

Come Forward to Save Bangladesh from Its Plundering-Terrorist Ruling Class

Towards a Total Liberation of the People of Bangladesh

National Convention

**24 October 2003, Friday, 10:00 am, Engineers' Institution, Dhaka
Convener: Badruddin Umar**

The life of the people in Bangladesh is enormously endangered by the regime of its ruling class, which thrives on plunder and violence. Lack of safety and security characterises life in general, while unemployment and inflation continue to threaten the economic life of the masses. In order to change this life—unbearable as it is—a widespread disquiet has been created among the people of Bangladesh. Indeed, the people have been desperately seeking and awaiting such a change.

The conditions of actual existence in Bangladesh are prompting its people to agitate at a time when the ruling class itself has reached an impasse. But this does not imply that the ruling class is completely unable to function at this moment by any means. Indeed, this class continues to rule. The impasse in question, however, suggests that the survival of the ruling class as a class-in-itself is no longer possible; on the contrary, the ruling class in Bangladesh is disintegrating very rapidly.

Instances of disintegration are generalised today in the economic, administrative, security, educational, and legal systems of the ruling class in Bangladesh. Above all, signs of disintegration are most evident in the political parties and organisations of the ruling class. This entire process of disintegration has contributed to social disorder and chaos, and as a consequence, the life of the people in Bangladesh is acutely afflicted, deeply devastated, and utterly unsettled.

The primary cause of the disintegration in question inherently resides in the very process of the ruling-class formation in Bangladesh. Subsequent to the emergence of Bangladesh as an “independent” nation-state (in 1971), its ruling class has been formed mainly through such practices as plunder and corruption rather than through “exploitation,” the persistence of the latter notwithstanding. Through this process, instead of developing and maturing as an exploitative and reactionary class, the ruling class has rapidly constituted itself as one that characteristically thrives on plunder and violence. Today what we witness in Bangladesh is exactly the rule and regime of this plundering lumpen-bourgeoisie.

The rich capitalist, the bourgeoisie, is primarily a reactionary element in society who lives on exploitation. The bourgeoisie builds mountains of social wealth by exploiting surplus-value from what the labour-power of the proletariat produces. It is in the interest of exploitation that the bourgeoisie also institutes and mobilizes concomitant and corresponding administrative and coercive apparatuses, mechanisms, and measures. But the ruling class in Bangladesh that

remains compulsively disposed to loot existing wealth and resources through corruption and violence—instead of appropriating surplus-value in the process of production as the source of accumulating wealth—is constitutively and qualitatively different from the exploitative bourgeoisie of the kind described above. The latter generally carries out administration—characterized of course by exploitation and oppression—through certain defined rules and laws. But the ruling-class corruption and violence prevalent in Bangladesh today are by no means subservient to rules and laws as such. Rather, corruption and violence keep multiplying only through demolishing the existing structures of law and order.

In the context of the increasing deterioration of law and order in today's Bangladesh, the main reason for the consequent chaotic condition in which the entire country finds itself is that the ruling class no longer finds it possible to govern the people and the country in the old ways, bankrupt as these ways are; nor does this class have the least ability to inaugurate and evolve new modes and methods of governance. Therefore, the failure of a given government cannot merely be attributed to its specific role. Rather, the failure of each government in Bangladesh reflects in microcosm the general crises of governance into which the entire ruling class has fully flung itself. Such failures have only increased and intensified from one government to another in the course of time.

In such conditions, the gulf and alienation not only between the people and the government-in-power but also between the masses and the entire ruling class have been sharp, deep, and increasingly unbridgeable. Under any system whatsoever, this kind of alienation by no means ensures the longevity of the ruling class. Instead, such alienation creates conditions for the total ruin of the ruling class itself.

And, indeed, the entire ruling class in today's Bangladesh stands face to face with the threat of ruin or abolition. This class is inherently so weak that it can no longer resort to any force worth a name within its structure of governance to preclude the possibility of its abolition. This absence of internal strength, therefore, compels the national ruling class to rely increasingly on a configuration of foreign forces or on imperialism itself—particularly on US imperialism. In fact, the support from US imperialism constitutes the most indispensable condition for the survival and sustenance of the ruling class in Bangladesh today.

