

Analysis of an Organisation

BOOK REVIEW

Jamaate Islami Bangladesh: Netritto, Shongothon O Adorsho
(Jamaate Islami Bangladesh: Leadership, Organisation and Ideology)
by Hasan Mohammad

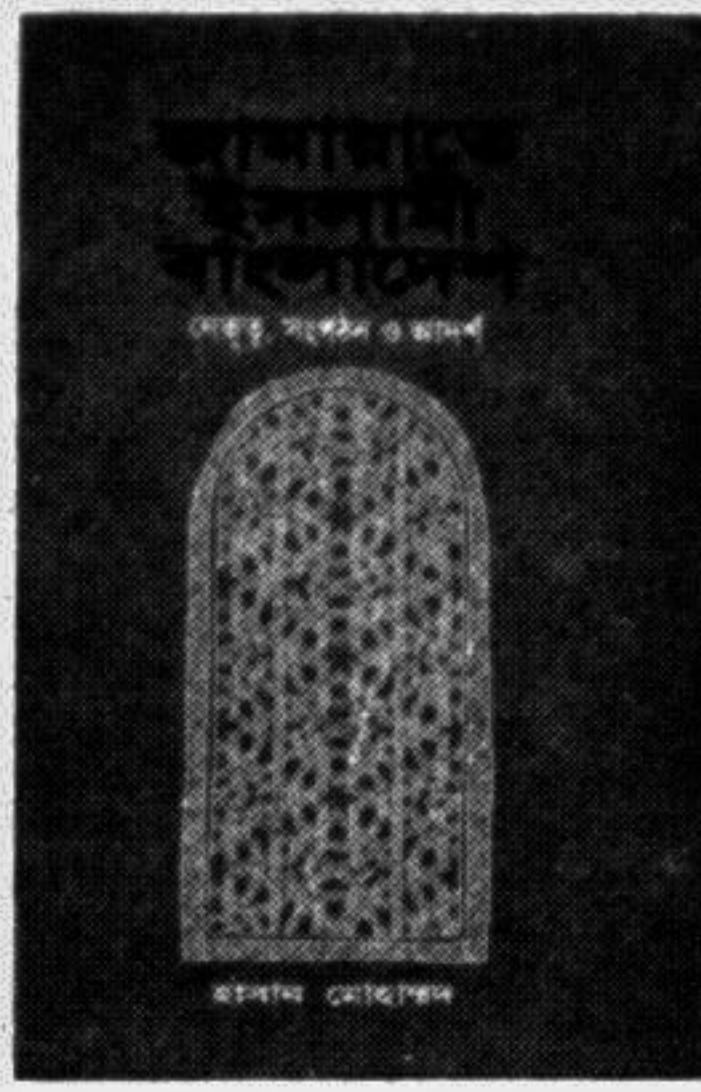
Academic Publishers, Dhaka; 1993 pp177 Price: Tk 110.00

FOR various reasons the Jamaate Islami Bangladesh has been the subject of discussion among political activists, intellectuals and the conscious section of the society. The significant progress made by the organisation deserves attention at this juncture of our national history because of its distinct political strategies that at times seem to baffle the common mind. It is notable that at present the party has been able to arouse interest among both its followers and opposers.

The book under review is based on the author's doctoral dissertation and contains a systematic discussion of the Jamaate Islami's origin in undivided India and the party's intentions and postures during the 1947-71 period, in the then Pakistan, and in post-independent Bangladesh. The book is divided into three chapters besides having an introduction and a conclusion. Hasan Mohammad while analysing the nature of the party's leadership posits that

although the Jamaate Islami has been strictly following pristine Islamic Guidelines in selecting its leadership, the party in recent times has taken into cognizance certain western values that have seeped into our culture; therefore, the Jamaat is tolerant, for instance, of female leadership at the national level.

In a nearly comprehensive study of the organisational structure of the party and its front organisations, the author suggests that the Jamaate Islami cannot be bracketed within any of the classifications made by Western social scientists in their study of the growth and formation of a political party. However, the author observes that while the Jamaat functions as a party based on the strict and irreversible Islamic principles, it remains conscious about the transformations that have taken place in our culture. Nevertheless, the author says that the Jamaat does not fit into the definition of a cadre-based political party as many would like to define it.



In his discussion of the party's ideology, the author takes an ambivalent position: The Jamaat ideology has no positive impact on the social fabric seen from a western perspective; but at the same time the party is keen on activating the millions of faithful who are traditionally apathetic to politics.

