class” aspires to become a CSP (Civil Service of Pakistan) officer before reaching his twenty-fifth birthday. And, above all, state capitalism strengthens, rather than weakens, the power of the bureaucracy.

#### *The New Coalition Replaces the Old*

The People's Party thus succeeded in pulling together the forces alienated by the Ayub regime: the petty bourgeoisie of Punjab and Karachi; the “progressive” landlords of Sind, lower Punjab, and parts of Sarhad; and the disgruntled members of the military and bureaucracy. Not only was the party's program in their interest, but Mr. Bhutto gave repeated assurances to these groups that their vested interests would be protected. To the vast mass of the alienated and exploited people—the peasants, the workers, and the lumpen proletariat—the PPP was sold as a revolutionary socialist party that was bent upon “tumbling the thrones and tossing the crowns.”<sup>37</sup> They were told that every trace of feudalism and capitalism would be eliminated, that the fields would belong to the tillers and the factories to the workers, and that every exploiter would have to be answerable to the people's court.<sup>38</sup> In short, there was no revolutionary slogan or cliché which was not used by the PPP leaders and cadres.

In Punjab, where the leftist cadres had done splendid work of grassroots organization and where there was no competing regional-

ist movement,<sup>39</sup> the masses, looking at their own objective conditions, at the brutal repression of the PPP by the ruling oligarchy, and at the sincerity of the party workers, were taken in by the radical rhetoric. They voted massively for the PPP and gave it a landslide victory in both the National and Provincial Assemblies. In Sind, where political education and organization of the masses had not progressed so well, the PPP owed its success to the traditional hold of the landlords over the peasants.

To ensure control by feudal lords and the petty bourgeoisie, democracy within the party was disallowed.<sup>40</sup> Top positions were arbitrarily assigned by Mr. Bhutto to the representatives of the propertied classes. The 18-member central committee, named by Bhutto, included only three persons—S. M. Rashid, Mairaj M. Khan, and M. Haneef Ramay—who could be considered leftist by any definition. Similarly, party tickets for the elections were awarded almost exclusively to the rich members. In Punjab, of the sixty-three PPP members elected to the National Assembly, only two, Sheikh Rashid and Mukhtar Rana, represent the peasants and workers. In Sind, all of the nineteen NA members from the PPP are either landlords or belong to aristocratic families.

The party's wealthy leadership also worked out deals with landlords of other parties whereby the PPP did not contest certain constituencies, or, if it did contest, did not campaign wholeheartedly in behalf of its own candidates. The most blatant exposure of such deals came when Mr. Bhutto went to Multan to campaign for himself but refused to visit nearby Vehari, where a new PPP stalwart, Taj Mohammad Lengah, was effectively challenging Mr. Daulatana, the old guru of the Punjabi feudal politicians.<sup>41</sup>

#### *The Monopolists React*

As has been noted, it was only the monopoly capitalists who had to fear the forces gathering under the banner of the PPP. Due to the peculiar conditions of postindependence Pakistan and as a consequence of the imperialist domination of the country, Pakistan's capitalists had progressed rather rapidly and without the paraphernalia of the bourgeois order. They had not even felt the need to build an effective political party of their own: the military and the bureaucracy had provided them the necessary cover. Now, when the military

and the bureaucracy had yielded to the popular demand for the restoration of parliamentary democracy, the big monopoly capitalists panicked. They attempted to prevent the elections but failed. In the elections, although thirty right-wing candidates, over whom the big bourgeoisie could maintain some sort of control, were elected to an NA of 300 members, both members of the "big twenty-two" families who contested the elections, Saeed Haroon and Rafique Saigal, were soundly defeated. The immediate reaction of the bourgeoisie to the election results was to panic: the stock market declined, prices went up, and capital began to fly out of the country.<sup>42</sup> A series of actions by the big capitalists and their agents indicated that there was a conspiracy to prevent the restoration of democracy.<sup>43</sup> To many leftist critics of the PPP, this may sound pretty far-fetched. But an understanding of the narrow political base of Pakistan's big bourgeoisie, an appreciation of the nature of the conflict between the big bourgeoisie and the "emergent bourgeoisie" of the PPP, and an examination of the events taking place between December 8, 1970, and March 25, 1971, would confirm the assertion that Pakistan's big bourgeoisie felt seriously threatened by the specter of the West Pakistani petty bourgeoisie marching into its monopoly preserves.<sup>44</sup>

#### *The Petty Bourgeoisie Retreats*

Given a transfer of power under normal conditions, with industries still holding out the promise of big profit, the PPP, in all likelihood, would have made an earnest attempt to implement its social-democratic program. The result would have been a state-owned and state-operated economic infrastructure supporting the competitive capitalism of the petty bourgeoisie. In order to understand the dynamics of state capitalism we need not go very far: the experience of our neighbor, India, is an eye-opener (see the table on the next page).<sup>45</sup>

Unfortunately, Pakistan's industrial sector is not in a very happy state at the moment. In fact, the country as a whole rests on very shaky foundations. The bourgeoisie—both entrenched and emergent—is in the lowest of spirits. Pakistan's economy has never recovered since the uprising against Ayub Khan. The accompanying table summarizes the economic conditions which obtained at the time of the start of the Bengal genocide. The prolongation of the military occupation of East Bengal not only cost the exchequer an average

*Economic Indicators*

Gross National Product, 1969-70 (at present market exchange rate)	\$5,000 million (approx.)
Total external debt at the time of Bengal operation	\$4,600 million
Annual rate of increase in GNP, 1968-69	5.2%
Annual rate of increase in GNP, 1970-71	1.4%
Annual rate of population growth before the massacre	3.0% (approx.)
Foreign exchange reserves at the time of Bengal operation	\$184 million
Foreign exchange earning, 1967-68	\$800 million
Average annual flow of foreign economic aid	\$500 million
Planned imports, 1970-71	\$1,900 million
External debt service, 1968-69	\$141 million
External debt service, 1969-70	\$150 million
External debt service, due at the time of Bengal operation	\$210 million
Debt service as part of foreign exchange earning, 1960-61	3.6%
Debt service as part of foreign exchange earning, 1969-70	20%

Sources: *Pakistan Yearbook 1969; Interim Reports of Pakistan Embassy in Washington*, September 1969 and June-July 1971; A. T. Chaudhri, "Pakistan's Crippling Burden of Foreign Debt," *Atlas*, November 1970.

monthly sum of \$30-40 million but deprived West Pakistan of revenues, foreign exchange, and a market for its manufactured goods. The shrinking of markets and the shortage of foreign exchange seriously affected production in West Pakistan, where several thousand workers were laid off.<sup>46</sup> The military defeat at the hands of India and the de facto establishment of Bangladesh completed the severance of the parasitic link between West Pakistan and East Bengal. All West Pakistani assets in Bangladesh have now been nationalized.<sup>47</sup>

The major economic consequences of the separation of East Bengal for West Pakistan are:

1. The GNP has been reduced by at least 45 percent, not counting the downward economic trend in West Pakistan itself.
2. At least a 50 percent reduction in export earnings has occurred,

again not counting the reduced capacity for earning foreign exchange in West Pakistan. This means a drastic (at least 40 percent) reduction in foreign exchange available for the importation of capital goods and industrial raw materials. West Pakistan earned, at most, 50 percent of united Pakistan's foreign exchange and spent at least 70 percent of it.

3. The loss of East Bengal implies the loss of markets for Rs. 1.7 billion worth of West Pakistani goods annually, including approximately 40 percent of West Pakistan's manufactured goods. Even if alternate markets are found in the Middle East, there will be no incentive to expand such industries as cotton textiles.

4. It will be necessary to spend Rs. 550 million annually in foreign exchange to purchase tea, jute, and paper, assuming that no foreign exchange is spent on Rs. 200 million worth of other commodities that were purchased every year from East Bengal.

5. Repayment of the nearly \$5 billion owed to foreign creditors of Pakistan must now come from West Pakistan's resources alone.<sup>48</sup>

6. West Pakistan must now bear a tremendous burden of military expenditure, the defense budget of undivided Pakistan being roughly 5 percent higher than the total revenues of West Pakistan.

7. Since the ratio of West to East Pakistanis in the civil service was more than four to one, about half the civil service personnel of West Pakistani origin are now surplus and must be re-absorbed in West Pakistan.

To all these must be added the economic disaster in West Pakistan, which was an inevitable outcome of the colonial type of relationship between the two parts of Pakistan and the incredibly stupid policies of the military regime.

Given this economic picture, plus the military and diplomatic vulnerability of a truncated, weakened, and demoralized Pakistan, Pakistan's new rulers will have to take great risks to implement their program. Aside from a revolutionary restructuring of the society, there is no way for Pakistan to pull itself up by its bootstraps. Such a change is certainly not in the interest of the classes in power. They must seek the easiest remedy for their troubles, i.e., imperialist "aid."

In order to put the West Pakistani economy back into shape, it will require as much as \$1.5 billion per year in foreign "aid" for the next several years. The social consequences of this "economic recov-

ery" are not likely to be very different from what Pakistan has already witnessed. Nevertheless, the petty bourgeoisie, true to its class character, cannot find a better way of coping with its problems.

Mr. Bhutto's comment that a new era in friendship with the United States has opened and that a new era in business relations with the U.S. is going to start,<sup>49</sup> in addition to the government's repeated assurances to foreign investors, is indicative of the dilemma of the "national" bourgeoisie, which had fed the people with anti-imperialist slogans during the elections. The same Mr. Bhutto who was incensed at America's failure to support Pakistan in 1965<sup>50</sup> has only praise for America when it did essentially the same thing while Pakistan was being dismembered in 1971. Today he appears reluctant to pull Pakistan out of SEATO and CENTO, against which he campaigned so vociferously between 1966 and 1970.

Domestically, the imperialist pressure and the "emergent bourgeoisie's" own lack of self-confidence will mean going back on its manifesto. Instead of nationalizing many industries and all financial institutions, as promised in the party manifesto, the government has taken over the management—not the ownership—of a handful of industries. Instead of breaking the monopolies, it has only attempted to curb the "political" influence of the big capitalists.<sup>51</sup> Instead of breaking the imperialist stranglehold over Pakistan's economy, it is inviting foreign investment.<sup>52</sup> Instead of forcing management to honor contracts made with the workers, it is urging the workers to desist from *gheraoing* (besieging) the bosses.<sup>53</sup>

Since the industries have lost their attraction—at least for the time being—the landlord faction in the PPP does not appear very enthusiastic about land reform. There are neither the investment opportunities of 1968 nor funds in the state coffers to pay immediate compensation for lands. The banks and insurance companies do not have sufficient deposits to advance much credit to the "emergent bourgeoisie." It is no accident that Bhutto, who is rationalizing martial law in the name of reforms, has had to wait three months to announce his much-publicized land reforms. It would be unwise to pre-judge the land reform bill. It will probably be out before the publication of this article and should be analyzed carefully. At the moment, we must make two observations on the land reform question: (1) many landlords have already transferred some of their land to their relatives and loyal tenants; others are trying to complete their deals

before the reforms are announced, and (2) the average maximum limit of 150 acres, proposed by the PPP during the elections, will hurt very few landlords and benefit few peasants.

The petty bourgeoisie's nervousness is manifested not only in its response to imperialism and in its economic policies but in its entire political conduct. During the past five years it vehemently opposed martial law and dictatorship, and demanded representative government. Today, when given the opportunity, it prefers to rule by martial law rather than by people's mandate. A year ago it opposed the idea of the majority party alone forming the central government on the grounds that the Awami League had no support in West Pakistan. Today, it attempts to rule all four provinces of West Pakistan when it has no mandate in two of them. Despite its proclamation about amnesty, it continues to hold political prisoners<sup>54</sup> and even makes fresh arbitrary arrests.<sup>55</sup> Instead of pardoning, or showing leniency to, the "outlaws" who want to surrender and live decent lives, it raises the price on their heads.<sup>56</sup> Instead of dissolving the notorious National Press Trust, as promised during the elections, it uses the Trust to its own advantage by installing its cronies in it.<sup>57</sup> Instead of purging the corrupt bureaucrats—which any liberal government would do to win the confidence of the people—it resuscitates the old hacks of the bureaucracy.<sup>58</sup>

It is difficult to think of an elected party anywhere in the world which so rapidly exposed its lack of faith in the people, which refused to rule by popular mandate, and which did not even make a feeble attempt to assert its independence and self-confidence. This nervousness about, and lack of confidence in, the democratic process also explains why, despite the exploding of the military's myth, only a handful of "fat and flabby" (read: anti-Bhutto) generals were fired and why the military as an institution escaped criticism, let alone firing. The nervous petty bourgeoisie's most reliable ally is the "new" military, which most likely will try to rebuild itself on a Nasserite or a Gaddafite model. Pakistan's military vulnerability will again be used to justify the remilitarization of the country, unless the big powers, on whose "charity" the fate of Pakistan's capitalists depends, prevent it for their own reasons.

The performance of the Bhutto government must not be judged in terms of Bhutto's "dictatorial personality" or of the behavioral attributes of the "new breed" of politicians who surround him. What

has happened so far and what is likely to happen must be viewed in the context of the class interests of the people in power, the specific conditions obtaining in Pakistan, the dilemma faced by the new rulers, and the options open to them. The ultimate limit to the options is set by their class interests.

Pakistan cannot become independent, united, and prosperous without eliminating the causes of dependence, disunity, and impoverishment. In order to eradicate the roots of these evils it will be necessary to destroy the social arrangements which institutionalize them and the social groups which perpetuate and profit from them. Such an undertaking is certainly not on the agenda of Pakistan's present rulers. What was originally on the agenda of the PPP cannot be fully realized due to the conditions created by the Yahya dictatorship and Pakistan's military defeat. To do so would exact a price from the "emergent bourgeoisie" which it is unwilling to pay.