Under the “New World Order”—defined and dictated as it is by US imperialism—the ruling class in Bangladesh is rapidly destroying the country's industries in order to serve and expand foreign commercial interests. While the need to develop mills and industries remains increasingly acute in a country like Bangladesh, a great number of mills—from Adamjee Jute Mill to other jute mills, from textile mills to paper mills to sugar mills—have been, and are being, closed down on the pretext of incurring so-called “losses.” Thus millions of workers are being laid off now, while tools and machinery are being destroyed daily. This year alone—according to the new program designed to destroy industry—as many as 105 industries will be shut down. And following the closures of those industries, the ruling-class orgy of plundering industrial property and resources will set in with a vengeance.

In addition to mills and industries, the banks in Bangladesh remain the target of the ruling-class plunderers and robbers. Loan-defaulters—who owe thousands and thousands of crores of

Taka to the banks—have brought these institutions to such a critical situation that the financial system of the country is beset with insurmountable crises today. Thousands and thousands of bank employees are currently facing threats of dismissal.

The government has brought under its ministerial jurisdiction the Bangladesh Railway, thus opening up yet another way to extensive plunder. The land belonging to the railway is being taken away, the actual length of the railtrack is being reduced, the railway workshops are being closed down, and hideous attempts are being made to transform the railway into a corporation such that this means of mass transport is rendered amply vulnerable to destruction in the interests of foreign and imperialist motor industries from the US, Japan, and India. What also accompanies this phenomenon is an ongoing machination to extract and deplete apace the most valuable fuel-resource in the country—namely gas—by way of exporting it from Bangladesh to India through US companies. This, indeed, increasingly devastates the economic life of the common masses, as the price of gas inside the country keeps gradually going up.

Under the governance of the ruling class, radical reforms of the land-system in Bangladesh are not even a remote possibility. But the existing land-system gives rise to numerous problems. Such problems do not merely include an acute lack of employment for the rural poor—including peasants and the rural proletariat—but also generally deter the development of agriculture and industry. The ruling class has created anarchy in the sphere of agriculture by gradually reducing the size of such crucial organizations as Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation (BADC) and thus diminishing their usefulness. And all this is being done in response to the imperatives and injunctions of such imperialist financial institutions as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and Asian Development Bank (ADB).

Under the general conditions prevailing in Bangladesh, what is most distinctly manifest is that such “un-political” elements as dishonest businessmen, retired corrupt bureaucrats, military officials, and other miscreants or delinquents figure predominantly in the political parties and organisations of the ruling class, and that leaders and workers at virtually all levels and layers of those organisations ferociously resort to the practices of unrestricted and unregulated corruption and plunder.

In a country like Bangladesh, where its plundering ruling class has established a reign of terror, it is understandable that the safety and security of all minorities continue to remain at stake in general. This is why religious, ethnic, and linguistic minorities are subject to all forms of oppression in the country. Since the establishment of Bangladesh as a nation-state, the ruling-class political party Awami League relentlessly looted and misappropriated the property of the Hindu minority by merely nominally changing “Enemy Property Law” to “Vested Property Law.” In a similar tradition, immediately following the election of October 01, 2001, oppression of the religious minority intensified in alarming proportions. Much of their property came under direct attacks and assaults. Some members of the Hindu minority even lost their lives in the hands of the assaulters. All this notwithstanding, the Hindu minority has not hitherto been seen as building an organised resistance against oppression and violence. Instead, reckoning India as their saviour and their shelter-giver, many Hindus tend to leave their own country in the face of attacks and assaults. Also, a segment of the Hindu population tends to join communal (religious sectarianist) organisations like “Hindu-Buddhist-Christian Unity Council” wherein they fall into

the trap of serving the political interests of the ruling class itself. All this is happening because there does not exist any well-organised political movement that can forge a strong unity among the people to protest and resist all forms and forces of oppression—interconnected as they are—to which both the minority and the majority remain subject in different degrees. Indeed, only a broad-based, united mass-resistance against the rule of the plundering terrorists can liberate the life of the people, otherwise divided as they are as the minority and the majority in the country.

