

On The Martyred Intellectuals' Day 2006

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We observe on December 14 every year as **Martyred Intellectuals' Day** since 1972 in order to mark the selective killing of members of the Bengali intelligentsia by the Pakistani occupation forces and their local henchmen (collaborators), armed gangs such as Razakar, Al Badr and Al-Shams, through the nine months of the liberation war in 1971. In fact, the Pakistani occupation army started killing of the revered sons and daughters of the nation at the very onset of the genocide that began on 25th March 1971. Dhaka University became their first target and a number of professors were killed. (For more, pls see [Ajoy Roy's Article](#) and [Nuruzzaman Manik's](#) write up). And the killing of intellectuals by the collaborators of the Pakistani occupation army continued even in January 1972. For instance, we can refer Famous Filmmaker and writer **Zahir Raihan**, Journalist **Gulam Rahman** and **Dr Mansur Ali** who were missed or killed December 21, 1971 to 31 January 1972. In view of the fact that, the most extreme cases of targeted killing of intellectuals took place on December 14, 1971, two days before the surrender of the occupation forces, the first prime minister of Bangladesh, **the late Tajuddin Ahmed** (killed in Jail on Nov 3, 1975), declared December 14 **Martyred Intellectuals' Day**.

However, a comprehensive list of the martyred intellectuals is yet to be prepared, and so is an inquiry into the nature, dimension and extent of the selective killing. Unfortunately, no official inquiry has been done so far.

Besides, the report of the Buddhijibi Nidhan Tathyanusandhan Committee formed by a group of leading seven civil society members on December 18, 1971 for inquiry into the killings, has never been come to light, let alone followed up. The then prime minister of Bangladesh, **the late Tajuddin Ahmed** decided on December 31 to form an inquiry commission for an inquiry into the nature, dimension and extent of the Genocide, specially the killing of the intellectuals. But the decision was never implemented. (Ref. The New Age, December 15, 2005)

Allegedly, the leaders of Jamat-e-Islami and its paramilitary arm, the Al-Badr and Al-Shams forces created a list of doctors, teachers, poets and scholars. (Ref. Dr. Rashid Askari, "Our martyred intellectuals", editorial, the Daily Star, December 14, 2005). The Buddhijibi Nidhan Tathyanusandhan Committee recovered a list/ document prepared by **Dr. Syed Sazzad Hossain**, Prof of Rajshahi University, listed 30 university teachers. The martyred intellectuals were on the list. The committee also narrowed down the list of suspects to three names, including **Chowdhury Mainuddin** and **Asrafuzzaman** of the Al-Badr. (The New Age, ibid). Some sources also allege the role of the **CIA** in devising the plan. (Ref: Dr. M.A. Hasan, Juddhaporadh, Gonohatya o bicharer anneshan, War

Crimes Fact Finding Committee and Genocide archive & Human Studies Centre, Dhaka, 2001

After the circulation of the Bangladesh Collaborators Order 1972, widely known as the collaborators order, on Jan 24, 1972, The Govt.of **Bongobondhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman** set up 73 special tribunals to try Razakar, Al-Badr and Al-Shams forces, defined as collaborators in the order. The families of many martyred intellectuals filled cases under the order. No specific information on the fate of the cases could be found as the old files and police records were untraceable.

The collaborators order was, meanwhile amended three times in 1972. The process of trial and conviction was, however, impeded by a general amnesty of the collaborators in 1973. Under the general amnesty, about 26,000 out of the 30,000 people held or convicted under the collaborators act were released. While the amnesty did not apply to those charged with murder, rape or arson, a large number of persons charged with murder, rape or arson, including prominent collaborators, were also released.

The collaborators order was finally revoked on December 31, 1975 and almost all of the collaborators convicted were released in the early days of the regime of **Gen. Ziaur Rahman** (killed in a coup de tat in Chittagong, 30 May, 1981), burying the process of the trial of the collaborators.

The slayers of the intellectuals have not been tried yet even though the requisite law was entaced, special tribunals were formed and special prosecutors were appointed. The families of the martyred intellectuals still wait the faint look forward to the justice.

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