One may then ask what specifically the new rulers will or will not do. Without making claims to prophecy or prediction, we can safely say that the new rulers *will not even attempt* to bring about the equality and justice they have repeatedly promised. They will not sever the links with imperialism or take an independent posture in foreign policy. They will not attempt to demilitarize Pakistan. They will not curb the privileges and power of the capitalists or the landlords—especially the kulaks, the military officers, and the bureaucrats. They will not do away with the repressive laws which allow detention without trial. They will not restore the complete freedom of expression which they have been demanding for themselves.

They will attempt to do a number of things in which they are not likely to succeed—for example, stopping the eviction of peasants and the victimization of factory workers, reforming the educational system, providing elementary education and basic health care to as many people as possible, reducing unemployment, and streamlining the judicial system.

The new government is likely to succeed in the following areas: collection of taxes from the super-rich, prevention of investment in luxury goods, equitable access to credit for all capitalists, prevention of further growth of monopolies, partial substitution of technocrats for generalist bureaucrats, and more effective government control over the banks and insurance.

Because of the pressure of the masses in the streets or of the PPP's

probable coalition partners, the NAP and the Jamiat-ul-Ulema-e-Islam, many things may happen contrary to expectations. By and large, however, the above picture is likely to hold.

#### Notes

1. Z. A. Bhutto, "Address to the Hyderabad Convention, September 21, 1968," in *Let the People Judge* (Pakistan People's Party, Lahore, March 1969).
2. *Dawn* (Karachi), December 31, 1971.
3. *Dawn*, January 8, 9, and 10, 1972.
4. Voice of American broadcast, January 9, 1972.
5. For a graphic account of the events of 1968–69, see Tariq Ali, *Pakistan: Military Rule or People's Power?* (William Morrow and Co., New York, 1970).
6. *The Observer*, July 24, 1971.
7. For a general review of Pakistan's ruling structure at the time of its independence, see Tariq Ali, op. cit.; for an analysis of the military and bureaucracy as semi-autonomous forces in Pakistan, see Hamza Alavi, "Military and Bureaucracy in Pakistan," *International Socialist Journal*, March–April 1966 (revised version to be published).
8. The military's decision to unleash terror in East Pakistan, despite the West Pakistani capitalists' conciliatory attitude toward the Awami League, is the most glaring example of such conflicts; see Feroz Ahmed, "The Structural Matrix of the Struggle in Bangladesh," in this volume. Subordination of specialized technocrats to "generalist" bureaucrats is another example of the interests of the bureaucrat being given precedence over those of the capitalist, which demand the most effective employment of all available skills.
9. For an analysis of the contradictory aspects of capitalist development in Pakistan, see Arthur MacEwan, "Contradictions of Capitalist Development: The Case of Pakistan," *The Review of Radical Political Economics*, Spring 1971 (abstract published in *Pakistan Forum*, October–November 1970).
10. The conflicts between the West Pakistani rulers and the classes in East Pakistan will not be dealt with here; for a discussion of this, see Feroz Ahmed, op. cit.
11. *Pakistan Forum*, December 1970–January 1971, p. 11.
12. Mechanization of agriculture took place on the large farms of some of the feudal lords as well as on the lands owned by the rich peasants and retired military and civil officers who turned to farming. According to Alavi, the consequences of mechanization were much more severe on

- the lands of the rich farmers than on those owned by the old big landlords; see Hamza Alavi, "Elite Farmer Strategy and Regional Disparities in the Agricultural Development in Pakistan," in Stevens, Alavi, and Bertocci (eds.), *Rural Development in Pakistan* (to be published).
13. The petty bourgeoisie of the minority provinces of West Pakistan, like its counterpart in East Bengal, was preoccupied with regional nationalism and demanded regional autonomy, proportional allocation of resources and jobs to the provinces, and guarantees for the protection of regional languages and cultures. It has usually been sympathetic to the Bengalis and has been less vulnerable to religious bigotry.
  14. The famous Urdu poet from Punjab (often compared with Nietzsche), who allegedly first dreamed of Pakistan.
  15. An Association of Unemployed Graduates has recently been formed in Karachi, enrolling 1,000 members instantly; see *Dawn*, January 11, 1972.
  16. Richard Nations, "The Economic Structure of Pakistan: Class and Colony," *New Left Review*, No. 68.
  17. Armed revolts were staged on a number of occasions by Baluchi nationalists, but were mercilessly crushed by the Pakistan army. The major crackdown of Baluchi dissidents during Ayub's times was conducted by General Tikka Khan, who later acquired the notoriety of being the "butcher of Bengal" for the carnage he organized in East Pakistan. The reports of Baluchi insurrections and the army crackdowns never appeared in the Pakistani press. In Hyderabad (Sind), I had the occasion to talk with a physician who had examined the bodies of "dozens of tall, 18- to 25-year-old handsome Baluchis." The doctor told me that these incidents had generated a wave of sympathy for the Baluchi resistance fighters and intense hatred for Ayub and his cronies in Sind.
  18. Pakistan People's Party, *Foundation and Policy* (Lahore, 1968).
  19. Ibid.
  20. Ibid.
  21. Ibid.
  22. Ibid.
  23. Ibid.
  24. Throughout his election campaign, Mr. Bhutto, while constantly attacking feudalism and capitalism, cleverly evaded the land question. In his privileged election speech on television, he promised distribution of government land to the landless peasants but made no mention of the private lands (*Dawn*, November 19, 1970). The party manifesto was so ambiguous on the land ceiling to be allowed by the PPP that Mr. M. A. Kasuri, Vice-President of the party, issued a clarification that the maximum landholding to be permitted was 150 acres, and not 50 acres as many PPP workers thought (*Dawn*, December 18, 1970).

25. Besides many public statements of this nature, his anti-imperialist pronouncements appear in his two works: *The Myth of Independence* (Oxford University Press, Karachi, 1969) and *Pakistan and the Alliances* (Pakistan People's Party, 1969).
26. In the wake of the *Nusrat's* success, the same journalist launched a daily paper, *Mussawat* (Equality), which overnight became immensely popular. Several other daily and weekly publications were later started by the PPP in different cities in West Pakistan.
27. Kaleem Nishtar (compiler), *Chairman Bhutto Ke Aqual Aur Afkar* (Sayings and Thoughts of Chairman Bhutto) (Maktaba Alia, Lahore, 1969).
28. The fears of the non-Sindhi minority were exploited by the right-wing pseudo-religious parties representing the interests of the colons who were given lands as a reward for playing the fifth column for Ayub's clique.
29. The People's Party took no effective stand against the "one unit." However, once it was dissolved, it accepted the fait accompli and tried to take maximum advantage of the changed situation.
30. A number of landlord supporters of the PPP had already invested money in industries and trade. For example, Hakim Zardari, who was later elected to the National Assembly, owned several cinema houses in Karachi and other urban properties. The Talpurs have a textile mill in Hyderabad and other industrial assets. A detailed profile of the PPP leaders—with information on their landed, business, and industrial assets—would be of great interest and use in explaining the policies of the Bhutto regime.
31. Bhutto, op. cit.
32. Ibid., p. 152.
33. Ibid.
34. Ibid., p. 153.
35. Several retired colonels, majors, and captains were awarded PPP tickets to run for the National and Provincial Assemblies. The People's Party's popularity among the in-service officers could be judged from the fact that a novice of this party defeated a former chief of the air force by better than a 2-to-1 margin in Rawalpindi city, headquarters of the Pakistan army. The PPP also captured most of the Provincial Assembly seats in the Rawalpindi district, including the riding (administrative district) of the military cantonment.
36. The tally of absentee ballots cast by the on-duty bureaucrats showed an overwhelming vote for the PPP candidates. The only bureaucrat to join a political party, Mr. Mazari, was to join the PPP. Mr. M. M. Ahmed, who acted as Yahya Khan's Rasputin in the Bengal operation, was simultaneously Mr. Bhutto's adviser. He has been now given new responsibilities by President Bhutto. The new regime has so far not touched the

- bureaucracy despite many utterances about the "conspiracies of the bureaucrats."
37. See, for example, the banner line of the December 5, 1970, issue of the party's official organ, *Mussawat*.
38. *Mussawat*, December 7, 1970.
39. In the minority provinces the regionalists, using Punjab as a scapegoat, were quite successful in channelling the militancy of the masses into the nationalist movements. In Punjab, the age-old slogan of "Islam in danger" was used by the reactionaries to distract the masses from class struggle. By prefixing socialism with "Islamic," the People's Party effectively defused the right-wing propaganda that socialism was the antithesis of Islam.
40. The visible split in the People's Party at the local level all over the Punjab since March 1971 has been mainly over the issue of internal government and party elections. A small faction, led by MNA-elect Ahmed Raza Qasuri, unsuccessfully attempted to challenge Bhutto's dictatorial methods. The left-wing faction, led by MNA-elect Mukhtar Rana, has recently launched a drive for democracy within the party and in the country. As a result of these demands at the grassroots, Bhutto has increasingly been drawn toward the right wing of the party. In fact, in recent months, he has recruited dozens of reactionary tribal leaders in Baluchistan and Sarhad and assigned them the task of reorganizing the party.
41. No such "adjustments" were, however, offered to the recognized leaders of the working class and to other known leftist candidates. In Multan, Mr. Bhutto decided to run himself rather than give the ticket to Babu Ferozuddin Ansari, the leader of the weavers, despite the fact that Mr. Bhutto was running from five other constituencies. In Lahore, the veteran leader of the railway workers, Mirza Ibrahim, was opposed and soundly defeated by a rich engineer of the PPP, Dr. Mubashar Hassan, who is now Finance Minister of Pakistan. In Karachi, because of rank-and-file pressure, the party decided not to run a candidate against Mrs. Kaneez Fatima, a militant labor leader. But I have been told on good authority that the PPP workers campaigned for a right-wing candidate, Mufti Mohammad Shafi, on the pretext that Kaneez Fatima had no chance and that in order to ensure the defeat of another ultra-rightist it was necessary to support Mufti Shafi. The revolutionary poet Habib Jalib, running on the ticket of the NAP, was also opposed and beaten by an unknown PPP candidate. In Sarhad province, the PPP's intransigence resulted in the defeat of the NAP and the victory of the right-wing Muslim League in several constituencies, despite the fact that the NAP withdrew its candidate to enable the PPP province chief, Sherpao, to win a seat in the provincial assembly.

42. *Pakistan Forum*, February-March 1971.
43. See, for example, reports appearing in Karachi's *Daily News*, January 11 and March 18, 1971, and an article by Mazhar Ali Khan in *Forum* (Dacca), January 16, 1971.
44. The intrigues against the People's Party did not stop on March 25, 1971. The Yahya regime's attempts to impose an artificial right-wing majority (see *Pakistan Forum*, October and November 1971) were undoubtedly received by the big capitalists with enthusiasm.
45. See Paresh Chattopadhyay, "State Capitalism in India," *Monthly Review*, March 1970.
46. According to a "conservative" estimate of the conservative Karachi daily *Dawn* (January 6, 1972), at least 45,000 workers were laid off in Karachi alone since the imposition of Yahya's martial law.
47. This action has affected almost all of Pakistan's big capitalists, including a PPP supporter, M. M. Ispahani, who had most of his capital invested in East Pakistan.
48. There is a good possibility that the petty-bourgeois government of Bangladesh, now desperately begging for imperialist "aid," may agree to repay a portion of this debt in return for fresh loans from the World Bank and other agencies. The international creditors, who are capable of exercising "leverage" on the Bangladesh government, will find this arrangement more practical—if not fair—in recovering the money owed by Pakistan.
49. *Dawn*, January 3, 1972.
50. Bhutto, op. cit.
51. Bhutto's interview with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, January 23, 1972.
52. *Dawn*, January 3, 1972.
53. *Dawn*, January 4, 1972.
54. Afzal Bangash and other leaders of the Kisan-Mazdoor Party, who were incarcerated by the Yahya gang, were not released by the new regime until a month after the release of other detainees, during which a nationwide campaign for their release was launched. Ghulam Jilani, a former Awami League leader, is still illegally detained.
55. Jam Saqi, a peasant leader of Sind, was recently apprehended under a martial law regulation (*Dawn*, January 15, 1972).
56. Mubeen Dahri, a peasant of Nawabshah district, who was driven to "banditry" by the cruelties and exploitation of the landlords, recently wrote to the President of the Sind People's Party that he would like to live a decent life if given amnesty (*Dawn*, January 14, 1972). The government replied by raising the price on his head from Rs. 5,000 to Rs. 15,000 (*Dawn*, January 16, 1972).

57. Yunus Saeed, editor of the People's Party's Karachi weekly, *Combat*, was made the chairman of the infamous Press Trust which controls several large daily papers.
58. Two notorious pro-American bureaucrats, Aziz Ahmed and G. Ahmed, brothers and former ambassadors to Washington, were among the first beneficiaries of the Bhutto regime; they were called from retirement to head the foreign office and to "reform" the police.

## Part II

### The Roots of Struggle in the Villages

## 5. Revolutionary Movements in Ceylon

Jayasumana Obeysekara

Ceylon covers about 25,000 square miles and has a population of 12.5 million. The south-central part of the island, called the "up country," forms a massif rising to 8,000 feet. The contrasting "low country" comprises the northern part of the island together with a coastal belt of varying width.

The hill country has been a fortress against invasion. The Portuguese and the Dutch, who occupied the maritime provinces in 1505 and 1683, respectively, never wrested control of it from the Sinhala kings. The British, who finally annexed the Kandyan kingdom located in the uplands, did so by intrigue rather than military combat.