What holds true in the case of religious minorities also applies to the predicament of ethnic and linguistic minorities in Bangladesh today. Violence perpetrated on such ethnic minorities as Chakma, Marma, Tripura, Murang, etc., of the Chittagong Hill Tracts as well as on Munda, Santal, Garo, Khasia, Manipuri, Rakhain, among others, is indeed a regular practice. Such minorities are being uprooted from their own homes and their own land. Their cultural life remains in jeopardy, while many of them live like exiles or aliens in their own country.

The movement for the right-to-language is an exemplary episode in the rich tradition of struggles of the Bengali-speaking people in this part of the world. But, following the rise of Bangladesh as a state, the Urdu-speaking people in this country have been deprived of their right to practise and cultivate their own language. For them, there are no schools, no programmes on the radio or television, and no press or newspapers. Like the Urdu-speaking people themselves, other minorities such as Santal, Chakma, Marma, Garo, Manipuri, and so on also continue to suffer fascist onslaughts on language.

Such assaults on, and oppressions of, minorities in Bangladesh remain inextricably intertwined with the exploitation and persecution of the majority. Thus, there is no other path to liberation than through the united resistance of both the majority and the minority against their common enemy—the plundering, terrorist ruling class.

Oppression and persecution of children and women—the most brutal forms of which are infanticide and the killing and rape of women—stubbornly persist in Bangladesh today. Currently, however, there are instances of prompt legal actions—including punishments such as death-sentences—against infanticide and other murders. But the situation in Bangladesh has taken such a dreadful turn that those possibilities of punishments notwithstanding, crimes such as infanticide, abduction of children, and the killing of women have only multiplied rather than showing any signs of abatement. This, indeed, is an unmistakable yardstick whereby one can measure the extent to which the criminalisation of society has increased in general.

The system of education in Bangladesh is now disintegrating apace. Undemocratic, unscientific, backward, and partisan curricula and pedagogies; lack and mismanagement of buildings, textbooks, and other educational means; an impulsive and imprudent institutionalisation of Bengali as the only medium of instruction and a pronounced ban on English without ensuring the availability and supply of necessary textbooks in Bengali in 1972, and other factors have together contributed to the decline of educational standards and thus to the egregious degeneration of the educational system itself. Far-ranging deleterious effects of such phenomena are seen in culture as well. One decisive upshot is the growing frustration of students themselves. Driven by discontent and despair, many students resort to drugs, mugging, rape, murder, violence, and looting. Because of their apparent inability to think and act positively and

properly, the consciousness and cultural life of most of the students remain underdeveloped, even imprisoned, so to speak. The major political parties of the ruling class take advantage of this unfortunate state into which students have now fallen. Such parties—in the interest of their own class—keep (ab)using students by deploying them as the former’s battalions of hitmen. Thus, the glorious and rich tradition of democratic and progressive student-movements in this country remains vulnerable to massive threats of destruction.

Criminalisation of the police system has reached such a level that corrupt culprits, terrorist criminals, and the police themselves walk and work arm-in-arm, and together keep committing crimes almost without restraint, from Dhaka to all other parts of the country. One large segment of such corrupt criminals and terrorists includes the leaders and members of different political parties of the ruling class—particularly the two major parties in the country.

As direct victims of such mainstream politics and administrative systems, the people have lost confidence in the present ruling class. In fact, the people have no expectations whatsoever from the ruling class. However, the people long for nothing short of change. But they do not seek a mere change of the government. The urge of the people to change the system itself is so deep and compelling that this seems unprecedented in the history of this country. It is this desperate longing for change that stands out as the most remarkable aspect of the people’s consciousness in Bangladesh today.

Their deep and desperate longing notwithstanding, the people in Bangladesh are not certain about the possibilities of change. They do not concretely envisage how this change will come about and what kind of political leadership will initiate, facilitate, and accelerate this change. At such a crucial juncture in history, the people, thus, stand face to face with those uncertainties as well.

