



January 1, 1972, The Indian Council of World Affairs published a collection of stories about the serious abuses that Pakistani forces committed during the Liberation War of Bangladesh (March 26 to December 16, 1971). Andre Malraux wrote a foreword to this book, "How Pakistan Violated Human Rights in Bangladesh." Here we publish the foreword.

How Pakistan Violated Human Rights in Bangladesh

ANDRE MALRAUX

I would wish these pages were not only an anthology of eye-witness accounts. People of my generation have experienced enough horror to be, alas! no longer shocked. And human nature is such that it is rare that horror does not breed horror.

But for years, horror, in its origin, has been routinely and terrifyingly political.

So, an attempt is being made to convince us that the problem of Bangla Desh is, in its origin, the same. This is a lie.

The strategists of illusion have explained at length that what was involved was a clash between China (and, if it makes any difference, the United States), and the Soviet Union.

I am well aware that a political problem existed since partition. The British Empire considered that partition was the only way to guarantee the departure of the English, and it had conceived a vast encirclement of Arabia (Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan) which the United States later took over for their count. It was also the encirclement of India, hence the policy of non-encirclement of Nehru. Gandhi had proclaimed the danger of partition not for nothing. Let us be left in peace as regards China: this time, what did she do other than making speeches?

But still, if Marshal Yahya Khan had not decided to exterminate the Bengalis, and if he had not sent his planes to bomb Indian Airfields, what would be the role of China, the United States, the Soviet Union in this affair? As is the custom, each ambassador would have defended his country. The Pakistani ambassador in France -- I repeat: of Pakistan -- nobly defended Pakistan. He did not kill anybody. The electoral victory of the Awami League was troublesome for Islamabad. The electoral victory of the people's front was so for the French right, it did not



Bangabandhu with Andre Malraux

exterminate its opponents for all that. If politics is an art, it is one of reconciliation and not of assassination.