Ceylon's strategic position in the Indian Ocean invited its occupation; indeed, the British initially occupied it while fighting the French in the French revolutionary and Napoleonic wars. There were British air and naval bases in Ceylon until 1956. Recently, there has been renewed interest among imperialist powers in the "security" of the Indian Ocean. The Russian naval presence and the "communist threat" were among the reasons given for Britain's decision to sell arms to South Africa. Meanwhile revolutionary struggle has advanced in Southeast Asia and imperialism is internally threatened in Southern Asia as a whole. Ceylon's strategic location may invite yet another occupation. The American and British governments have already supplied arms and equipment to bolster up the government, but such indirect assistance may not suffice to prevent the collapse of capitalist rule.

### Socioeconomy

During the 152 years of their rule (1796–1948), the British transformed the socioeconomic system. Their impact differed from that of

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the Portuguese and the Dutch, who barely tampered with indigenous social relations: the British destroyed the largely self-sufficient agricultural economy. They introduced systematic cultivation of commercial crops such as tea, rubber, and coffee, and created a predominantly export-import economy. They confiscated peasant land and sold it to British planters for as little as a shilling an acre.

The British who took away peasant lands expected the peasants to become wage workers on their tea and coffee plantations. The peasants, however, resisted, so that the British were obliged to bring in indentured laborers from South India. In non-plantation villages, the imposition of capitalist property relations meant that traditional services rendered by various birth-status groups to the community at large could no longer be adequately fulfilled. No one, for example, remained responsible for maintaining the dams and canals which irrigated the dry zone of the country—the granary of Ceylon.

In such ways the British disrupted Ceylonese society. The changes they effected still dominate the country's economic and political life. Ceylon's commercial economy is today largely dependent on the export of tea, which accounts for almost two-thirds of its foreign exchange earnings.<sup>1</sup> A country which exported rice before the advent of the Europeans now imports more than half this staple food. In the last ten years, Ceylon's balance-of-payments situation has deteriorated precipitously because of the continual decline of world market tea prices.

Ceylon produces two other principal commercial crops. With the development of synthetic processes, rubber, now sold mainly to the People's Republic of China, has become less important. Coconut and its by-products form the third significant export crop.

In addition to export crops oriented to the needs of imperialism, the Ceylonese grow subsistence crops for internal consumption, using mainly traditional techniques. Few finished products are manufactured, although some service industries closely linked to the export of primary products have created a small urban working class. Local property owners have recently tried to establish light industries, e.g., biscuit manufacturing. The governments of the past eighteen years have also exploited differences between the imperialist countries and the workers' states to obtain long-term loans and "aid" to establish small assembly plants for cars and bicycles and factories for tires and textiles. These changes do not, however, alter the fundamental char-

acter of Ceylon's economy. The most important development in the last twenty-five years has been in rural areas, where the proportion of agricultural workers and, in general, of the landless poor has steadily increased.<sup>2</sup> One reason for this is that the native bourgeoisie has invested much of its profits in cultivable land and in building, which involved buying up the land of small and poor peasants. Growing rural indebtedness has also accelerated this process.

#### *Culture, Religion, and Caste*

Ceylon has two main ethnic groups, the Sinhala and the Tamils. The Sinhala people make up about 71 percent of the population; the Tamils, about 21 percent. The Tamils include the "Ceylon Tamils," who began to arrive at least 2,000 years ago, and the "Indian Tamils," who were brought from South India by the British to work on the tea plantations. There are few cultural differences between the Ceylon Tamils (about 1.5 million, who chiefly inhabit the northern and eastern regions) and the plantation workers (about 1 million). The latter are, however, not legal citizens of Ceylon and were disenfranchised in 1950. A large majority of these plantation workers are stateless persons who do not enjoy even basic civil rights. They are the most oppressed sector of the Ceylonese wage-working class.

Among other minorities we find the Muslims, who constitute about 5 percent of the people, and the Burghers, who number about 50,000. The Muslims descend from unions between Arab and Indian immigrants and native people. The Burghers descend from Dutch and Portuguese settlers and, together with a small proportion of the Sinhala and Tamil peoples, make up the Christian community.

Buddhism is the predominant religion. The great majority of the Sinhala people are Buddhists; most Tamils are Hindus.

The caste system differs from that of India. It is not rigidly observed except in the more conservative Tamil areas, and is declining in significance in Ceylon today.

The native bourgeoisie as well as the colonial masters have used ethnic and religious differences skillfully to divide and disorient the working class. Both the United National Party and the Sri Lanka Freedom Party governments have nurtured anti-Tamil ethnocentrism. These pseudo-racial prejudices have been primarily directed at the Tamil plantation workers. Not only have they been disenfran-

chised, but successive governments have played on the theme of "Ceylonization" of the economy. The notorious pact between Mrs. Bandaranaike and the late Indian Prime Minister Shastri, in which they agreed to deport 300,000 of these workers to India without consultation with any of them, is one example how the wrath of unemployed Sinhalese has been used against this most oppressed section of the people.

#### *Dilemma of the Brown Sahebs*

The British government, having "considered the well-being of the native people of Ceylon, and noting that they had reached a sufficient level of development to undertake responsibility for their internal affairs," granted independence in 1948. A parliamentary system on the British model was introduced. In fact, the British simply realized they could not hold back the colonial revolution throughout South Asia. They could only make the best of an unhappy situation.

A Marxist opposition (the Lanka Sama Samaja Party), which had emerged from World War II with mass support and nationwide popularity, was the only organized anti-imperialist force in the country. Unlike India, where the bourgeoisie, led by Nehru and Gandhi, spearheaded the nationalist movement, in Ceylon it was almost completely tied to its imperialist patrons. There were, here and there, individual Buddhist nationalists who opposed British imperialism, but the overwhelming majority of the propertied class worked within the system, petitioning the imperialists for the right to rule.

Therefore the problem for the British Raj was not whether political power should be transferred to their local junior partners, but whether these partners would be capable of safeguarding British interests. The British had to take the risk, but they retained air and naval bases on the island as a provision for direct intervention should the situation go out of control.

The average Ceylonese had a higher standard of living than most of his neighbors. Ceylon's bourgeoisie was thus initially in a stronger position than the Indian or Pakistani bourgeoisie.

The British had not succeeded in crushing the old ruling class completely; they had had to make certain compromises. The old ruling class, in turn, had been able to adapt itself to the new system of property relations and to prosper as capitalist junior partners of the

British. Although its failure to wage an anti-imperialist struggle compromised the Ceylonese bourgeoisie in the eyes of the people, its historical continuity made it stronger than, for example, the newly emerging Indian bourgeoisie. This explains why it has been able to maintain the façade of a two-party bourgeois "democracy" for a longer period than most other semicolonial countries, even though each successive government has been compelled to rule more and more through special powers and "emergency regulations."

Despite such initial advantages, the Ceylonese bourgeoisie's ability to grant concessions to the masses has greatly diminished. Living standards have been continuously eroded and the level of unemployment has increased year by year.

World market prices of tea have been falling rapidly and are now at their lowest point. The same British companies that own most of the plantations in Ceylon have ensured alternative sources of supply by opening up plantations in Kenya and India. The Ceylonese bourgeoisie has not been able to diversify the economy or to produce import substitutes. At the same time the highly literate population contains a large percentage of educated unemployed youth who have no prospect of obtaining even manual jobs. As the balance of payments and the general economic situation deteriorate, the local bourgeoisie depends increasingly on imperialism for survival. Ceylon owes a debt to the World Bank of about \$50 million, and the present government has applied for further loans. These loans are required not to initiate new development projects but to pay for essential imports and repay overdue loans.<sup>3</sup>

The rural poor and the working class have been highly politicized over the past twenty-five years, notably through the spread of Marxist ideas and organizations. So strong are these institutions that no government has been able to destroy them. Nevertheless, the economic plight of Ceylon leaves no alternative to the bourgeoisie but to withdraw the concessions it has granted. This dilemma explains the varying tactics employed by the governments in power since "independence."

#### *The "Uncle-Nephew Party"*

The outcome of the parliamentary elections of 1948 was indecisive. The main bourgeois party, the United National Party (UNP),

failed to gain a clear majority of seats. Had the Communist Party supported the other Marxist parties instead of the UNP, there could at least temporarily have been a Left united front government. Instead, the UNP formed a minority government with the aid of appointed members and Independents. After the government was formed, representatives of the Tamil bourgeoisie, in the form of the Ceylon Tamil Congress, joined it and the UNP was able to consolidate its position.

During the 1948 elections the UNP leaders were faced with two well-organized Marxist parties, the LSSP and the Bolshevik Leninist Party (BLP). The UNP based its campaign on the danger of communism, painting grim pictures of how Marxists would burn down Buddhist temples and destroy Buddhist civilization. To complement such scare stories, the UNP promised that, if elected, it would give "two measures of rice at 25 cents a measure."<sup>4</sup> This meant that the government, having imported rice at 60 cents a measure, had to sell it to the people at a net loss of 35 cents. In order to win rural voters, the UNP also guaranteed rice producers a subsidized price. Each subsequent government has found these two subsidies burdensome, but every attempt to discontinue them has aroused immediate opposition. Indeed, the first effort to remove them provoked a partial insurrection.

Once the UNP had consolidated its power, its government took steps to destroy the electoral base of the working class parties. In 1948 tea plantation workers had voted for the Ceylon Indian Congress and the LSSP. In 1949 the Ceylon (Parliamentary Elections) Amendment Act No. 48, one of the most reactionary pieces of legislation in the island's history, disenfranchised these workers. The new act ensured that seats in those regions would in future fall to the UNP.

The UNP's foreign policy was staunchly anticommunist. The government refused even diplomatic relations with the workers' states, and supported the imperialist bloc at every international conference. In the Korean War the UNP granted refueling and landing facilities to U.S. and allied troops.

Following the death of the first Prime Minister, D. S. Senanayake, in March 1952, his son Dudley Senanayake succeeded him. More senior UNP leaders resented this selection. In the election that followed, however, despite its internal dissensions, the UNP was re-

turned to power with an increased majority, partly because of the disenfranchisement of the plantation workers. Within a year, Mr. Senanayake and his colleagues had to face tensions and squabbles within the party, accusations of nepotism, and a serious economic crisis.

Ceylon's economy was greatly stimulated by the Korean War, which boosted the U.S. demand for natural rubber and provided handsome profits for Ceylonese rubber producers. At the same time, the price of rice skyrocketed because of the war, so that the government had to make substantial economies. Its leaders decided to withdraw the rice subsidy, since Ceylon was spending more than half its income on importing rice. The government also discontinued school meals and increased postal and rail charges.

Three Left parties were now in existence: the Communist Party; the LSSP, with which the BLP had reunified; and the United Front, a splinter from the LSSP. These groups organized a day of civil disobedience (*hartal*) on August 12, 1953. Trade unions under the leadership of these three parties called for a general strike. When the government alerted the army and deployed troops in several parts of the country, the peaceful protest turned into a three-day insurrection. The Left party leaders were unprepared for further struggle and could give no perspective to the militants in the streets.

The *hartal* led, however, to the Prime Minister's resignation and to partial restoration of the rice subsidy. UNP prestige suffered a heavy blow and many workers sensed their strength. The UNP tottered for three more years and was routed at the 1956 elections.

The UNP leaders had aped their British predecessors. They conducted their business in English in a country where 92 percent of the population did not read or write that language. They maintained the former economic patterns and traditions. Except for the fact that they now had brown- instead of white-skinned rulers, "independence" had brought little change for most people.

#### *The Sri Lanka Freedom Party*

Internal differences based largely on personal antagonisms resulted in a UNP split in 1951. The Oxford-educated leader of the House of Representatives, Solomon West Ridgeway Dias Bandaranaike, broke away to form the Sri Lanka (Ceylon) Freedom Party.

Until 1952 the main opposition party in parliament had been the LSSP, led by N. M. Perera. After the 1952 election, however, although the LSSP won the same number of seats as the SLFP, Bandaranaike became leader of the opposition. The three Communist Party members supported Bandaranaike.

Immediately after the war the CP had supported the UNP, but the rabid anticomunism of the latter, coupled with its growing unpopularity, eventually compelled the CP to change its line. The CP did not, of course, abandon its theory of a two-stage revolution or its attempt to distinguish between the "reactionary" and "progressive" bourgeoisie. But the SLFP was now seen as representing the "progressive" bourgeoisie; the demagogic nationalism of Bandaranaike lent credibility to these assertions.

The LSSP leaders expressed opposition to such a broad "anti-UNP" front and counterposed a united front of working class parties and organizations. At that date (1952) they recognized that the only forces capable of sustaining a consistent anti-UNP struggle were the urban working class and the rural proletariat. They argued that to mobilize these classes would challenge not only the UNP but its class interests, since these were expressed through capitalist property relations. Any front which included bourgeois and petty-bourgeois forces would, they argued, enter a blind alley the moment the bourgeoisie adopted another vehicle through which to represent its interests.

The SLFP filled precisely that role. It served as a safety valve for the ruling class. Bandaranaike skillfully exploited the frustrated aspirations of the Sinhala Buddhist petty bourgeoisie. He appeared as the champion of the Sinhala underdog, a crusader against the privileged, who could be interpreted at will as the rich, the Tamils, or the Christians. In his election manifesto he promised to replace English with Sinhala as the official language along with "reasonable use of Tamil," but did not explain what this meant. He demanded abrogation of the agreement by which the British were allowed naval and air bases in Ceylon. To give credibility to his socialist pretensions he even promised to nationalize the ports and the omnibus companies. Finally, in 1956, he launched his election campaign not as the SLFP leader but as the leader of the MEP (Mahajana Eksath Peramuna—People's Liberation Front), a popular front of "progressive forces" which included, in addition to the SLFP, a collection of ex-LSSP members such as Philip Goonewardene and Dahanayake. Bandara-

naike realized that without posing as a socialist and a progressive he could not compete successfully with the LSSP, which had a consistent history of opposition to the UNP.