The political parties wearing left-wing and communist masks—particularly those that are generally and officially known as “left-wing”—are mostly the organisations of the petit-bourgeoisie in this country. Therefore, for them, the questions of changing the existing system and inaugurating a new one do not arise at all, although those organisations remain somewhat active as parliamentary and non-parliamentary forces within the country. Taking on the names or labels of “communist” and “left-wing,” they keep wallowing within the vicious circle of bourgeois politics itself. In spite of their weaknesses, however, such parties have hitherto survived and gained a particular level of acceptance as the “left” political forces in certain circles, because those forces receive support and assistance from certain intellectuals who are in reality nothing but social props to the ruling class itself. Such intellectuals use established newspapers and other print media to promote the so-called left. And those newspapers in turn tactically present these intellectuals as the acceptable left and communist forces in the country only in order to safeguard and promote the interests of the ruling class.

But the inherent weakness of this ruling class has reached such a point that it is not possible for this class to survive much longer. Yet the fact that this class is somehow surviving at this moment has to do with an absence of necessary and adequate organisational forces capable of contesting, combating, and changing the contemporary configuration of power. But, as it was indicated, the weak ruling class is now unprecedentedly alienated from the people, and this

alienation is becoming even more flagrant. Although a strong, adequate, and complete resistance against this weak and alienated class is yet to take full shape, the conditions for such resistance are maturing at a rapid pace.

Despite the fact that money, weapons, and the entire state-power are all concentrated in the hands of the ruling-class political parties, the people of Bangladesh now potentially stand face-to-face with the country's ruling class, seeking its complete abolition. And those who will organise through identifying with, internalising, and representing the consciousness and aspirations of the masses are the ones under whose leadership the people of Bangladesh are likely to unite. The people themselves will then see who can possibly provide leadership in the service of the change they thirst for.

The level of antagonism between the people and the ruling class has now reached a particularly critical point. The people are generally opposed to the ruling class, and are completely distrustful and disdainful of each political party of the ruling class. The people are also opposed to imperialism—the major prop to the national ruling class. It is under such circumstances that the conditions for shifting the balance of power from the ruling class to the genuine representatives of the people have been created. In fact, a momentous change in the equation of power is imminent. The life of the people in Bangladesh can be likened to a parched leaf now. And one tiny spark in the otherwise arid climate of their life may end up causing a raging forest-fire.

The configuration of external forces or imperialism, particularly US imperialism—on whose support the ruling class of Bangladesh relies for its survival—is historically moving in the direction of a downfall, despite US imperialism's screaming propaganda, domination of dollars, and terrorism of the weapons of mass destruction. The internal crises of this imperialist state are assuming aggressive proportions day by day. Then, there are also conflicts and rivalries within the imperialist camp itself. And, more importantly, the people on a global scale are now unprecedentedly vocal and active against imperialism. Given this contemporary juncture, it is not possible for US imperialism to sustain for a long time its support to the ruling class in Bangladesh in the way, for instance, the US actually did to the ruling class in Vietnam. Owing to the rapid erosion of the internal forces of power and the progressive weakening of external power, the current ruling class will soon reach the doorstep of its own destruction. If the revolution in Bangladesh takes shape and gathers intensity and momentum, it is highly unlikely that the US will be in a position to take over Bangladesh in the way that the US occupied Iraq by dint of military strength. In fact, if the people themselves are firmly united and if they move forward in their resistance against the imperialist aggression, that very aggression then becomes impossible.

Although the possibilities of a direct US-imperial occupation of Bangladesh do not seem tenable, the US continues to subject Bangladesh to unequal agreements and treaties. Economic agreements such as the Trade and Investment Forum Agreement (TIFA) and other military agreements such as science and technology agreements relating to biological warfare, the Humanitarian Needs Assessment Agreement (2000), and the peace corps agreement are a few glaring cases in point. And the ruling class of Bangladesh keeps signing such imperialist and

subjugating agreements only as a desperate attempt to survive somehow in its current power and position.

The state of India has established its hegemonic and expansionist influence on Bangladesh, and is thus plundering and misappropriating the wealth of this country. Indeed, a range of Indian economic, cultural, and political interventions—designed to sabotage the country—persist in Bangladesh. Yet it is also impossible for India to intervene and interfere directly in, or for that matter perpetrate military aggressions on, the revolutionary situation in Bangladesh. There is indeed an infinite distance between the situation in which India entered Bangladesh in 1971 and a genuinely revolutionary situation. Therefore, India's attempts to intervene and interfere in Bangladesh would only invite monstrous political problems for India by simultaneously provoking unrest and creating messy situations on the northeastern borders of India as well as in West Bengal.