Barring some tangential repetitions, Hasan's book is written in a lucid language; it bears ample proof of his insight and research potential. Moderately priced, the hardcover volume should catch the attentions of academics and all others who show interest in the political developments of Bangladesh.

Reviewed by
G Sarwar Chowdhury

Outlook of Social Situations

BOOK REVIEW

Jagatik Chetanar Bichitra Prasun (Variegated blossoms of terrestrial spirit) — a collection of essays by Ahmad Sharif.

Published by Bastu Prokashana, 68/2, Purana Paltan, Dhaka. Pages: 110. Price: Tk 70.00.

AHMED Sharif as a writer and columnist is noted for conveying messages that are often unconventional in our society. Recently he has become a target of widespread criticism and attack for his too much articulate statements expressing his outlook and philosophy on social situations.

The compilation Jagatik Chetanar Bichitra Prasun (Variegated blossoms of terrestrial spirit) contains 46 articles by Ahmad Sharif. They mainly reflect on pragmatic aspects concerning contemporary society, state and world. In 'Sampradikata O Dangabaji Ekattak O Ekarthak Noy' (Communalism and riotousness are not identical and synonymous), the writer says communal attitude will survive until and unless man becomes philanthropist in the true sense and upholds his identity only as man overcoming religious, linguistic, racial, geographical and professional entities. But communal riots are not essentially outcome of communal hatred. Riot is very often caused by vested interest groups who instigate unconscious ignorant fellows to involve in riots with a view to realising their own political and financial interests.

'Itihasar Bikriti Sampradikata Hattakdar Uta' (Distortion of history is the root of communal killings) draws historical perspective and shows how communal harmony prevailed in the sub-continent throughout the middle ages. Conversion to another religion was on the voluntary consent. It was the British pursuing the policy of 'divide and rule' who spread communal hatred by representing distorted history of religious torture and repression on Hindu majority by Muslim rulers. The myths and invented stories are still rooted so deep in the mind of common people that they tend to take revenge for past incidents by committing communal massacre.

'Rastrer Sanikat: Samaseha — Sampradikata O Antaratikata'

(Crisis of state: problem — communalism and internationalism) is a short assessment on how the process of economic exploitation by powerful states still prevails under the coverage of the spirit of internationalism.

The world today observes radical change in the mind of people living in the backward regions. They are no longer ready to remain under the domination of big powers. Even in the society, the sub-altern class shows protestant spirit in case of ill-treatment. The age of peculiar type of equilibrium on the basis of obeying the superior has gone. And so, for the sake of overall peace and harmony in the society and also in the world, we have to develop global spirit based on cooperation and mutual understanding. A few articles like 'Swatantray Noy, Baishwick Sahajogitay Nitya Manabikayan'.

Aa Baishwick Manabiketan Jarur! (Global human spirit is crucial today) etc are writers commentary on the reality. 'Prakrita Gyaan Otitey Nei, Achey Bhabishater Gorvey' (Real knowledge lies not in the past but in future) is an essay revealing that through the process of evolution, man is continuously advancing forward. Man proceeds towards future in quest of fulfillment of knowledge and way of life that will be more welfare-oriented. In the light of new thought and discovery, past is always proved to be incomplete. Extreme fascination to the past results in dogmatism and narrow outlook, causing interference in the way to the development of philanthropic spirit.

In 'Ujajog Sacheton Hoey Swakaly Bachar Pragatishila' (Progressiveness is to live being conscious of the spirit of the age) the writer says that man's thoughts, actions and discoveries are outcome of his attempt to adjust and live better in his contemporary environment. The present always requires the solution of prag-

জাগতিক
চেতনার বিচিত্র প্রসূন

আহমদ শরীফ

matic aspects for the sake of survival with dignity. Nari Mukti Sangrami: Begum Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain (Begum Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain: Fighter for female emancipation) is the epitome on Begum Rokeya, the pioneer in forming social movement for the emancipation of women of Bengal. She devoted to the great cause of spreading the light of education among women in Muslim community. Her attempts left far reaching consequences. Her writings were not only depiction of contemporary Muslim society, but also enlightening and suggestive about the way of solution. 'Muktachetanar Jeebanrostatw Bankim Chandra' (Bankim Chandra, the seeker of clan in free spirit) Bankim Chandra Sambandhey Aro Kichhu Katha' (Some more sayings on Bankim Chandra) and 'Hindu Punarjagaranbadi Bankim Chandra' (Bankim Chandra, the Hindu revivalist) are the writer's evaluation of the literary genius and social insight of Bankim Chandra, one of the best fruits of western education in nineteenth century Bengal. In general he has been looked upon as communal. Referring to different creations of Bankim Chandra, the writer opposes the stereotype evaluation of Bankim's being communal.