#### *Decline of the LSSP*

Not surprisingly, the Communist Party supported this electoral bloc. More unexpected, however, was the LSSP decision to agree to an electoral arrangement whereby the LSSP and the Bandaranaike-led popular front decided not to contest each other in certain constituencies. This was the first crack in the LSSP's resolute anticapitalist position.

It may be useful to examine why the LSSP, which in the past had politicized the working class, had led an uncompromising struggle against imperialism, and had correctly analyzed Bandaranaike's political role, now began to take the first steps away from revolutionary practice. Reference has been made to a split in the LSSP and to its reunification in the 1950s. The two groups, the Lanka Sama Samaja Party and the Bolshevik Leninist Party, contested the 1948 general elections as separate organizations and between them won 25 out of 95 seats.

These two political currents had existed from early days within the LSSP. One, a populist current, wished to launch a broadly based mass organization; this group was led by Perera, Goonewardene, Dahanayake, and others. The second group, the Bolshevik Leninists, wished to build a disciplined vanguard party. Although both groups called themselves "Trotskyists," there was a fundamental difference in the way they approached political problems. These differences were exploited by the Communist Party, and there was pressure within both groups to close ranks against the CP. This partly explains why the BLP was prepared to reunify with the populist group.

The BLP leaders were intellectually committed to Bolshevism, but never came to grips with the actuality of the Ceylon revolution. They did not, for example, have a serious attitude toward the rural poor. This was not accidental, for they did not understand the dynamics of capitalism in rural Ceylon. The Communist Party was completely off the mark, its members still speaking about "feudal relations" in the rural areas as late as the 1960s. The BLP, and even the LSSP, recognized that capitalist property relations had pene-

trated even the remotest villages in Ceylon—that is to say, the rural economy was a money economy: capitalist laws of value operated throughout the society. Nevertheless, these "Trotskyists" did not draw the logical conclusions of their analysis. They did not evaluate the increasing tendency of the local bourgeoisie to buy up land from the peasants, nor did they take note of the high level of rural indebtedness that accelerated this process. It is because of such factors that a majority of rural people today belong to the rural proletariat. Most of them are seasonal workers who exchange their labor power for a daily wage. It is in fact quite incorrect to call them "peasantry" in the European sense, for European peasants hold land. This was largely true even in prerevolutionary Russia.

Although most of the small and middle peasants of Ceylon can rightly be included within the petty bourgeoisie, to classify the landless laborers and rural seasonal workers with the petty bourgeoisie, as the BLP tended to do, was a quite mistaken application of Marxist concepts. This scholastic approach to theory contributed to the degeneration of the BLP.

If the BLP had remained independent, its members might have come to grips with the problem of mobilizing the rural masses. Lenin and the Russian Bolsheviks themselves made many mistakes; they were, however, able to swing the party back to a successful course because they had made a fundamental break with the Mensheviks in 1903 and did not backpedal later. By contrast, once the BLP had reunited with the LSSP in 1950, it forewent the opportunity of learning from its own mistakes.

The BLP—and later the LSSP—was affiliated with the Fourth International, but the leadership of the International lacked the authority to intervene in Ceylon. Most of the international working class owed allegiance to social-democratic or "Stalinist" parties. Only in a few places like Ceylon, indeed, had Trotskyists gained a foothold among the people; the International's leadership therefore had no power to do more than advise.

Leninist and populist currents coexisted for some time within the LSSP; hence the contradictory character of its policies. For example, the party contested a large number of parliamentary seats. At first this was seen as a tactic to educate people about the revolutionary program. Parliament was to be used as a platform from which its own futility could be exposed. Gradually, however, the LSSP made

concessions to popular prejudices. Candidates were chosen for their ability to win, which often meant choosing a person of a particular caste or ethnic group.

The Samajists unionized and politicized a large number of workers. But in time the LSSP unions, like those of other parties, succumbed to economism.

The criticisms made by the Bolshevik current were, in fact, pertinent. In the 1930s, when a small group of leftists launched their anti-imperialist struggle against the British, they gained a large number of followers. The LSSP was not, however, a cadre organization, and it is doubtful whether most of its leaders ever intended it to become one. Marxist theory was monopolized by the English-educated elite, who failed to provide political education for rank-and-file members. In the thirty-odd years of its existence the party did not translate any Marxist classics into the vernacular. Such failures perpetuated a vast gap in political understanding between leaders and followers. Since the followers relied entirely on the leaders for theoretical interpretations, they were unable to call a halt to the leaders' degeneration.

In the decade that followed the party's reunification, the Sama Samaja leaders became ever more deeply involved in parliamentarism. Their formal adherence to Marxism and to the political positions they had previously adopted became burdensome. They were, for example, pledged to fight for the citizenship rights of plantation workers. But plantation workers had no votes and could do nothing to increase the LSSP's parliamentary representation. Moreover, demands in behalf of the plantation workers did not help the party to win the existing rural vote, for the bourgeois parties were able to exploit anti-Tamil prejudices.

Lacking the ability to mobilize the rural poor around concrete programs issuing from long-range theory, the LSSP gradually abandoned its Marxist heritage for parliamentary politics. The party recruited fewer workers and more electoral functionaries. The largest branches grew up in the electorates of Sama Samaja M.P.'s, not in plantations or rural centers with large concentrations of workers. Trade union militants of yesteryear became trade union bureaucrats. By 1960 the LSSP had transformed itself from a potentially revolutionary movement into a reformist party. In exploited countries there is no room for independent social-democratic groups; they rapidly become appendages of bourgeois political forces.

#### *Bandaranaike's Triumph*

Lacking a revolutionary leadership, the rural poor tended to follow one of the bourgeois parties: the UNP or the SLFP (which was leading the MEP). In 1956, Bandaranaike rallied them in a spectacular electoral victory for the MEP. The LSSP's no-contest pact in the election was the first open indication that it had in effect accepted the Communist Party view that whereas the UNP represented the "reactionary bourgeoisie," the SLFP was its more "progressive" wing.

Bandaranaike's government initially enjoyed great support. He gave an impression of following genuine socialist policies: he nationalized the port of Colombo and the bus companies, introduced the Paddy Lands Act as a start to agrarian reform, and for a short time allowed wages and salaries to rise. These moves did not, however, affect the lives of the majority. The nationalization measures were comparable in scope to those of Kenneth Kaunda, Alvarado Vallesco, or Indira Gandhi: their primary aim was to strengthen the national bourgeoisie's ability to bargain more effectively with imperialism, although they offered hope to the common people and so alleviated mass pressures. Even these reforms could not be successfully implemented because of the obstinate opposition of the SLFP right wing. The Paddy Lands Act, for instance, was so amended that its purpose was defeated.

Meanwhile the MEP government's stand on the language issue alienated Tamil speakers. The "Sinhala Only" Act replaced English with Sinhala as the official language. Influenced by chauvinists in his own party, Bandaranaike withdrew even the limited provisions he had made for the use of Tamil. This retreat invited further demands for discriminatory laws against the Tamils. Resurgent Sinhala chauvinism culminated in an anti-Tamil pogrom and brought relations between the two peoples to their lowest point.

Bandaranaike's policies proved futile in the face of increasing unemployment, inflation, and deteriorating living standards. Enthusiasm turned to discontent. When strikes occurred, he used the police and the army to crush them, as in the widely reported public servants' strike of April 1958. The draconian Public Security Act which

followed has since been used repeatedly to defeat or prevent strikes and other forms of industrial action.

Although the LSSP and the CP had entered a no-contest pact with Bandaranaike, they refrained from joining the government. The CP supported the government's "progressive" measures; the LSSP gave it "critical support." But the anti-working class legislation, the "Sinhala Only" Act, and the anti-Tamil pogrom compelled LSSP leaders to switch from critical support to total opposition. Moving briefly to the left, the LSSP trade unions called a one-day political strike against the Public Security Act on March 3, 1959. Despite its verbal opposition to the Act, the Communist Party failed to support and even tried to sabotage the strike.

#### *LSSP Crossroads*

Bandaranaike's party was rent by factional strife. The left wing, led by Goonewardene, resigned from the cabinet and joined the opposition in May 1959. The right wing conspired to get rid of the Prime Minister, and on September 26, 1959, he was assassinated. The fact and manner of his death aroused great sympathy, but there was confusion and dissatisfaction in the country, with the SLFP now leaderless and disorganized. When a general election was held in March 1960, after six months of caretaker government, no party obtained a majority. The UNP was returned with 50 seats, while the SLFP showing dropped to 45. LSSP leaders completely misjudged the situation: they campaigned for a "Sama Samaja government," fielded 100 candidates, but won only 10 seats. Instead of abandoning the parliamentary strategy after this shattering blow, they abandoned the political principles that appeared to have cost them votes.

The UNP formed a minority government. Within a month, parliament was again dissolved and another election was held in July. At this point the degeneration of the LSSP became widely apparent. At a special conference just before the July elections, a right-wing proposal not only to support the SLFP but, if possible, to accept office under its prime ministership was carried.

Sirimavo Bandaranaike, wife of the former Prime Minister, took over the leadership of the SLFP and won a decisive majority, so decisive that she did not need the LSSP to form a government. The UNP reemerged as the main opposition. On the surface, Ceylon had

achieved a British parliamentary model with two main parties, both committed to private property and "free" enterprise. Their influence declining, the left-wing parties moved to the right. The CP continued its support of the "progressive" national bourgeoisie while the LSSP gave "responsive" cooperation to the government. With the help of the left-wing parties, Mrs. Bandaranaike's government was briefly able to create the illusion that the SLFP was more progressive than the UNP. But by the end of 1961 mass discontent had erupted in demonstrations and strikes.

The CP and the LSSP tried to avoid being identified with these extra-parliamentary struggles, fearing they might cost them votes. In late 1962 the dock workers struck against the wishes of both CP and LSSP trade union leaders. Immediately afterward, the transport workers launched a national strike. These strikes for the first time united workers of different trade unions and political parties in grassroots actions. They embarrassed the left-wing party leaders and compelled a shift in their policies. But instead of mobilizing the workers, these leaders took advantage of their desire for unity in struggle in order to create a three-party electoral bloc.

#### *Betrayal*

This bloc, comprising the right wing of the CP, the LSSP, and the MEP, called itself the United Left Front. In order to join it, the Sama Samaja leaders had to abandon their policies on the Tamil language and the citizenship rights of plantation workers. The Front was a triumph for the Communist Party. Its program involved no great threat to the Ceylonese capitalist class. It called for the "Ceylonization" of foreign interests rather than for nationalization of the means of production, distribution, and exchange. "Ceylonization" artificially separated the anti-imperialist from the anticapitalist struggle. By accepting it the LSSP, in effect, accepted the Stalinist theory of a two-stage revolution.

In each of the three Left parties there were small but influential groups opposed to this front. These groups presented an alternative strategy of uniting the working class in struggle on transitional demands. The right-wing leaders could not oppose this proposal outright. Accordingly all trade unions, including those not affiliated to any political party (notably those of the plantation workers), formed

a joint committee and hammered out a series of twenty-one demands. The enthusiasm with which these demands were greeted in April 1964 contrasted strongly with the workers' apathy over the formation of the United Left Front in August 1963. Indeed, the demands threatened the capitalist structure of Ceylon. They were presented to the government at a mass rally in April, held in direct violation of the emergency regulations then obtaining.

Never before had all the trade unions forged such unity. Mrs. Bandaranaike realized that the government could not afford a frontal attack on the workers, yet it could not grant the demands without endangering the capitalist system. Instead, it bought off a small number of influential working class leaders. Ceylon's harassed bourgeoisie consented to this gambit, and the Left parties' leaders jumped for the bait. They even competed in offering terms to the ruling class to obtain a few ministerial posts. The Prime Minister showed her astuteness. She refrained from offering jobs to the MEP leaders, who lacked any significant working class following. She could rely on the support of the Communists since it followed from their political analysis. The most important party on the Left was the LSSP: it had a mass following and a significant trade union base. Accordingly she co-opted the right-wing leaders of the LSSP.

The party's left wing had predicted this development in August 1963. It could not, however, prevent the disastrous regroupment, and in June 1964 a special conference of the LSSP voted to form a coalition government with the SLFP on terms similar to those proposed by the Prime Minister. Bargaining was limited to trivialities relating to the number of cabinet posts to be held by the LSSP. The party's left wing then split away to form the LSSP (Revolutionary). The Fourth International at once recognized it and expelled the majority party.

The coalition government precisely fulfilled the Prime Minister's aims. Some workers believed it would bring the changes they desired; the working class was thus split between supporters and opponents of the government. The three left-wing parties split into six different groups; soon, some of these began to disintegrate altogether. The threat of a mass general strike receded and the twenty-one demands were forgotten. The capitalists not only regained their confidence; they soon began to reconsider the advisability of hiring any Marxists. More conservative elements in the SLFP could not under-

stand the importance of the Prime Minister's tactical maneuver; in any case, the defection of these elements from the SLFP caused the coalition to collapse in eight months.

Afraid to jeopardize their cabinet positions, the LSSP leaders betrayed the working class. The struggle at the Velona factory was a crass example. One thousand of its workers were dismissed by the owner, a traditional capitalist and a UNP supporter, because of their attempt to join a union of their choice. Mainly young and women, the Velona workers labored under medieval conditions. Yet the "progressive" government did nothing to help them; instead it sent the police to smash the heads of teen-agers who dared to organize a picket line. The government could have applied labor laws already on the statute books to discipline the Velona management, but this it dared not do lest other sections of the workers also strike. By persuading the workers to return to work and take the issue to the courts, the LSSP and its unions helped defeat the strike.

Despite such events, the sudden collapse of the government prevented many workers from learning through experience that popular front coalitions help class enemies. Eight months was, moreover, too short a time for the left wing, which had broken with the reformists, to build an alternative leadership. The early defeat of the coalition government left the working class confused.

