



Bangabandhu's interview by David Frost

Here we publish an excerpt of the transcript of interview telecast in The David Frost Show, WNEW-TV, New York on January 18, 1972

Frost: ...On the night that you were arrested, on the night when in fact West Pakistan was about to invade where they'd been talking with you for sometime disguising their intentions and then they invaded, now at 8 O'clock you were at home on the night you were arrested and you got a warning, I believe, by phone that the army was on the way. Why did you decide to stay and be arrested?

Sheikh Mujibur: You see, there is a most interesting story on this point. That evening, my house was surrounded by commandos and they wanted to kill me if I came out of the house, giving the names of my own people and saying that Mujib Rahman has been killed by the extremists of Bangla Desh. Then they decided to take action by telling the world that we are negotiation with Mujibur Rahman but the extremists killed Mujibur Rahman and that Yahya Khan has no alternative but to take action against that. That was their first idea. I know they are brutes, uncivilized. They will kill my whole people. They will make a massacre. I thought it is better I die and at least save my people who love me so much.

Frost: You could have gone to Calcutta perhaps.

Sheikh Mujibur: I could have gone to any place if I was ready to go, but how I can leave my people? I am a leader of the nation. I can fight and die, but I asked my people to resist.

Frost: How did they actually arrest you? It was 1.30 in the morning wasn't it? What happened?

Sheikh Mujibur: They machine-gunned my house first.

Frost: Where were you when they arrived?

Sheikh Mujibur: I was sitting in my bedroom -- this is my bedroom. They started machine-gunning from that side. Some machine-guns were this side and from that side they started firing on the windows.

Frost: This was all destroyed?

Sheikh Mujibur: All destroyed. I was with my family and a bullet entered my bedroom. My six-year old child was sleeping on the bed. My wife was here with two children

Frost: As you left your home at 32, Dhanmandi, did you think you would ever see it again?

Sheikh Mujibur: I didn't, I thought this was the last, but if I die as a leader with my head up, at least they will not be ashamed; but if I

surrender to them, my nation, the people of my country cannot show their face to the world. It is better that I die keeping the prestige of my people.

Frost: What about your trial?

Sheikh Mujibur: They made it a court-martial with five military officers and all civil officers.

Frost: What did they charge you with?

Sheikh Mujibur: Treason, war against the Pakistan Government, against the armed forces, wanting to make Bengal independent and what not. Twelve charges out of which for six charges the punishment is hanging.

Frost: And did you have defence?

Sheikh Mujibur: The Government was giving defence first but when I saw the situation and the position I thought, "No use defending me, because this is a mock trial. It is a farce." Then I got up in the court and said, "Mr. Judge, kindly ask the defence lawyers to go away because you know it is a camera trial. I am a civilian. I'm not a military person and they are giving me court-martial. Mr. Yahya Khan is not only the President but also the Chief Martial Law Administrator. He is the confirming authority. He is the convening authority of this court."

Frost: You didn't have much freedom of choice I suppose. Did they ever reach an official verdict?

Sheikh Mujibur: After the court finished the proceeding of December 4, immediately Mr. Yahya Khan called on all the judges, that means the Lt. Colonels and Brigadiers, to Rawalpindi to dictate the judgment. There they decided to hang me.

Frost: And, indeed, I believe that you discovered that in the next cell to you they were digging a grave.

Sheikh Mujibur: Yes, just near my cell they dug a grave. I saw that.

Frost: You knew they were doing that?

Sheikh Mujibur: Yes, I've seen it with my own eyes, and I said, "I know, this is my grave perhaps. All right, I'm ready."

Frost: Did they say, "Yes, this is your grave" ?

Sheikh Mujibur: No, they would not say that.

Frost: What did they say?

Sheikh Mujibur: They said, "No, no, no, no. We are making some arrangement that if we



have some bombing then you can take shelter."

Frost: And at that moment what were your thoughts? Had you thought you were about to die all the nine months?

Sheikh Mujibur: I knew all the nine months that any day I can die. Because they are uncivilized.

Frost: And how did you face up to that? Did you pray?

Sheikh Mujibur: I could face it for my conviction, for my principle, for my 75 million people who love me as their brother, their father, their leader.