The articles introduce thoughts of Ahmad Sharif on life and world. However, most of the articles are too concise considering the subject matters they deal with. Perhaps it will not be over-exaggeration to say that they deserve detailed discussion in order to appease readers' curiosity and thirst.

Reviewed by
Md Mahub Hassan.

called on him in his second class Dak Bungalow, because he was not only my 'murabbi', but a 'murabbi' of my father as well. In all humility and earnestness I requested Mr Chowdhury to return to his former room. In a tone of quiet finality he said, 'My boy, I am quite happy that you are there'.

One evening he unburdened himself with great sorrow. As a young officer he had genuinely hoped that he could do something for his country with programmes such as removal of water hyacinths, etc. Then Mr Chowdhury tried to raise the level of consciousness of a village.

It is now many years, since Mr Nurun-nabi had left this transient world. But certainly he left something of him, to all those he met in his journey through life. May his soul rest in peace.

REFLECTIONS

Nurun-nabi Chowdhury, ICS

by Shahabuddin Mahtab

PRIOR to the partition of India in 1947, there were only a few Muslims of Bengal in the different services, with the possible exception of the Education Department; even here the Muslims were predominant only in the secondary schools. In the Indian Civil Service there were only four Muslims (to the best of my knowledge). At the time of partition we had inherited only one ICS Officer, Mr Nurun-nabi Chowdhury (Mr Akhtar-uz Zaman, of Faridpur remained in the 'rest of India').

In the year 1961, I was a junior officer, and had to undertake the 'tour duties' for

several days in a month. One such tour took me to Gaibandha town for several days. The designated place of the touring officers was the Dak Bungalow. In Gaibandha, there were two types of Dak Bungalows. As I was in the 'active' service, I got a room in the first class Dak Bungalow. I came to learn from the gregarious chowkidar that the room where I was installed had to be vacated by a retired gentleman, who came to the town frequently and moved about its length and breadth on a rickshaw, armed with a chonga (mike). I had a suspicion that it could be Mr Nurun-nabi Chowdhury. So I

CHINDLER'S List," the American film adjudged best picture for 1993 by practically every movie award-giving body in the United States, may end up with another distinction by the time it is pulled out from commercial showing.

It may yet become the movie banned from the most number of countries in the history of filmmaking.

Director Steven Spielberg's masterpiece, briefly banned earlier in the Philippines and Malaysia, and threatened with a ban in Thailand as of this writing, has also been prevented from being shown in several Middle Eastern countries, including Lebanon. Recently, the Lebanese government even confiscated advertising about the film. It also announced that home-viewing on video cassette recorders (VCRs) would likewise be banned.

The film depicts the Holocaust, the extermination of six million Jews by the Nazis between 1933-1945. It focuses on Oskar Schindler, a German war profiteer who felt sympathy for the persecuted people. He subsequently saved many from the extermination camps.

While some countries banned the film because they found some scenes offensive, many Arab nations, apparently including Lebanon, believe the production is Jewish propaganda and that their people are better off not seeing it.

It is claimed that the Jews still run Hollywood, the world's filmmaking centre, as much as they did when it was first established. The best example of Jewish financial muscle today is Hollywood's thrillmaster Mr Spielberg, who was estimated to be worth over

Oscar's Best may be the Most-banned Film

Many Arab nations ... believe 'Schindler's List' is Jewish propaganda

US\$225 million in 1987 by Forbes magazine — and this was before the hugely successful "Jurassic Park," a movie about dinosaurs. Today he is one of the most influential and richest persons in Hollywood.

Another trait the Mr Spielberg seems to share with the early Hollywood Jews is a marked unease, at least earlier, with being Jewish. But after making "Schindler's List," with the Holocaust as subject matter, Mr Spielberg has shown a change of heart and expressed pride in his Jewish heritage.

Several of the production companies whose names millions of moviegoers easily recognize when flashed on the silver screen at the start of a movie, were founded by East European Jews who migrated to America at the end of the last century. The movie moguls were Carl Laemmle who founded Universal Pictures, William Fox from Hungary who founded 20th Century Fox, Benjamin Warner from Poland whose sons founded Warner Brothers, Adolph Zukor from Hungary who founded Paramount, Harry Cohn who founded Columbia and Louis B Mayer from Russia who founded the most important studio, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer or MGM.