#### *Return of the UNP*

In the new elections of January 1965, conservatives who had split from the SLFP joined the UNP. With their help, the UNP secured a narrow majority over the coalition parties. (The CP also joined the coalition soon after the defeat of the latter.) With the aid of the Federal Party, which represented the interests of the Tamil bourgeoisie, the UNP formed a "national government." The MEP also joined this hotch-potch. Thus, except for two small revolutionary nuclei—the LSSP (Revolutionary) and the CP (pro-Peking)—all the left-wing leaders and parties became appendages of one of the two bourgeois parties.

UNP members recognized that they could not pursue the same course as in 1948–1956. At that time they had preached the advantages of "free enterprise" unashamedly, but that was now impracticable. The UNP also recognized the advantages of Bandaranaike's

foreign policy, which enabled the government to obtain aid from both power blocs. The UNP was, however, no better than the previous coalition in its attempts to salvage Ceylon's economy. It had to obtain loans from the World Bank on humiliating terms. In order to repress strikes in support of wage demands, it ruled the country under emergency regulations for three and a half of its five years in office. During this period the rice subsidy was withdrawn and expenditures on education drastically cut.

Although mass discontent reached a boiling point, there was no effective leadership to mobilize people in action. The CP and the LSSP had one strategy: to wait for the next elections. The Maoist party (CP, pro-Peking), which initially controlled a number of trade unions, lost them to the pro-Moscow CP. Although the Maoists retained a certain influence among the plantation workers, it was insignificant compared to that of the unions led by Thondaman and Aziz, which were organized on the basis of the religious affiliations and national origins of the workers.<sup>5</sup>

The LSSP-R split after a special conference in 1967. A section led by Edmund Samarakkody left it and formed the Revolutionary Sama Samaja Party (RSSP). The latter, as well as the LSSP-R, now led by the trade union leader Bala Tampoe, consisted of small groups which lacked the forces to organize mass actions against the UNP. Although the Ceylon mercantile union, led by Tampoe, did initiate a number of united front struggles where they had influence, almost all of them were sabotaged by the coalition trade unions, which each time pulled out as early as possible. The coalition leaders were marking time until the next general elections scheduled for April 1970.

By the time of the election campaign of March 1970, the UNP's defeat seemed certain. The party had a miserable record: it offered nothing to the unemployed, the workers, or the rural poor, whose conditions had deteriorated during UNP rule. True, the coalition parties offered little better. The only significant concession they were prepared to make was restoration of the rice subsidy, withdrawn by the UNP. The coalition program also included (a) recognition of North Vietnam, the Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam, North Korea, and East Germany; (b) the creation of People's Committees and Workers' Committees; and (c) control of the export-import trade and especially of the trade in tea.

The first of these was designed to improve the "socialist" image of the coalition, while the second and third were deceptive. Even before her election Mrs. Bandaranaike had made it clear that the People's and Workers' Committees would be strictly advisory, not soviets or centers of power. Control of exports and imports did not mean that the trade would be nationalized, but only that measures would be taken to improve the efficiency of the export-import sector and the production and marketing of tea.

Despite these vague promises, the large majority of workers and youth, who still had illusions about the reformist leaders, voted for the coalition. Their protest votes once again routed the UNP, and the coalition parties were swept into power in May 1970, winning 120 out of 150 seats. Of these 120, 95 were won by the SLFP.

#### *Second Coalition Government*

The coalition parties, especially their younger members, had campaigned against the UNP with much anticapitalist rhetoric. The young SLFP candidate Nanda Ellawala, for example, described to his rural voters how he would skin capitalists alive on the Galleface Green when he came to power. The coalition thus came to office on the promise to destroy capitalism, create a socialist society, and give everyone a job and a decent livelihood.

Soon after the election the more advanced sections of the people began to carry out what their leaders had promised. The day after the elections there was a spontaneous demonstration against the pro-UNP Lake House Press and the building was almost burned down. More important, in several areas where people lacked housing, they began to occupy the land of landlords. The government condemned these actions and sent the army and police to evict the squatters. Leslie Goonewardene, former secretary of the LSSP and a Member of Parliament, issued a statement attacking these irresponsible moves and stating that he would support legal action against them.

Similarly, the Velona workers and those of the Dasawa Publishing House learned through bitter experience that it was irresponsible to ask for such elementary rights as that of organizing in a union of their choice, and that it was perhaps even criminal to strike for such demands. These workers were not led by the "wreckers" of the LSSP-R but by "responsible" leaders of the LSSP.<sup>6</sup> Mrs. Bandara-

naike sent her Finance Minister, Dr. N. M. Perera, to explain to the workers why they should go back to work without their comrades, who had been fired by the boss, and, further, that they should apologize to the boss for striking. At the Norwood estate, police under the control of the Bandaranaike government shot and killed two plantation workers. Yet the government had nothing to offer the thousands of unemployed youth or the urban and rural workers whose living standards were continually deteriorating. The much-publicized budget gave nothing to the people. Its sole purpose seemed to be to allay the fears of local and foreign capitalists about the coalition government and its "Marxist" ministers.

These developments began to radicalize the more politically aware among the people, especially the impatient youth. They looked for new leadership, and found that its framework already existed.

#### *Birth of the JVP*

The Ceylon public first heard of the Janata Vimukthi Peramuna, or People's Liberation Front, in the spring of 1970. They were referred to as the "Che Guevarists." The JVP had in fact organized clandestinely for over four years before anyone heard of them. Just before the general elections of May 1970, the UNP government announced the arrest of a few JVP members, charging them with a plot to attack polling booths and ballot boxes. Today it is known that there was no such plot. The "information" may have come from a section of the UNP, who were themselves toying with the idea of a coup d'état because they faced certain defeat in the elections. During the campaign the JVP supported "progressive" candidates of the coalition parties. In fact, only the LSSP-R opposed both the UNP and the Bandaranaike-led coalition composed of the SLFP, the pro-Moscow CP, and the LSSP. Even the Maoists tried to join the coalition bloc; it was only when they were rebuffed that they called for a boycott of the elections.

When the JVP militants were held in custody even after the elections, their movement organized a poster campaign to demand the release of their leader, Rohan Wijeweera. This campaign alarmed the government. The posters were hand-written and appeared every-

where at once, and no one knew who had put them up. Their timing suggested a widespread organization.

When Wijeweera was eventually released by the courts, he sought to answer some of the questions that puzzled the Left in general. Rohan Wijeweera had been a student at Lumumba University in Moscow. During the Sino-Soviet dispute he supported the Chinese position. Naturally displeased, the Russians refused to renew his visa when he returned to Ceylon on vacation. For a short time Wijeweera worked for the pro-Moscow CP, but soon left it with a small group to join the Maoist Communists. Not long after, he and his comrades became disillusioned with the Maoists too, and formed their own organization. Their disillusionment with existing parties sprang from a sense that the old generation of leftists had either fallen by the wayside into social democracy or, even if still revolutionary, could not come to grips with today's realities.

The political understanding of JVP members was limited. They initially held a "Debrayist" view of the urban working class, namely, that its members, having a higher standard of living than the rural poor, lacked the political consciousness of the latter. Similarly, one of their three main slogans was "Against Indian Expansionism," which in view of the presence of Indian plantation workers in Ceylon could be interpreted as chauvinism (their other two slogans were "Against Imperialism" and "Against Capitalism"). They opposed the Bandaranaike coalition because they concluded that coalitions between bourgeois and working class parties always lead to the defeat and disorientation of the working class. They cited the example of Indonesia, yet explained that the massacre of Indonesian Communists resulted from the failure of the Aidit leadership to follow the thoughts of Mao. This shows that they failed to make a complete theoretical assessment of Maoism.

The discipline and organization of these comrades were, however, remarkable. They stopped smoking and drinking alcohol and used the money thus saved for political work. They organized themselves clandestinely, realizing that the period of bourgeois democracy was coming to an end in Ceylon.

The first indications of this were evident in the summer of 1970, when the government strengthened the apparatus of repression. It increased the police force by 55 percent and formed an antirevolu-

tionary committee in the army (among whose distinguished members was the pro-Moscow leader, Pieter Keuneman). In August the JVP held mass meetings throughout the country to explain their politics, attracting crowds of ten to fifteen thousand. The JVP explained that it was not a terrorist organization. Speakers attacked and exposed the coalition as a capitalist government and explained that they wished to build a Leninist revolutionary party. The pro-Moscow CP, and later the other coalition parties, slandered the JVP as a CIA-backed organization. The JVP ridiculed these charges and asked the CP why they had supported imperialism during World War II and why they had made a bloc with the UNP in 1948. They gathered a large following among the youth and their paper sold over 40,000 copies a few days after its publication, but because of police intimidation the movement could not find a printer to produce more copies. About this time the police began to arrest and intimidate JVP militants to obtain information on their strength and influence. When this harassment began, the JVP sought allies.

#### *Revolutionary United Front*

The JVP leaders now made contact with the revolutionary Trotskyists of the LSSP-R, led by Bala Tampoe. Tampoe was also the leader of the Ceylon Mercantile Union. The most militant union in Ceylon, it had a membership of 35,000 and a policy-making General Council of 400. JVP leaders were well-informed about CMU policies, and instructed their urban members to join the CMU.

A parallel development took place on the tea plantations. The estate workers, disillusioned by the coalition and recognizing the bankruptcy of communal leaders like Thondaman, were seeking new leadership. They therefore approached the CMU. The LSSP-R leaders' response was, however, that the plantation workers had no tradition of militancy, that their desire to join the CMU was merely an effort to replace one "savior" with another, and that the first lesson the plantation militants must drive home to their fellow workers was to rely on their own class strength. Tampoe agreed, however, to assist the tea workers. Their militants accepted this advice and formed their own political organization, the Young Socialist Front, whose policies were close to those of the LSSP-R and whose aim was

to politicize and mobilize plantation workers and at a suitable moment to fuse their organization with the LSSP-R.

When the JVP learned about this organization, they requested discussions with the YSF. Out of these discussions a new front emerged, uniting the YSF, the LSSP-R, and the JVP. Their first meeting as a united front was held at the Norwood estate to protest the police shooting of two Indian workers. This was an important occasion for the JVP because they wanted to demonstrate that they were not opposed to Indian workers, and that, contrary to the slanders of the orthodox Communists, they were not a chauvinist movement.

The growing unity between the JVP, the LSSP-R, and the YSF frightened the coalition leaders. The government was facing a foreign-exchange crisis and was making appeals to the World Bank and to imperialist countries for aid and loans. The World Bank had, however, already granted \$50 million and the Ceylon government had failed even to make regular interest payments. The World Bank was prepared to grant further loans only under certain conditions, and the government agreed. In an interview with the *Ceylon Times*, Finance Minister Dr. Perera admitted that "harsh measures" would have to be taken to set the economy right. The budget for 1971, to be announced in the spring, would undoubtedly impose more burdens on the people. Meanwhile the masses were becoming impatient. The tea and rubber workers had presented a wage demand six months previously and were still awaiting a reply. Disillusion among coalition supporters was worrying the government.

These three factors—the possible emergence of a permanent revolutionary united front, the growing dependence of the government on the imperialists, and the swelling mass discontent—account for the events that followed.

#### *Repression and Resistance*

Faced with rising opposition, the government struck first. Its object was (1) to isolate and destroy the political vanguard before the people were ready to come out in struggle, and (2) to use emergency regulations to ward off the threatened unrest. The imperialists decided to give the government their full cooperation if only because of their strategic and military interests in Ceylon.

The post-March 5, 1971, events resulted from a well-planned government operation. In the first week of March the police were put on "alert." On March 6 a group of "youth" attacked the U.S. embassy with petrol bombs and left some leaflets in the vicinity of the embassy. They claimed to be the Mao Youth Front and demanded that the U.S.A. get out of Vietnam and that it stop its aid to the "Anti-Che Guevara" movement. The government attributed this action to the JVP and invoked special powers, including the power to search, arrest, and detain without trial. The JVP disclaimed responsibility and stated that this was an act of provocateurs.

Ceylon has no Mao Youth Front, and the government provided no evidence to substantiate its charges. Shortly afterward, it began to arrest every known militant in the JVP, including Rohan Wijeweera. The government also arrested the pro-Chinese leader, N. Shanmugathasan, and even some LSSP militants. On March 13 the government "disclosed" a "plot" by the JVP to overthrow it, declared a state of emergency, and imposed a dusk-to-dawn curfew.

Mrs. Bandaranaike claimed that the security forces foiled an attempt by the JVP to seize power. Government communiqués in April stated that the army was engaged in mopping-up operations. At the same time, however, the government made frantic appeals to the British and U.S. governments, who provided military aid. On the request of Mrs. Bandaranaike, the Indian government also sent four frigates and a few helicopters, while Yahya Khan of Pakistan, even while engaged in the invasion of East Pakistan, added his own assistance, as did the UAR and Yugoslavia. The Soviet government enthusiastically joined this united front by providing MIGs and helicopters to the Ceylon government. The Chinese government also provided an interest-free loan of \$30 million.

The main purpose of the government operation was, it seems, to destroy the infrastructure of the JVP. The government used extraordinary powers under the emergency laws to carry out an extensive search for every person suspected of revolutionary activity. A majority of JVP members, at least, were on the alert for this. They had not planned to initiate a struggle at that point; neither the plantation workers nor the urban sector was ready. Nevertheless, they decided that they would not passively allow their organization to be destroyed and that if the government decided to attack they would resist.

The government leaders underestimated both the organizational strength and the mass support of the JVP. They also overestimated the capacity of the army to fight in the countryside. Not only were they unaware of the combat strength of the JVP; they also forgot that most army privates come from rural areas and are likely to have more sympathy with the JVP than with the government. Repression was therefore effected only after fierce fighting and the bloody slaughter, by government forces, of several thousand militants and civilians.