On the other hand, in the dialectical social process, changes in the situation of Bangladesh are coming about rapidly. As was already pointed out, the people have no faith whatsoever in the ruling class, and this class is simply unfit to be the ruling class insofar as it has meanwhile reached the decisive limits of its old-style governance and administration. In fact, its entire system of rule remains thoroughly chaotic and topsy-turvy today.

Under such messy circumstances, the people of Bangladesh continue to remain adversely affected and afflicted in a thousand ways. But, then, there is no safety, no security for even the very owners of the wealth in today's Bangladesh either. Their lives, dignity, honour, and wealth all remain targets of attack by other robbers and terrorists in the country. Such attacks are increasing every day. In the not-too-distant future, thus, the owners of wealth will have to confront the real and urgent problem of choosing between the robbers and the revolutionary forces in the country. True, the rich will have to lose much of their wealth in a revolutionary situation. Yet their lives, dignity, and the system of general living would all remain safe and secure. But, in the vortex of increasingly notorious social disorder, they would end up losing everything—from dignity to life itself—in the very hands of the violent robbers. Therefore, it is imperative that at least a particular segment of the well-to-do middle-class and rich people begins to think, from now on, of the choice they need to make in their own interest: whether they would lose life to robbers and rapacious marauders or support and align with the revolutionary forces geared towards bringing about a revolutionary social change in the country.

What is to be Done Under Such Circumstances?

The ensemble of existing conditions in Bangladesh has reached such a stage that even the kinds of demands that used to be placed in different spheres—while yielding certain gains here and there—can no longer be reckoned as viable practices. Certain progressive movements sometimes might gain from the exploitative reactionaries because such reactionaries intend to keep the production-process going and also embark upon different kinds of reforms, making necessary compromises. However, in Bangladesh—as it was meanwhile suggested—the primary means of accumulating wealth is not exploitation through production as such, but are unrestrained corruption and unrestricted looting through violence. Indeed, the primary characteristics of the

ruling class in Bangladesh today are plunder in the economic domain and violence on the social and political terrains.

This is why there is an enormous difference between an effective line of struggle against today's ruling class and the politico-organizational practices of the past. The very difference between the exploitative reactionaries and today's plundering, terrorist ruling class in terms of their respective governing character and strategies clearly points to the fact that many aspects of the lines of our past struggle are totally unsustainable now.

Therefore, it is imperative to change and reconfigure various aspects of the prior lines of our work, and move forward in an attempt to find a new direction and evolve a new constellation of practices. The struggle of workers encompassing a range of trade union movements and strikes, the movements of peasants for economic demands, and other such programmes involving meetings and processions all continue to remain negatively affected, rather unprecedentedly, by the rapacious ruling class—the protagonists of administrative and other forms of violence. Therefore, it is historically exigent that we conduct the lines of our march and movement outside the very electoral structure within which so many past movements were confined and conducted.

The system of a non-partisan, “un-political” caretaker government that ostensibly came as an “alternative” in the face of animosities and conflicts—primarily surrounding the question of election—between the two major ruling-class political parties—Awami League and Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP)—is incontrovertibly proving its own uselessness within the existing structure of governance, even after three elections that were all held and conducted under the caretaker government itself. This crisis will assume alarming proportions during the next election and will end up digging the grave of the electoral system itself. The character and content of “representative elections” under the present state-system and its conditions, and if such a system is even at all effective, can be understood from the very history of general elections in Bangladesh that have taken place one after another since 1991. Money and weapons play fundamental roles in all elections, be they national-parliamentary or municipal elections. Consequently, those who are elected do not at all represent the people whose votes make them win. This problem can be distinctly diagnosed by looking at the character and functions of the national parliament and the cabinet, formed and installed as they are by those elections. It is a decisively proven truth that the interests of the people cannot be served even infinitesimally through such elections. Entirely ignoring and eliding the interests of the people, the ministers and the members of parliament in the country have been aggressively multiplying their own opportunities and privileges. And, after all, what are all such practices but ones that amount to brutal, shameless, naked plundering and looting?