Frost: If you came face to face with Yahya Khan today, what would you say?

Sheikh Mujibur: He's a criminal. I don't like to see his photo even. He has killed my 3 million people of Bangla Desh through his soldiers.

Frost: Mr. Bhutto has him under house arrest. What should Mr. Bhutto do, do you think?

Sheikh Mujibur: You know what has happened in Bengal? I will tell you. Three million people have been killed, including children, women, intellectuals, peasants, workers, students. At least 25 per cent to 30 per cent of houses are burned and looted in Bangla Desh. All the food godowns have been destroyed.

Frost: And how do you know that the number was as high as three million?

Frost: If you had to say, "I, today declare the independent state of Bangla Desh," what would have happened?

Sheikh Mujibur: I didn't want to do it that day particularly because I didn't want to allow them then to tell the world that Mujibur Rahman has declared independence and we have no alternative but to hit back. I wanted them to hit us first and my people were ready to resist it.

Frost: But you did not want to start it?

Sheikh Mujibur: No, I wanted them to start it.

Frost: At this moment in time as you look back, what would you say was your gladdest moment in the past year? What was the moment which provided the greatest happiness for you?

Sheikh Mujibur: The day that I heard that my people had been liberated, my people were independent and I have got Bangla Desh as an independent sovereign country. That was the happiest day of my life.

Frost: Of your whole life?

Sheikh Mujibur: Whole life.

Frost: Prime Minister, could you offer a prayer in which the world could join?

Sheikh Mujibur: I always pray that the world should come forward to help my people. I always expect that they should come forward for the sake of humanity and my unfortunate people of Bangla Desh. No country in the world has suffered so much for their liberation as my people of Bangla Desh have suffered. I am very grateful to you, you are a friend of mine. I invited you to come and see for yourself. You have seen. See some more, go and move around. There is absolute law and order in my land. The question now does arise that if anybody asks you anything, do whatever you can do and give my good wishes as a prayer to the world. I wish everybody good luck and I expect that everybody will come forward to help my hungry millions. Thank you my friend. God Help you. Joi Bangla.

Frost: Joi Bangla. I'm sure the world will come forward and I'm sure that if it doesn't, God will never forgive us.

Source: Bangla Desh Documents- Volume II

For full interview transcription please visit our website : <http://www.thedailystar.net/op-ed>

INTERVIEW WITH AVIJIT ROY

Alo Hate Choliyachhe Adharer Yatree

On February 7, 2007, the Star Magazine ran an interview of Bangladeshi-born writer and blogger Avijit Roy. Avijit was killed and his wife, also a blogger, was violently stabbed last Thursday by two unknown assailants as the couple was going out of the Ekushey Book Fair. Below is an abridged version of the interview.

Ahmede Hussain (AH): How has Mukto-Mona evolved? Can you please explain the idea behind Mukto-Mona for our readers?

Avijit Roy (AR): Mukto-Mona came into being in the year 2000, with the intention of debating and promoting critical issues that are of the utmost importance in building a progressive, rational and secular society, but usually are ignored in the mainstream Bangladeshi and South Asian media. On May 26, 2001, I created a Yahoo group under the name Mukto-Mona. A year later, it was developed into a complete web site (www.mukto-mona.com), which, to the best of my knowledge, was the first South Asian Humanist and Rationalist forum on the net. Our aim is to build a society which will not be bound by the dictates of arbitrary authority, comfortable superstition, stifling tradition, or suffocating

orthodoxy but would rather be based on reason, compassion, humanity, equality and science. Since its existence, Mukto-Mona has been able to draw the attention of many like-minded thinkers including many distinguished authors, scientists, philosophers and human rights activists from all around the world. We have always tried to raise our voices wherever people's freedom and civil liberties have been attacked. For example, we were (still are) acrid critics of Bush's policy of aggression and invasion of Iraq in the name of the so-called 'war on terror.' Within the subcontinent, we have affiliations with the Federation of Indian Rationalist Associations and the Science and Rationalists' Association of India (SRAI) led by Prabhir Ghosh. The International Humanist and Ethical Union (IHEU) has also provided con-

tinuous encouragement and support to us. Mukto-Mona forum is approaching 3000 members. **AH:** In a region where a majority of the people live in abject poverty and do not have access to the Internet, how can Mukto-Mona help establish a secular society?