Strict censorship was in force during the repression and it was difficult to obtain precise information about the struggle. It is clear, however, that the government has still not succeeded in gaining complete control. It has, for instance, admitted that the army has not been totally successful in its operation in the interior and that some "guerrillas" survive and are avoiding contact with security forces. Although the government slandered the JVP as a "right-wing" and "fascist" formation, the mass of people do not appear to be deceived. The brutality with which the army and police have dealt not only with JVP suspects but with innocent civilians has increased sympathy for the JVP in both the cities and the countryside. The fact that the armed resistance of the JVP was most successful in precisely those areas where the SLFP scored sweeping electoral victories last year is politically significant. It appears to have stricken the SLFP leaders with terror. The arrest and detention of at least two SLFP Members of Parliament suggest that the JVP may indeed have had sympathizers within the government ranks. The government's attempt to eliminate the JVP has been at least partly damaging to itself.

Some of the extreme savagery displayed by the Bandaranaike administration will undoubtedly have far-reaching effects: the same CP and LSSP government ministers who participated in and justified the crushing of the insurrection will soon find that they themselves are not immune and that the Ceylonese ruling class can do without them. There is increasing evidence to suggest that rank-and-file members of these two parties are already in a state of turmoil. On a more general level some of the atrocities of the regime have been brought to light *inside* Ceylon itself: the two officers accused of raping and murdering 21-year-old Prema Manamperi (Ceylon's "Beauty Queen" and a JVP sympathizer) have been brought to trial. The

two men claimed that they were merely acting on instructions from superior officers.<sup>7</sup> Meanwhile, even the Ceylonese government has so far been unable to kill all the JVP prisoners. There are still 16,000 political prisoners in concentration camps spread all over Ceylon. The bourgeois press in Europe and North America, which goes into ecstasies in describing persecution of militants in the U.S.S.R. and Eastern Europe, has so far ignored the plight of these prisoners and the indignities being inflicted on them. It is possible that many will be killed or tortured to death because at the moment they pose a permanent political threat. The very fact that the government has herded them into concentration camps has resulted in the JVP militants embarking on a whole series of political discussions and analyzing the reasons for their defeat. In other words, they have succeeded in preserving a collective identity and developing self-critical analyses even inside the concentration camps. Very few have been demoralized, and morale in the camps is reported to be fairly high.<sup>8</sup>

#### *Prospects*

Struggle was forced upon the oppressed people of Ceylon before they were politically prepared for it. Equally obviously, however, no capitalist government will be able to solve the island's deepest problems and every government from now on will be compelled to use brutal force to maintain the capitalist system.

Although the urban and plantation workers may be confused by recent developments, they too will now be confronted by "emergency regulations" whenever they seek to back up their demands with industrial action. And for that reason they too may begin to move. Today the urgent need is to overcome the uneven development of political consciousness among different sections of the working people and to build quickly an effective leadership to unite them. Comrades of the JVP, the LSSP(R), and the YSF realize that the struggle will be protracted and bitter: the acute crisis of the Ceylonese bourgeoisie and the growing impasse of imperialism can lead only to escalation of the struggle. There is little doubt that in this process the imperialist powers will go beyond material aid and send "advisers" or whatever else they deem necessary, for they are fully aware of the need to retain a foothold in Ceylon to police the Indian Ocean.

The Soviet bureaucracy, concerned with its own interests rather

than with those of the world working class, has lined up with capitalism and imperialism against the suffering people of Ceylon. The politics of peaceful coexistence prove to be those of betrayal and counter-revolution. The People's Republic of China has also shamefully betrayed the revolutionary militants of Ceylon by giving aid and moral support to the Bandaranaike government.

Despite these events and despite the defection of its reformist "Left" leaders, the working class of Ceylon has not been tamed by its rulers; it has several times shown willingness to fight. The emergence of the JVP and the politicization of the rural proletariat are significant and welcome. Given the growing crisis of capitalism, Ceylonese workers and poor people must either accept greater oppression or prepare to overthrow capitalism with arms in hand.<sup>9</sup> This task cannot be accomplished by a disorganized and spontaneous rising of the masses. What is needed is not only a revolutionary leadership in Ceylon but also, as the experience of Indochina and Bangladesh demonstrates, a revolutionary international to ensure the final defeat of capitalism and imperialism.

#### *Notes*

1. The value of principal exports in 1968 was as follows:

	<i>Rs. 1,000</i>
Tea	1,160,910
Rubber	330,654
Dessicated coconut	163,820
Copra	33,703
Coconut oil	132,991
Plambage	7,848
Areca nut	245
Cocoa	7,339
 Total	 1,837,510

Tea thus accounted for 63 percent of principal export earnings.

2. *The Report of the Survey of Landless Laborers* (Ceylon Parliament, sessional papers XIII, 1952), published in July 1952, shows that in the rural sector of Ceylon 26.3 percent of all families dependent on subsistence agriculture owned no land at all; 42.3 percent owned less than half an acre;

and 54.1 percent owned less than one acre. The corresponding figures for all families were 37.7 percent, 59.3 percent, and 70.6 percent. This survey was made in 1948. Since then no comparable survey has been made, but there is no doubt that in the past twenty-three years the proportion of landless rural poor has greatly increased. In Ceylon, moreover, the primitive methods of cultivation do not permit a person who owns even one acre of land to produce enough food to sustain his family.

3. Terms of trade from 1964-1968 were as follows (in Rs. 1,000):

	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968
Exports	1,974,502	1,474,381	2,028,268	1,738,365	2,173,089
Imports	1,842,573	1,915,916	1,675,959	1,630,864	1,975,135

4. One measure equals two pounds of rice.
5. The two largest and most important unions on the plantations are organized on ethnic lines. The Ceylon Workers' Congress includes workers who came from regions that are now in modern India. This union is led by Mr. Thondaman, who has been made a distinguished citizen of Ceylon and is himself a plantation owner. The Democratic Workers' Congress has organized workers from regions that are now in Pakistan. It is led by Mr. Aziz, a supporter of the pro-Moscow Communist Party.
6. To date there have been three strikes at Velona on the same issue, that of organizing in a union of the workers' choice. The owner of the Velona factory, a UNP member and an ex-MP, has a particularly brutal reputation. In 1958 the Communist Party (at that time united and pro-Moscow) led a strike of workers in support of fellow workers who had been fired for attempting to form a union. After a bitter struggle the dispute was referred to the Arbitration Court. The lengthy court battle ended in the owner being asked to make certain concessions, including reinstatement of some of the dismissed employees. The owner, however, ignored the court order without being penalized. In 1964 the workers were led by the LSSP-R. Again the strike was lost and the owner recruited a new batch of workers. A third strike in July 1970 was led by the LSSP, i.e., one of the parties in the coalition government. It was provoked by the owner's intransigence rather than by the LSSP. LSSP leaders tried to persuade the Labor Minister to refer the case to the Arbitration Court, a procedure which in most cases aids the employer, who can afford long and expensive legal battles. Meanwhile the factory owner made a deal with leaders of the SLFP to form a rival union and affiliate it to the SLFP trade union organization. The outcome of all these maneuvers was the same: the strike was lost and the strike leaders were dismissed from their jobs.
7. "Ceylon: The Rapists Defend Themselves," *The Red Mole*, No. 33, De-

cember 12, 1971, p. 9, provides details of the trial and the defense offered by the two men, Lieutenant Wijeysoora and Sergeant Ratnayaka. Both men claimed that their orders were: "Take no prisoners; bump them off; liquidate them."

8. For further details see Halliday, "The Ceylonese Insurrection," in *New Left Review*, No. 69. Readers who want further evidence on the concentration camps would be well advised to study the budget announced by LSSP Minister Perera on November 11, 1971. One of the items that was exempted from the new taxes was barbed wire, a hot item in Ceylon, and even the pro-Moscow CP newspaper allowed itself a sarcastic editorial comment entitled "Barbed Wire Is a Bargain."
9. The November 11, 1971, budget represented a vicious attack on the living standards of the working class. Perera informed the people that the price of rice would be raised, the sugar ration would be limited to two pounds a month per person, and free hospital care would be phased out. The workers responded to the budget with work stoppages, slowdowns, and street demonstrations, despite the official state of emergency. The pressure was so immense that the government was forced to retract and make some concessions. It was precisely the linking of the rural poor led by the JVP and the urban proletariat led by Tampoe that the Ceylonese bourgeoisie had been keen to prevent when they unleashed the repression against the JVP. A report in *Le Monde* on January 8, 1972, claimed that the Mercantile Union led by Tampoe "has not ceased to challenge the regime since the beginning of the repression." The options open to the Ceylonese coalition government are extremely limited: they will attempt to move in and smash completely the organizations of the working class, which would result in a massive response from the workers; if not, they will face the possibilities of being overthrown by a military coup d'état.

## **1. The Social Background of Bangladesh**

Ramkrishna Mukherjee

### *Growth of the "Bengali" Ethnic Unit*

Little is known about the people in "Bengal" before *aryanization* began with the consolidation of the Gupta empire in eastern India from about the fifth century A.D. It is known, however, that they were described as *koma* (tribal) and that many of them lived in rather undifferentiated societies. Sufficient division of labor had taken place among them to identify "merchants," but their social organization did not admit the supremacy of Brahmins or a caste structure of society.<sup>1</sup> Caste organization, an imported institution, developed when Brahmins were brought in as religious and legal authorities by rulers from western and southern India.<sup>2</sup> Eventually, all people (including the Brahmins) were categorized into castes according to their vocations, and the caste division of society became a hereditary phenomenon which carried with it all the familiar Hindu prohibitions against marriage, dining, and physical contact between people of different castes.<sup>3</sup> Even so, the caste structure of Bengal did not have the foundation or the stable growth found in the Indo-Gangetic plain proper.<sup>4</sup> Because of the existence of powerful social groups that were placed in ranks lower in the religious scale than that of the Brahmins, compromises had to be made between the Brahmanic and non-Brahmanic ways of life.

Beginning with the fifth century, the caste organization and the settlement of people on land cultivated with the plow developed

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simultaneously, and by the twelfth to thirteenth centuries both had become stabilized in Bengal society.<sup>5</sup> The indigenous people of Bengal accepted the Brahmanic way of life because of the accompanying economic privileges of a settled agricultural society, but they also contributed significantly to the social organization and the ideology that eventually emerged in Bengal from this process of culture-contact.<sup>6</sup> As a result, while Hinduism spread over Bengal, the Bengali Hindus were particularly distinguished from their coreligionists in the rest of the subcontinent. Even today, orthodox Brahmins in other parts of India will not dine with Bengali Brahmins who eat fish and are in other ways regarded as deviating from the vocation of the Brahmins. The Hindus of Bengal thus assumed a distinct "Bengali" character, as is currently reflected in the behavior of the Hindu refugees from East Pakistan who have been migrating to the Republic of India since 1947 but who, unlike their counterparts from Punjab and Sind, find it difficult to settle anywhere outside Bengal.

While the Hindus of Bengal were thus ethnically consolidated and correspondingly alienated from the Hindus in the rest of India, the course of Hinduization was not the same in the eastern and western regions of Bengal. The area east of the Padma River (a tributary of the Ganges), which comprised the bulk of East Bengal, was not easily accessible from the west. It was closely linked with Assam, where Buddhism and, later, a loose form of Hinduism prevailed.<sup>7</sup> Buddhism contented itself with superimposing a new religion upon the existing tribal societies, which it left largely unchanged with regard to the introduction of new economic activities and from which it did not even uproot animistic practices. Because of their remoteness from the seat of Hindu rule, the people of East Bengal were also relatively free from control by the Guptas and other Hindu rulers. As a result, there developed a combination of creeds and cults known as *sahajiya* (simplified religion), and the West Bengali Brahmins considered the area east of the Padma as defiling and detrimental to their status. Consequently, when in the wake of Muslim conquest the zeal of conversion to Islam was felt in Bengali society, the great majority of the people of East Bengal were converted. Some Muslims from the upper part of India no doubt settled in Bengal, and even some Brahmins were converted to Islam. But like the imported Brahmins among Bengali Hindus, they constituted a very small proportion of the Muslim population in both East and West Bengal.<sup>8</sup>

Regional distinction thus coincided with religious differentiation, and both played their role in Bengali society. The forces of consolidation of "Bengali" culture, however, were greater than these two forces of alienation. Muslim *sufism* (a branch of Islamic philosophy and religion) and Hindu "simplified religion" and worship of the deity Vishnu, as against orthodox religious systems, found a fertile soil in Bengal and helped in the development of Bengali culture and a Bengali language.<sup>9</sup> With the onset of the Bhakti or devotional movement in eastern India under Chaitanya's leadership, the Hindus and Muslims were brought closer to each other on the social and ideological planes.<sup>10</sup> The Bengali language was also raised to the status of a literary language and in course of time it was enriched with loan words and phrases from Persian and Arabic.<sup>11</sup> The Muslim rulers actively supported these trends. The most important of all Hindu epics—the *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharata*, and the *Bhagavata*—were translated from Sanskrit into Bengali under the patronage of Muslim rulers who also honored both Hindu and Muslim noblemen and men of letters, and employed both Hindus and Muslims as state officials, revenue farmers (*zamindars*), etc.<sup>12</sup>

The economic structure of Bengal at that time facilitated and consolidated the unity achieved in the social and ideological life of the people, for it involved Hindus and Muslims who followed the same or similar vocations in East and West Bengal. The *jati*- or caste division of the people (which should not be confused with the *varna*, or four-class distinction of the Hindus)<sup>13</sup> had become so deep-rooted in the society that many functional castes emerged among the Muslims. Cotton weaving had developed as an important industry in which both Hindu and Muslim castes were engaged. In riverine Bengal, fishing was also an important occupation of Hindu and Muslim castes. The castes of oil-pressers included both the Hindu *kolu* and the Muslim *khulu*.<sup>14</sup>