In this situation, then, there is no option or alternative for the toiling masses of the country but to establish a democratic state-system in Bangladesh by liquidating the rule, reign, and regime of the plundering class through initiating and intensifying a democratic mass-movement. This part of the world, indeed, offers many glorious past instances of mass movements and uprisings. Indeed, such movements and uprisings constitute and characterize a crucial political tradition of this country. The Language Movement in 1952, the mass movement in 1969, the mass uprising prior to the 1971 war, and the urban mass movement against General Ershad's military rule and regime in 1990 are each an important step in the direction of the political

struggle of Bangladesh and in the direction of change itself. Yet it merits attention that although certain rights were achieved and certain political changes were brought about through those mass movements and uprisings, their leadership was concentrated in and monopolized by the anti-people forces and elements in the country. The leadership did not thus rest with the true representatives of the masses and their organised forces. Given the totality of the situation hitherto created in Bangladesh, and given the way in which the masses are currently standing face to face with their political antagonists—the ruling class—in the interest of inaugurating nothing short of a fundamental change, the conditions are being created historically for a radical transformation in the very nature of leadership for a new mass uprising in the near future. So the destiny of the people of Bangladesh depends on how we will be working and on the degree of success we will be achieving in order to mature and bring to fruition those conditions mentioned beforehand.

One particular concern here warrants urgent mention. In some circles, there obtains the very contention that if a mass uprising takes place at this point, the most reactionary forces existing in our society such as religious organisations, terrorist groups, and the like will all benefit from an even more decisive conquest of the state-power, and thus the life of the people will be more plagued by adversities and hardships than before. Therefore, for them, the line of a mass uprising is not a correct path to rescuing the people of the country from their current predicament. Rather, as those circles suggest, the very call to such an uprising would only aggravate and exacerbate the condition of the people, pushing them to face even more dire consequences.

It is true that if a mass uprising takes place at this point without any preparation, the consequences will be as alarming as has been apprehended. But when we speak of a mass movement at this moment, we do not mean to chalk out and enact a set of immediate programmes in the interest of an unprepared, precipitate event. It has been historically seen that a mass uprising cannot be forced to happen through announcing or circulating a call and through deciding a specific date or a precise time for the event as such. A mass uprising in fact gets off the ground as a result of the creation, emergence, and ripening of certain objective and material conditions within a situation. The most fundamental aspects of such conditions are indeed the progressive blocking of—and, in the final instance, the impossibility of—the resolution of conflicts and contradictions between the relations of production and the forces of production themselves.

The case of Bangladesh is no exception to this dialectical and materialist logic of a mass-movement. A concrete analysis of the concrete situation in Bangladesh reveals that because of a certain kind of unity of the social bases and mass-consciousness, the people—brutally and viciously subject as they are to economic exploitation and political persecution—find no ways of redress and thus turn out to be the driving forces of mass uprisings. Such uprisings have come to constitute a vital and vivacious tradition of the political responses and reactions of the people of Bangladesh.

In the not-too-distant future, given the rapidly-maturing political conditions in the country, another mass uprising is inevitable in Bangladesh. If it is true that no one can force such an uprising to happen by means of spelling out certain plans and programmes, or by deciding and declaring definite deadlines and times, then it is also true that none can placate or put a brake on

a mass uprising once it erupts. Therefore, our foremost agenda is: keeping such possibilities in sight, we must emphasise and ensure political and organisational preparedness to such a degree and heighten the consciousness of the people to such a level that the leadership of the mass uprising does not get hijacked by the enemies of the people, as it was the case with more than one mass uprising in the past. In other words, we must make sure that the leadership of the mass movement remains concentrated and well-preserved in the hands of the people themselves, in the hands of their genuine representatives proven as such through the course of struggle itself.