These Jewish immigrants had two things in common:

Depthnews reports from Beirut

they were extremely poor and they desperately wanted to become accepted by American society. At that time, Wall Street, New England and the Midwest were where the money was. Unable to gain acceptance to the American aristocracy, they created their own which is best represented today by the pomp and glamour of the Oscar ceremonies, the annual rites to honour outstanding achievements in the film industry. Seats for the awards cost as much as US\$1,500 in the front seven rows.

It was this group of immigrant Jews that was largely responsible for making Thomas Edison's invention into a medium for mass entertainment. When they started, all that an entrepreneur needed was US\$400 to open a movie theatre.

The movie moguls all seem to want to forget their Jewish roots and reinvent themselves in accordance with the American Dream which is built around financial and material success. Mr Mayer, for instance, could not even remember his birthdate and marked it on the day he became an American citizen.

Financial considerations heightened fears of being stigmatized for being Jewish. Being identified as Jews, they feared, could endanger the

sizeable fortunes of the early movie producers. Thus, the Hollywood Jews went to extreme pains to appease the Protestant majority. Producers forced actors to Americanize their names. Emanuel Goldberg became Edward G. Robinson, Muni Weisenfreund became Paul Muni, Marion Levy became Paulette Godard, Bernie Schwartz became Tony Curtis and Issur Danielovitch became Kirk Douglas.

Jewish paranoia was strongest in the early years of Hollywood. In 1909, the National Board of Review (called the watchdog by Jewish film historians) was set up to ensure that movie contents were not corruptive to society. The board was composed of Protestant industrialists.

When Hitler was murdering the Jews en masse in Europe, the Hollywood Moghuls made no attempts to portray this on film apparently for fear they would lose their German audience and get a reputation for being warmongers. It would have been unthinkable to make "Schindler's List" during the 1940s, for instance. The studios of the time steered clear of political issues.

Aside from movie moghuls, many performers on stage and film are Jewish. Comedians include Joey Adams, Woody Allen, Jack Benny, Lenny Bruce, Milton Berle, Mel

Brooks, Goldie Hawn, Danny Kaye, David Letterman, Jerry Lewis, the Marx Brothers, the Three Stooges and Bette Midler.

Barbra Streisand was among the first Jews to expose her ethnicity in the media and on film. She began with Funny Girl (1968) and later adapted the Yiddish story 'Yentl' for the big screen, both directing and acting in it.

Jewish actors and actresses no longer hide their names. They also play Jewish roles. Among these actors are Dustin Hoffman, Richard Benjamin, Richard Dreyfuss, Elliot Gould and Jeannie Berlin.

Of course, Mr Spielberg looms as a giant figure in motion pictures today. After dropping out of college, he went on to produce the two top box office hits of all time — "E.T." and "Jurassic Park." "E.T." broke all box office records in 1982. It grossed US\$400 million in America and US\$700 million worldwide. Seven out of the 10 top grossing films of all time were either produced or directed by Mr Spielberg.

The American director was number one on the "Premiere" magazine list of the 100 most powerful people in Hollywood. The list rated producers, directors, actors and actresses according to financial assets and influence in the film capital. Mr Spielberg has his own entertainment company, Amblin, and five television series.

"Schindler's List," which won him the elusive Oscar award for best director, marked a major turning point in his career. It is his most serious movie to date. And certainly the most political and controversial.

— Depthnews Asia

China Uncovers New Soldiers in its Underground Army

Chen Gengtao writes from Xian

Chinese archaeologists have started uncovering new sections of "the Eighth Wonder of the World", a vast underground terra-cotta army. Gemini News Service reports on the latest developments in the unearthing of a unique discovery.

Emperor Qin's terra-cotta defenders



●Kneeling figure: guarding the tomb

LAST Thursday's special drama, Kazi Nazrul Islam's "Behar Dan" telecast (on the occasion of the poet's anniversary of birth) by BTV was really worth viewing. The story involves two lovers, Brishti and Dara, moving around the bushes enjoying romantic moments with love duets emanating from their lips. One day, as all good things come to an end, Brishti's mother dies leaving her vulnerable without a guardian. Her maternal uncle comes and takes her away forcibly to his house. There she meets Saiful who is a drunkard. He begins to like her, but she cannot forget Dara. Saiful after being aware of Dara and Brishti's affair promises her that he would take her back to Dara. During the long journey they fall in love, after reaching their destination, Brishti realizes her mistake and feels guilty when she meets Dara. She tells him everything. Dara, unperturbed by the facts decides to take her back. Meanwhile the war breaks out and Dara goes to war. Now it is the turn of Saiful to feel guilty. He goes to the war front to find Dara and seeks his forgiveness. Dara forgives him and right at that moment in an air raid Dara becomes blind. Saiful does his duty and brings Brishti and Dara together for a happy ending. Although the drama was interesting to watch but the dialogue delivery of the artists seemed like speeches; more of expressions were required to make the drama a bit more lively. The inclusion of numerous Nazrul Sangeet was a tribute to the poet and musical bonus for the tele viewers.