A Bengali ethnic unit had thus emerged irrespective of the regional and religious distinctions of the people, and it approached the point of attaining nationhood in the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries. The people of Bengal had a territorial identification, a common history, a community of culture and language, a common economic organization based on agriculture and industry (mainly the production of cotton and silk textiles demanded in the international market through the agencies of European East India Companies), and a dis-

tinct psychological identity that was asserted against superior or analogous powers. (Examples of the latter were the role of the *barbhuinyas*, the twelve feudatory lords of Bengal, who included both Hindus and Muslims and who sometimes combined, irrespective of religious faith, to overthrow the suzerainty of the Mughal rulers; the several attempts of the Nawabs of Bengal—who had both Hindu and Muslim generals and ministers—to declare the province of Bengal independent of the Mughal state power; and the sustained defense organized by the Bengalis against Maratha domination in the eighteenth century.) This Bengali unity, in the course of nation-building among its people and state-formation in its territory, has been particularly emphasized in recent years by the Muslim intelligentsia of Bangladesh:

The whole thesis about the Bengali Muslims centred round two alternatives: either they were low caste Hindus converted to Islam, or they were immigrants, Mughal, Syeds, Pathans or at least Shaikhs. The third and possibly the more correct assessment, namely that they were essentially neither but a distinct cultural entity could never occur to any one. Bengali soil and Bengali blood are admittedly of innumerable origins but they are distinct identities in themselves. History of the growth and development also made the Bengali culture a distinct culture and the people a distinct people. . . . So long as the traces of peculiar origin are preserved the immigrants will remain alien residents in Bengal rather than become people of Bengal.<sup>15</sup>

#### *Alienation of Bengali Muslims from Bengali Hindus*

The economy of Bengal suffered serious reverses in the first phase of British rule, and this affected the Muslims more adversely than the Hindus. The Muslims were deliberately discriminated against in the field of administration and civic organization as well as in economic activities related to the interests of the British East India Company and its officials, who ruled the country in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. They were held in suspicion by the Company officials and were regarded as direct representatives of the previous rulers. The Muslim aristocracy also pursued a policy of aloofness from the Company's activities, and in general retreated to obscure stations or dispersed in the countryside, thereby losing the position of leadership in society which it had held previously along with its Hindu counterparts.<sup>16</sup>

The Hindus, on the other hand, were favored by the Company and its officials, although most of the previous Hindu revenue farmers, merchants, etc., were removed from the social scene.<sup>17</sup> There were, however, other Hindus who closely aligned themselves with the Company and its officials; as their agents (known as *baniyan* or *gomostha*), this group gained a strong footing in the economic organization of Bengal through dealings in its merchandise and other products.<sup>18</sup> But eventually, unlike their English counterparts, these agents were unable to thrive as merchants or to invest their gains in industrial production because the foreign ruler's policy was not conducive to such a course of development.<sup>19</sup> They could, however, turn themselves into a landed aristocracy, especially after the Permanent Settlement of Land in Bengal from 1793,<sup>20</sup> and in this pursuit East Bengal appeared to them as a virgin field because "Rajahs" were few and far between there. Consequently, by the middle of the nineteenth century the powerful landlords of East Bengal were Hindus, with a few exceptions—e.g., the Nawabs of Dacca, Bogra, and Jalpaiguri. Moreover, subinfeudation followed in the wake of the Permanent Settlement of Land,<sup>21</sup> and ever-increasing numbers of Hindus (who were in an advantageous position to accumulate some wealth) became subsidiary landlords. The process operated throughout Bengal, but in East Bengal it took the character of Hindu landlords versus Muslim peasantry (the latter constituted the bulk of the local population).

Because of their socioeconomic superiority, the Hindus could usurp almost all the facilities then available for education, which even wealthy Muslims kept away from for various reasons.<sup>22</sup> As a result the Bengali "baboons" (clerks) in the government and in mercantile firms were virtually all Hindus. At the same time, educated Hindus could employ their time in the pursuit of science, art, and literature while living on their rents from land. The socioeconomic structure of Bengal had changed so much in about a century that the 1871 census report recorded:

Hindus, with exceptions of course, are the principal *zamindars*, *talukdars* [owners of large subinfeudatory estates], public officers, men of learning, moneylenders, traders, shopkeepers, and [are] engaging in most active pursuits of life and coming directly and frequently under the notice of the rulers of the country; while the Musalmans, with exceptions also, form a very large majority of the cultivators of the

ground and of the day labourers, and others engaged in the very humblest forms of mechanical skill and of buying and selling.<sup>23</sup>

The "middle class" that developed in Bengal by the end of the nineteenth century was thus composed almost entirely of Hindus, which affected the previously established harmony in Bengal's social structure and was felt more keenly in East Bengal because of its Muslim majority. Some Hindu intellectuals lamented the loss to Bengal because of the decay of Muslim literature and culture<sup>24</sup> but, in general, the Hindus remained oblivious to it. Moreover, their reaction to the situation was influenced by the resurgence, in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, of government supported religious orthodoxy in both communities; this tended to separate Hindus and Muslims who had previously been brought closer by the propagation of humanistic values.<sup>25</sup> The upshot was that the socioeconomically dominant group began to show indifference and even contempt toward the Muslim way of life, and the latter group reacted sharply. A conflict situation, which was perennial but not pervasive in earlier times, thus emerged and had a pernicious effect on the course of nation-building and state-formation in Bengal.

Yet the "Bengali" identity remained. In 1905, there was such a powerful movement against the British proposal to divide Bengal administratively into East and West that the proposal had to be hastily withdrawn. It may be that the intercommunity conflict, now in the open, failed to lead to a decisive rupture of Hindu-Muslim relations because anti-British stances (displayed mostly by Hindus) during the Sepoy Rebellion of 1857, as well as the growing national movement from the 1890s on, had led the rulers to shift their support to the Muslim community<sup>26</sup>—a support which the latter readily accepted in order to recover its social position and status. Muslim leaders persuaded the government to offer special facilities for education and jobs for the Muslims, and a Muslim middle class began to grow in Bengal, especially at the beginning of the present century.<sup>27</sup>

The concurrent shift in the agrarian economy of Bengal helped in the growth of the Muslim middle class. At the close of the nineteenth century, crops in Bengal were steadily acquiring a commodity value in the ever-growing external and home markets.<sup>28</sup> Accordingly, although they were a distinct minority in the total society, the peasants with substantial holdings which could not be cultivated solely by

their own labor ceased to settle their surplus holdings on other peasants under the temporary tenures allowed under the rules of the Permanent Settlement of Land. Instead, they began to have these holdings cultivated by sharecroppers recruited from the ranks of impoverished peasants, since in this way they could acquire more land and employ their newly acquired holdings for the same mode of production. Thus a category known as *jotedar* (landholder) emerged in rural Bengal, distinct from the category of *zamindar* created by the Permanent Settlement of Land.<sup>29</sup> Naturally, in the Muslim majority area of East Bengal an appreciable number of *jotedars* were Muslims, and the number increased in course of time; some, like their Hindu counterparts, became petty *zamindars* in order to raise their social status. (See Table 1.)

Table 1

Rural Bengal, 1946	% of total households	
	Hindu	Muslim
Petty <i>zamindar</i> , <i>jotedar</i> , rich farmer	5	3
Self-sufficient owner-cultivator	37	44
Sharecropper, agricultural laborer	58	53
Total	100	100

Each category contains equivalent and corresponding rural occupations.  
Source: Ramkrishna Mukherjee, *The Dynamics of a Rural Society* (Akademie-Verlag, Berlin; Popular Prakashan, Bombay, 1957), p. 88, Table 2.1.

Since most of the *jotedars* could afford the cost of higher education for their sons or provide them with capital to invest in businesses in neighboring towns, a large number of *jotedar* families forged links with the urban middle class, as one or more members of the family became a school or college teacher, a lawyer, doctor, businessman, government or civic official, clerk, etc. This process among both the Hindu and Muslim rural elites in the post-1920 period, and especially among the Muslims in the eastern region of Bengal, has been traced in intensive village and case studies.<sup>30</sup> They show how the Muslim middle class could grow at a rapid rate in the post-1920 pe-

riod because Bengal, and particularly its eastern region, was overwhelmingly rural. (See Tables 2 and 3.)

Table 2

Highest social groups in Bengal, 1931	% literate to total population	% literate in English to total population
Brahman, Vaidya, Kayastha Hindu	36	40
Sayyad Muslim	22	28

Source: Ramkrishna Mukherjee, op. cit., p. 125, Table 2.7.

Table 3

Classes of economic structure in Bengal, 1931	% of total population			
	Brahman, Vaidya, Kayastha	Sayyad Muslim	All Hindus	All Muslims
I	61	31	20	14
II	22	47	44	67
III	17	22	36	19
Total	100	100	100	100

Source: Ramkrishna Mukherjee, op. cit., p. 96, Table 2.4.

It thus appeared that the emergence of a new economic structure in the first quarter of the present century would override the regional and religious distinctions of the "Bengali" people. It seemed likely that the growing propertied class of Hindus and Muslims would unite in relation to the impoverished but increasingly unified Hindu and Muslim peasantry and their like, and that further changes in Bengali society would be effected primarily on the economic plane, with repercussions in the social and ideological life of the people. There were indications to support this conjecture. Leaders of the Muslim middle class, such as Moulvi A. K. Fazlul Huq and Md. Azizul Huq, organized the Krishak Praja Party (literally, Peasants and People's Party), which remained restricted to Bengal and served es-

sentially as the mouthpiece of the *jotedar* interest in Bengal's economy and politics.<sup>31</sup> The party refrained from taking a religious or communal stand, and found members and allies among the Hindu middle class with substantial *jotedar* interest, as was evident from the Hindu members and supporters of the government formed by the party in Bengal. On the other hand, the peasant movement of Bengal, which flared up during the 1930s and the 1940s under the leadership of the Communist Party of India, was stronger in East Bengal and had a large following among the Muslim peasantry.

The Hindu middle class, however, was solidly entrenched in Bengal's economy. The corresponding Muslim interest could not compete with it even though it held political power from 1937. The urban population, the educated community, the landed interests, and the bureaucracy of Bengal were still predominantly Hindu. Regionally, moreover, West Bengal (with its Hindu stronghold) held East Bengal (with its Muslim stronghold) as its hinterland.

In the circumstances, the Bengali Muslim middle class envisaged a quicker and easier way to further its interests by responding to the call of the All-India Muslim League, which was steadily gaining strength with the demand for a Muslim homeland. In this way it expected to secure a territory and government of its own, as well as its own market in goods and services. Therefore, instead of pursuing only the Krishak Praja Party, Muslim leaders first aligned themselves with and later joined the Muslim League. They began to maneuver the Muslim peasantry (especially in East Bengal) through the influence they wielded in the countryside as *jotedars* and other variants of the rural elite.<sup>32</sup> The Congress Party, with its core leadership representing the Hindu landed and business interests, was regarded by the Muslims as a Hindu organization. The Communist Party and other left-wing parties were not strong enough to check the communal drift. As a result, influenced by the supra-Bengal course of religious separation in Indian society as a whole, the differing regional and religious identities of the "Bengali" people won out over their combined ethnic and national identity. Nation-building and state-formation in Bengal took an unprecedented turn: in 1947 the two regions of Bengal were awarded to two newly created state formations—West Bengal to the Indian Union and East Bengal to Pakistan.

Table 4

Bengal (before partition)	% of total	
	Hindu	Muslim
Urban population (1931 census)	12	4
Literate aged 5+ (1931 census)	16	7
Yearly agricultural income (in thousand rupees) of assessed families of <i>jotedars</i> , large-scale farmers, and owner-cultivators	27 51 11 4 2 1 1 1 1	23 58 11 4 2 1 1 1
Government officers in executive, judicial, and police posts (1940)	59	37

Source: *Partition of Bengal* (H. Chatterjee and Co., Calcutta, 1947); *Bengal Ministry and the Hindus of Bengal* (Director of Public Information, Government of Bengal, Calcutta, 1940). Figures are computed by the writer.

Table 5

Perennial industries (with 20 or more workers in each factory) in Bengal, 1945	No. factories		No. workers (thousands)	
	West	East	West	East
Minerals and metals	30	—	25	—
Chemicals, paper, and printing	257	7	45	0.2
Raw materials processing (including food, drink, and tobacco) and service industries	593	29	94	4
Textiles (cotton, jute, silk)	155	18	326	11
Engineering, shipbuilding, power generation, manufacture and repair, transport and communication, government works	465	29	194	11
Total	1500	83	684	26

Source: *Large Industrial Establishments in India, 1946* (Government of India, Delhi, 1950). Figures are computed by the writer.

#### Alienation of Bengali Muslims from "Western" Muslims

It appeared that the Bengali Muslim interests would have free and full play in East Pakistan. The communal riots, which preceded the partition of India and recurred in East Pakistan several times afterward, led to the migration of 3.14 million Bengali Hindus from East Pakistan to West Bengal in 1947–1961.<sup>33</sup> This facilitated the growth of a Muslim market in goods and services, but Muslims indigenous to Bengal proved able only partially to utilize the opportunities thus created. Bengali Muslims were permitted rather easy access to the lower and middle ranges of economic activities, especially to the professions of lawyer, teacher, doctor, etc.; but the top governmental, commercial, and industrial positions became virtually the monopoly of West Pakistanis posted to Bengal from the center of gravity of Pakistan in Sind and West Punjab. Similarly, the big business interests, which flowered in East Pakistan, were controlled by West Pakistanis or by Urdu-speaking refugee Muslims from central and northern India who had migrated to Bengal with capital and/or business acumen and experience. As reported in an unpublished study made in the 1960s by an international research organization which must remain anonymous: "Of the largest factories in the East Wing, including the largest, all but one are owned by non-Bengalis." Again, in analyzing the factors in Bengali regionalism in Pakistan, Lambert noted that "many of the ways in which *paschimas* [people from West Pakistan] were supposed to be exploiting the East Bengalis were much the same as those formerly charged against the Hindus and the British."<sup>34</sup>

Regional, linguistic, and kinship ties strengthened the bonds between the East Pakistani top bureaucracy and big business, from which Bengali Muslims were virtually barred. Moreover, law and order, together with the security and defense of this wing of Pakistan, were almost entirely in the hands of West Pakistanis. The subservient position of the Bengali Muslims in the economic structure of East Pakistan was thus reinforced. (See Table 6.)