For the sake of liberation from the present oppressive power-structure and ruling system, the people of Bangladesh seek a unity of democratic forces. However, in spite of this aspiration to unity, many people have been harbouring an outrageously misleading idea. This very misleading idea stems from equating the unity of the people with that of certain pseudo-left-wing and pseudo-communist parties, and also stems from the ludicrous logic that without such a unity of these pseudo-communists, the revolutionary unity of the masses is not possible. In fact, such organisations and parties remain linked at various levels to the ruling class itself, and have been working for a long time in the interest of serving and sustaining the present ruling system. This is why—although the largest segment of those pseudo-left and pseudo-communist forces has remained allied and united—it has been impossible for them to do anything whatsoever in advancing a democratic struggle in favour of the oppressed majority. Therefore, there is no possibility of changing the existing situation and the system by means of forging a unity for the sake of unity with the pseudo-left. By unity, then, we mean the unity of the working masses and the educated people who possess democratic and progressive consciousness and who seek social change.

The plundering, terrorist ruling class—organically tied as it is to imperialism—on the one side, and workers and peasants at all levels and in all spheres—including the middle-class working people—on the other, are now facing one another in struggle. It is this very struggle that marks the reality of the political situation in Bangladesh. In this situation, the path to the emancipation of the people decisively lies in liquidating the country's plundering, terrorist ruling class and establishing a democratic system through writing and enacting a democratic constitution.

At this most crucial conjuncture in our history, in order to build a strong movement so as to achieve the political aims stated above, I have made the decision to call a national convention. This will be the kind of movement in which hundreds and hundreds of the peoples' organisations can take part without dissolving or sacrificing their respective specificities and identities. At this convention, future programmes will be presented towards a total liberation of the people of Bangladesh.

I am a member of a political organisation called Gonotantrik Biplobi Jote (Democratic Revolutionary Alliance). If I call this convention on behalf of this organisation, the convention is likely to assume a partisan character and thus it might preclude the possibility of the presence and participation of many others. Operating from this particular angle, while also responding to the encouragement and suggestions provided by the members of our own organisation and by other compatriots, coactivists, and friends outside our organisation, I have agreed and taken the initiative to call this convention in this urgent situation in Bangladesh.

I am making this call to all democratic groups, organisations, parties, and individuals to support this initiative and to extend all possible help and cooperation towards it.

27. 08. 2003

**Our struggle is a struggle for a noble and revolutionary unity of the people
for a democratic revolution geared towards a liberation of the people.**

- The constitution and the national parliament have proven a total failure in serving and safeguarding the interests, livelihoods, honour, dignity, and the wealth of the people.
- The existing electoral system as well as the caretaker government have proven dysfunctional.
- Military rule serves and promotes the interests of imperialism and the plundering, terrorist ruling class.
- The people of the world are now vocal and active against imperialism. Imperialism has historically reached the stage of its vulnerability to a downfall.
- Conditions have been created for a shift of the balance of power from the ruling class to the true representatives of the people. A momentous change in the equation of power is imminent. The life of the people can be likened to a parched leaf. One tiny spark in this otherwise arid climate of their life may end up causing a raging forest-fire.
- Peasants, workers, and the middle-class working people are facing and standing against the plundering, violent ruling class. And the entire ruling class of Bangladesh stands face-to-face with the possibilities of its own liquidation.
- Mass movements and mass uprisings constitute the political tradition of the people of Bangladesh. Another mass uprising is inevitable in the rapidly-maturing political situation of Bangladesh.
- The path to the liberation of the people lies in abolishing the plundering, terrorist ruling class, in framing and enacting a democratic constitution, and thus in establishing a new democratic governance system; in other words, it lies in a democratic revolution of the people themselves.
- From this convention, in the interest of achieving the political aims stated above, new programmes of unity and struggle will be announced.

How Would You Work for the Convention?

1. Please circulate this call-to-convention widely. Collect a packet of the copies of this call (50 copies) at the price of Taka 10 and circulate them.
2. Please provide your message in support of the convention in newspapers and magazines or send your message to us. Organise a signature campaign in support of the convention.
3. Please form a convention publicity committee in your region.
4. Please share your opinions and ideas with us by writing letters or on the phone.

For All Communication and Correspondence

The National Convention Organising Committee for the Total Liberation of the People of Bangladesh

68/2 Purana Paltan (Below the BSS Office)
Dhaka 1000
Bangladesh
Phone: 9561337

Published and circulated by the National Convention Organising Committee for the Total Liberation of the People of Bangladesh, 68/2 Purana Paltan, Dhaka 1000, BANGLADESH. 27. 08. 2003