BTV's programme on mass education telecast last Thursday evening dealt with teaching Bengali in the rural areas and also there was a short drama on raising the awareness of illiterate people. The drama showed a literate landlord creating all sorts of

problems for his tenants; he even does not spare his own illiterate brother-in-law and by sending him to see action films each day, thus keeping him in amusement all the time, plans to take land from him. Also the farmers' daughters want to study first then go to work. More of these constructive programmes need to be telecast so that their positive impact can influence illiterate people to become literate.

"Our Friend Dolphin", a documentary film now telecast on Friday mornings after the conclusion of the social "Border Town", shows Dolphins, their historical evolution, their numerous displays and performances in the pools and sea shores. The performances of the Dolphins attracts millions of tourists around the world. Dolphins are friendly mammals to human beings. In the past many human lives were known to have saved by dolphins after ship wrecks. Their amazing and fascinating displays keep viewers spellbound. However the message of the film is safety of these friendly mammals. They are dying in captivity. Scientists are still doing research on how to improve conditions for them even in captivity.

Many of the readers can recall that few years ago a film called "Flipper" was shown on BTV, which was shot in Florida in the United States.

The Friday evening full length feature film shown was a Bangla-Pak joint Production entitled "Duniya". It was produced by Rozina and had herself and Pakistani actor Nadeem. The story is about a Bangladeshi man who is married to a British lady and has

one son and a daughter. He comes to his country for a visit and gets involved in clan conflict. His father gets killed and he is arrested and jailed for many years. His wife in London getting no news from her husband raises her children and moves to another area. After the passage of many years, her son Vicky (Nadeem) becomes a taxi driver and falls in love with his friend's sister Rozina who has arrived from Bangladesh. Vicky gets involved with a drug smugglers gang when he tries to help Christia who had a roll of film on smugglers activities, which was handed over to him by her. Smugglers in a bid to recover the roll of film kill his sister and mother. Vicky starts to take revenge and kills all the criminals one by one. The film was full of chases and counter chases with violence. The film was shot in London except some scenes in Pakistan, which was to be passed as being somewhere in Bangladesh but was not as such with camels and mud houses. It seemed peculiar that Vicky had to tie a ribbon before he killed his victims. And being a Bangladeshi national and producer of the film Rozina had selected all the Pakistani actors for the film except herself and actor Ahmed Sharif from Bangladesh. BTV by selecting this film probably wanted its viewers to take a free trip to London and see the quality of joint production film!

A programme was shown on Monday on the thirteenth anniversary of death of Late President Ziaur Rahman by BTV. It dealt with his achievements, historical narrations by various officials, teachers, and footage of his

foreign visits. Dr Rafiqul Islam Psc revealed some information which was probably disclosed for the first time to viewers. The programme also had patriotic songs by Shahnaz Rahmatulla. Programmes like these are praise worthy may also be shown on various other important personalities on their anniversaries of death and birth giving them democratic importance as well as diminishing accusations of not presenting both sides of the coin by the government-controlled electronic visual media.

Elitekhata episode telecast on Tuesday had Manik, son of Dada (Abul Khair) receiving head injury while saving his sister from forced haircut by her in-laws. Two eunuchs plan and go to seek revenge because they feel the honour of their village is at stake and the girl from their village has been insulted. But they are caught and beaten by the locals.

Neema left the village earlier and her daughter Piara and a guard Razzak come out of their village to locate Neema and reach her house. They do not find her and Piara wants to stay back and study but Abul Khair does not allow and against the wishes of other inmates of the house, he compels her and Razzak to go back to their village.

This week's episode of Elitekhata had one particular scene where the honesty of a village postman was shown. Neema's husband from Italy sends her a registered letter with a bank draft but since she is not present in her house, her in-laws want to take it from the postman, but he does not hand over the letter despite many attempts made on him using the carrot and stick method. Ferdowsi Muzumder's acting talent seems to be untutilized till now. Let us keep note of her role and see what come up in the forthcoming episodes.