AR: Despite our limited resources, mind you, Mukto-Mona is not an NGO run by donations from foreign countries. We carry out activities with our own funds i.e. donations collected from our members of advisory and editorial board (who are mostly expatriate Bangladeshis such as researchers, activists, students, etc) we are trying to target the most neglected areas. For example, as our first project, we undertook the reconstruction of a primary school in remote Roumari in Bangladesh. We have additionally promised to continue

our support for more years provided the school authority promote secular and rational thinking among the students. We undertook that project for many reasons: that was a place of poor rural people and thus was neglected by the rich class/government. Secondly, the most important stage of life when we can instill a value/lesson in the minds of our children is when they are in primary school. We have started publishing books on science and rationalism. In a few remote areas, our activists have formed Rationalist Forums drawing likeminded youth and students. Such forums or associations provide a sense of cohesiveness in the mind of young humanists and they do not feel they are isolated. In the future, we plan to work on mobilising and uniting youth toward rationalism and humanism in every part of Bangladesh.

Fortunately, we are not alone. There exist vast number of like-minded people in the world and nothing can beat the internet in making friends with such people. For example, we have humanists of Bangladesh and other South Asian origin in our group from virtually every corner of the world. Lots of people are showing eagerness to help Mukto-Mona in every possible way but we have been cautious in our response because we simply don't want to turn into yet another NGO. Ours is not just an organisation, it symbolises a movement, an ideal. Avijit Roy is author, "Alo Hate Choliyachhe Adharer Yatree" (a Bangla book on the origin of universe), and also the founding Moderator, Mukto-Mona. Ahmede Hussain has edited 'The New Anthem' (Tranquebar; 2009;India)

QUOTABLE Quote

Success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts.

Winston S. Churchill

CROSSWORD by Thomas Joseph

ACROSS

- King with a golden touch
- Milk choice
- Take as one's own.
- Lushes
- Cruise ship;
- "-of Two Cities"
- Great weight
- Have lunch
- Confessional topic
- Texters' devices
- Play division
- Smoke source
- Western spread
- Calendar items
- Lake near Buffalo
- Lively dance
- Wise guys
- Glutton
- Reuben bread
- Near the ground
- Make a speech
- New Zealand native
- Glossary entries
- Reuben cheese
- Ore sources
- Speaker's stand

45 Regions

DOWN

- Soda fountain treats
- Figure of speech
- Disco's Summer
- Gorilla, for one
- Start calisthenics
- Mown strip
- First aid case
- Peeved
- "Tartuffe" writer
- Taste and smell
- Indy entrant
- Mature
- Filmed anew
- Like a tank
- River with famous falls
- Predicament
- Crested bird
- Lock of hair
- Exact copy
- Seoul setting
- Reuben cheese
- "I don't need the details," for short
- Vacuum lack

CRYPTOQUOTE 1-19

TCHQGKZX: ZYQ SGZ AI ZYCMCEMW
CMTQBQMTQMZVX ZAWQZYQG.

— JSVUAVJ IAGOQK

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: THE PARTITION BETWEEN THE SAGE AND THE FOOL IS MORE SLENDER THAN THE SPIDERWEB.

— KAHLIL GIBRAN

Yesterday's answer

D	E	E	R	F	I	N	K		
S	E	R	V	E	I	W	O	N	T
O	G	R	E	S	R	O	T	O	R
F	R	A	N	C	E	S	I	C	K
T	E	T	U	P	T	I	C	K	S
C	E	A	S	E	S	B	E	S	T
A	R	I	S	E					
C	H	O	P	L	A	T	E	S	T
H	O	U	S	T	O	N			
A	P	T	O	N	T	A	R	I	O
O	P	A	R	T	A	D	O	P	T
S	E	Q	U	E	N	A	P	E	S
R	E	E	D						

HENRY by Don Trachte

BEETLE BAILEY by Mort Walker

HENRY by Don Trachte