In the first few years, however, the discriminatory situation was not apparent to the Bengali Muslims. Their middle class elements had not yet emerged sufficiently for them to aspire to the top positions in the governmental, commercial, and industrial sectors. The

Table 6

East Pakistan, 1955	Number of:	
	West Pakistanis	East Pakistanis
Civil servants		
Secretary	19	—
Joint Secretary	38	3
Deputy Secretary	123	10
Under Secretary	510	38
Total	690	51
Military officers		
Lt. General	3	—
Major General	20	—
Brigadier	34	1
Colonel	49	1
Lt. Colonel	198	2
Major	590	10
Air Force personnel	640	60
Naval officers	593	7
Total	2,127	81

Source: Richard D. Lambert, "Factors in Bengali Regionalism in Pakistan," *Far Eastern Survey*, April 1959, pp. 49-58.

Bengali Muslim elites, as well as the masses (with whom the former maintained live contact in rural and urban areas), were satisfied to fill the vacuum created by the emigration of Bengali Hindus from the middle stratum of economic activities, while the upper stratum was filled mainly by non-Bengali Muslims. Nevertheless, although truncated at the top, the market in goods and services which the Bengali Muslims obtained with the advent of Pakistan facilitated the spread of education among their children. According to census figures, from 1951 to 1961 the percentage of literates to the total population (excluding readers of the Holy Quran) rose from 13 to 18.<sup>35</sup> A sample survey of students in Dacca city in 1957 showed that 77 percent of the university and undergraduate students came from villages; the mother tongue of 93 percent of them was Bengali, and for 50 percent the father's education was under-matriculation or none.<sup>36</sup>

The Bengali Muslim middle class thus grew at a far more rapid rate than ever before, and within a few years the process began to provide an ever-increasing number of new aspirants for governmental, managerial, and executive jobs, while the vacuum created by the displacement of the Hindu population from East Pakistan was soon overfilled. In addition, those who had previously occupied the middle rungs of the economic ladder began to chafe at the lack of opportunity to further improve their positions.

The upshot was that the Bengali Muslims' orientation to social change became focused on regional disparities rather than on a comparison of their past and present conditions. They were no longer concerned with their position before and after the establishment of Pakistan in East Bengal, but with contrasting the opportunities available in the eastern and western wings of the republic. A social force thus began to gather momentum among the Bengali Muslims to throw off the lid that was obstructing the course of development they had aspired to when they subscribed to the ideology of Pakistan in the last phase of British rule in India, namely, to possess a territory and government of their own and to control their own market in goods and services. With this new perspective, they soon discovered that they were not only deprived of economic opportunities in their homeland but that the fruits of their capital and labor were being utilized more for the betterment of West than East Pakistan.

Table 7

Characteristics	West Pakistan	East Pakistan
Population in millions (1961 census)	43	51
Urban population as percentage of total (1961 census)	23	5
Percent share of total workers in large-scale manufacturing industries (1959-1960)	69	.31
Percent increase in civilian labor force (1951-1961)		
Agricultural	22	39
Nonagricultural	56	18
Percent increase in share of literate to total population aged 5 or more (1951-1961)	75	5
Percentage of population with 5+ years of schooling to the total aged 10+ (1961)		
Male	15	13
Female	4	2
Total	10	8

Table 7 (Continued)

Characteristics	West Pakistan	East Pakistan
Educational grants from central government (1947–1955, in Rs. billion)	1.5	0.2
Per capita yearly expenditure on education (Rs.)	9	6
Financial assistance and grants-in-aid from central government (1947–1955, in Rs. billion)	10.5	1.4
Number of hospital beds (1966, in thousands)	26	7
Road mileage (1953, in thousands)		
High-grade	8	0.8
Low-grade	24	25
Railway route-mileage (1961, in thousands)	5	2
Foreign aid allotted by central government (1947–1955, in Rs. billions)	0.7	0.2
Capital expenditure of central government (1947–1955, in Rs. billions)	2.1	0.6
Average yearly per capita consumption (1951–1960)		
Cereals (lbs.)	333	349
Sugar (lbs.)	54	19
Salt (lbs.)	17	12
Tea (lbs.)	1	0.1
Cigarettes (no.)	121	21
Cloth (yds.)	8	2
Paper (lbs.)	1	0.4
Matches (no.)	11	7
Coal (lbs.)	66	32
Petrol (gallons)	1	0.1
Electricity (kw)	19	1
Per capita gross regional product (GRP) in Rs. million factor cost of 1959/60		
Pre-Plan (1950/51–1954/55)	343	297
First Plan (1955/56–1959/60)	364	275
Second Plan (1960/61–1964/65)	393	301
East Pakistan GRP per capita as percentage of West Pakistan GRP per capita		
1950/51–1954/55	87	
1955/56–1959/60	76	
1960/61–1964/65	77	
Average annual compound rates of growth at 1959/60 factor (1949/50–1964/65)		
Agriculture	2.5	1.7
Nonagriculture	5.5	4.6
GRP	4.0	2.8
Population	2.5	2.5
GRP per capita	1.5	0.3
Average percent share of overseas trade at current prices (1950/51–1964/65)		
Imports	70	30
Exports	43	57

Table 7 (Continued)

Characteristics	West Pakistan	East Pakistan
Inter-wing (East to West or West to East Pakistan) imports of foreign merchandise on private account (in Rs. million, 1948/49–1956/57)	179	270
Percent increase in inter-wing balance of trade (exports minus imports), always adverse for East Pakistan (1950/51–1964/65)	162	
Average percent share of imports of capital goods and materials for capital goods (1951/52–1959/60)	70	30
Percent share of estimates of fixed investment (1959/60–1965/66)	68	32
Average percent of investment to GRP (1960/61–1964/65)	20	11
Average percent of saving to GRP (1960/61–1964/65)	12	8
Average percent of investment financed by own saving	60	80
Percent share of public sector investment or development expenditure (1950/51–1964/65)	61	39
Percent share of foreign private investments (including loans associated with equity investments) (1963–1964)	77	23
Percent share of loans from Pakistan Industrial Credit and Investment Corporation and Industrial Development Bank of Pakistan (1961/62–1966/67)	64	36
Defense expenditure of Central Government (1947–1955, in Rs. billions)	4.7	0.1

Source: Stephen R. Lewis, Jr., *Pakistan: Industrialization and Trade Policies* (Oxford University Press, London, 1970); Richard D. Lambert, op. cit.; G. S. Bhargava, *Pakistan in Crisis* (Vikas Publications, Delhi, 1969); F. B. Arnold, *Pakistan: Economic and Commercial Conditions* (Her Majesty's Stationery Office, London, 1955); *A Note on the Utilization of Agricultural Surpluses for Economic Development in Pakistan* (UN Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East, Bangkok, 1961); S. U. Khan, "A Measure of Economic Growth in East and West Pakistan," *Pakistan Development Review*, Vol. I, No. 2; Anwar Iqbal Qureshi, *Pakistan Economic Survey 1963–64* (Government of Pakistan, Rawalpindi, 1964); Akhlaqur M. Rahman, "The Role of the Public Sector in the Economic Development of Pakistan," in E. A. G. Robinson and Michael Kidron (eds.), *Economic Development of South Asia* (Macmillan and Co. Ltd., London, 1970). Figures are computed by the author.

#### Birth of Bangladesh

The germ of the East Pakistanis' alienation from the West Pakistanis was present from the time the Bengali Muslims responded to the call of Pakistan. Mr. Jinnah, the architect of Pakistan, had declared that "India is not a nation, nor a country" and that "the

Muslims are not a minority but a nation and self-determination is their birthright." But when the Bengali Moulvi A. K. Fazlul Huq moved the famous Lahore resolution of 1940, in which the Muslim League demanded explicitly, for the first time, the creation of Pakistan, the wording of the resolution made it clear that the demand was for two "Pakistans," one of which would be in Bengal: "The areas in which the Muslims are numerically in majority, as in the north-western and eastern zones of India, should be grouped to constitute 'Independent States' in which the constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign."<sup>37</sup> During the last few years of British rule, however, the alienation of the Muslims from the Hindus overpowered the force of ethnic and national identity of the Bengalis. Correspondingly, the consolidation of the Muslims in the two wings of Pakistan was marked by the Bengalis in Pakistan identifying themselves primarily as Pakistanis. It thus appeared that the "two nation" theory of Mr. Jinnah was not merely a political maneuver: a nation was being built on the basis of the Muslim way of life.

Islamization of East Pakistan and Arabicization of the Bengali language and literature facilitated the course of religious consolidation. In addition to the fact that, from 1948 on, frequent declarations of Pakistan as an Islamic state were no less enthusiastically received in the east than in the west wing of Pakistan,<sup>38</sup> the 1951 census returned 8.9 million people in East Pakistan as "literates, including Holy Quran readers,"<sup>39</sup> of which 3.3 million persons were exclusively of the latter category. A survey of undergraduate and post-graduate students in Dacca in 1957 showed that although Bengali was the mother tongue for 93 percent of them, 35 percent of these Bengali students could read, write, and speak in Urdu, and 34 percent could read and write Arabic; by contrast, only 2 percent of those whose mother tongue was not Bengali could read, write, and speak Bengali.<sup>40</sup> Also, the deliberate imposition of Arabic words upon the Bengali language and literature by the new enthusiasts was not resented at first. A possibility had thus opened up for the people of East Pakistan to drift further away from those of West Bengal and forge a stronger link with those of West Pakistan, the *paschimas*.

The honeymoon, however, was soon over. Economic and political discrimination against the East Pakistanis snapped the theocratic bond of all Pakistanis. Significantly, the 1961 census recorded that the number of Holy Quran readers in East Pakistan had dropped

from 3.3 million in 1951 to 1.7 million.<sup>41</sup> Nation-building in East Pakistan again took a different turn. By 1948 the grumblings of discontent were heard in the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan: "A feeling is growing among the Eastern Pakistanis that Eastern Pakistan is being neglected and treated merely as a 'colony' of Western Pakistan."<sup>42</sup> A Bengali identity then began to reemerge, corresponding to the alienation of the East from the West Pakistanis. It first took shape in the demand for Bengali as a national language, and climaxed in the police firing on demonstrators on February 21, 1952. The floodgate of a new nationalism in East Pakistan opened up, and this day has since been observed as the "day of martyrs" (*Sahid Dibas*).

In the new situation, the old leaders of the Bengali middle class became active again. Moulvi A. K. Fazlul Huq, mover of the 1940 Lahore resolution of the Muslim League, and erstwhile colleagues like Md. Azizul Huq formed the Krishak Sramik Party (Peasants' and Workers' Party) in the image of their previously established Krishak Praja Party. This party, like its predecessor noncommunal in character, demanded in its twelve-point program of July 29, 1953, recognition of Bengali as a state language and full regional autonomy for East Pakistan on the basis of the 1940 Lahore resolution. The initiative, however, passed from these older hands to such new leaders as Maulana Bhashani, as well as to Sheikh Mujibur Rahman who led the Awami League movement, launched a radical program for the future of East Pakistan, and found the broadest response from "radical Muslim intellectuals, members of the national bourgeoisie, peasants, workers, and owners of small and middle-size landholdings."<sup>43</sup>

In order to retain and consolidate its gains, the state retaliated with alternate measures of repression and concession, as had happened in the subcontinent of India during the last phase of British rule. And the results were also similar to those in British India: the adopted measures merely fed the ever-growing national upsurge of the East Pakistanis, who categorically ceased to identify themselves as Pakistanis. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the leader of the people, became henceforth Bangabandhu (Friend of Bengal). On April 17, 1971, the territory of the eastern wing of Pakistan was renamed Bangladesh (the land of Bengal) and on December 16, 1971, Bangladesh became a free and sovereign country.

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## 2. The Structural Matrix of the Struggle in Bangladesh

Feroz Ahmed

Ever since its creation in 1947, Pakistan has been a geographical absurdity, with its two parts separated by one thousand miles of unfriendly Indian territory. Greater than the spatial distance is the difference in the social structure, economy, and culture. Adherence to a common religion, Islam, was never sufficient to make these two dissimilar parts a single nation. But for almost twenty-four years Pakistan weathered all storms and maintained a precarious unity. That unity was finally broken in March 1971 when the West Pakistani military launched an all-out war to suppress the movement for regional autonomy in East Pakistan, forcing the region to declare itself an independent People's Republic of Bangladesh. The genocidal attacks of the West Pakistani army against the Bengali people and the agony of the millions of refugees who were forced to flee to India have now become a familiar story.<sup>1</sup>

While focusing their attention on the massacre and the inhuman conditions of the refugees, the Western media have by and large ignored the roots of the crisis. The most common explanation of the conflict, the traditional hatred between the Bengalis and Punjabis, misses the point entirely. In this brief article I shall attempt to show that the conflict in Pakistan is a synergetic product of U.S. foreign policy operating within Pakistan's social structure.

### *Social Structure*

Basic to an understanding of political developments in any country is the analysis of its social structure. Here I shall not attempt to

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