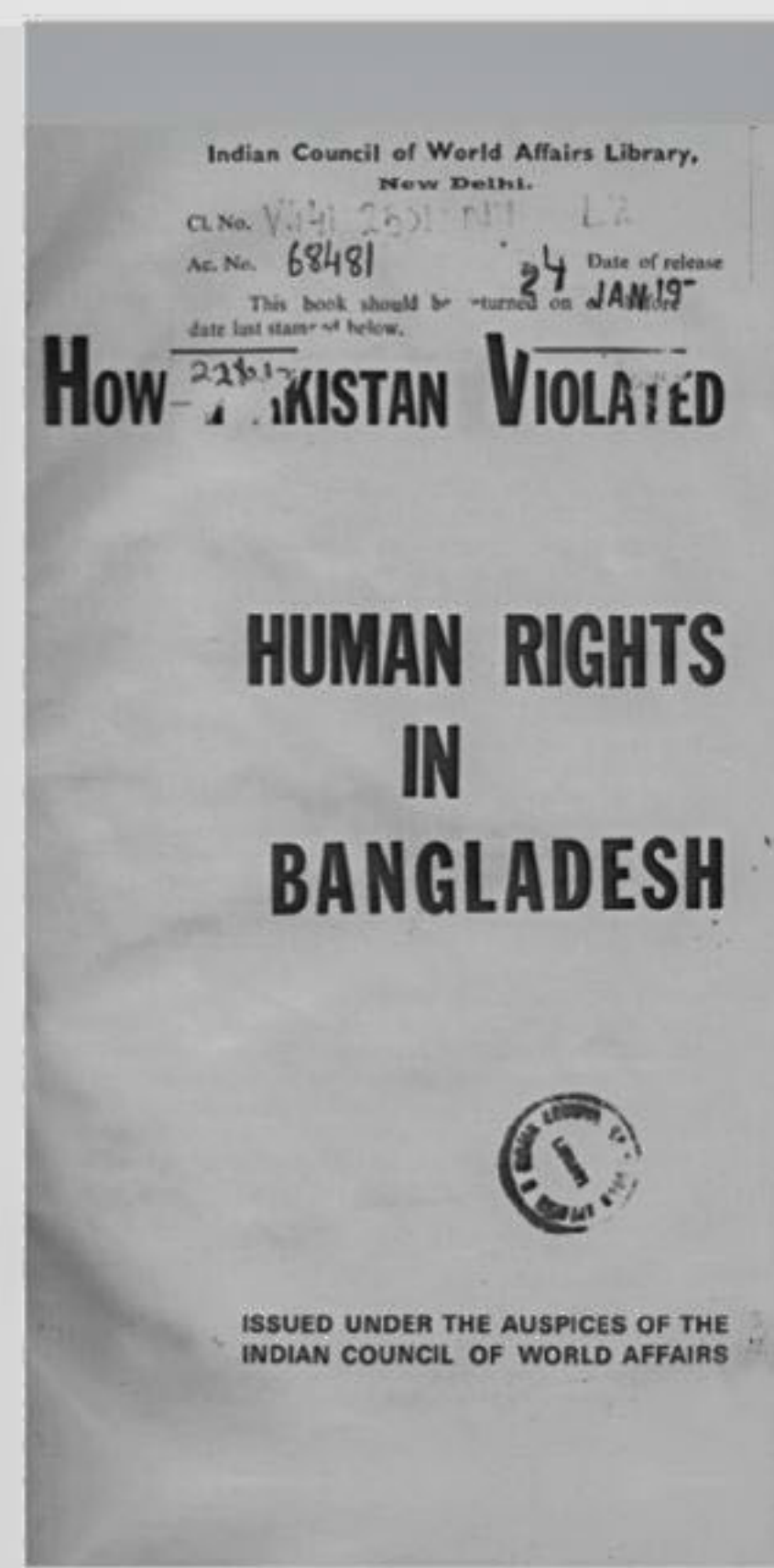
Those volunteers who were ready to fight with me for Bangla Desh belonged, in France and elsewhere, to varying political parties. At that time, they were hardly aware of India's stand -- (for she scarcely had any....). They were motivated by two facts, to which the memory of Biafra gave a tragic resonance: The exodus of the refugees, the extermination of the Bengali elite.

Firstly, the refugees. While our press was placing them on the same level as Yahya's troops, the fact remained that India had to take in ten million Hindu refugees, and that Pakistan did not have

to take in a single Muslim refugee, not even from Kashmir. One knows the exchange General De Gaulle had with a French major in Syria who said: "After all, we are too ill-informed to take sides." "Ill-informed, possibly," answered the General, "but someone did tell me that the Germans were in Paris." This time, however ill-informed it was -- and it was not really well informed -- the world did accept that the refugees were in India.

The second particular characteristic of the Bengali tragedy was the systematic, organized extermination of those who, in Bangla Desh, had voted against Marshal Yahya. We know now of wells filled with dead bodies of intellectuals. They were

selected, well selected. And, this time the Hindus were not involved. I must emphasize this because it is easy and sinister to make out the tragedy of Bangla Desh (the West did so) as a war of religion. If the Muslims of Bangla Desh had been in agreement with Islamabad, how would the Awami League have managed to obtain 167 out of 169 seats? And who does not know still that a large number of the leaders of the resistance, those whom the Marshal called deserters, had been officers of the Pakistan Army? Nobody disputes that the Hindus were the first to feel themselves threatened. But the civil war, until the intervention of the Indian Army, was not religious, it was national: That of the Muslims of



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Dacca against those of Islamabad. Assuming the worst (but without bloodshed) the Pakistan of Islamabad could survive without Bangla Desh, the proof is that it is doing so now. When a state wishes at all costs to make secession impossible, the wisest policy is not to treat half of its territory as a conquered country. When the revolt started, the soldiers of Islamabad were no longer, for the East, compatriots or co-religionists, they were occupants.

If there is any doubt about this, let one read the following eye-witness accounts.

Andre Malraux, in full Andre-Georges Malraux (born Nov. 3, 1901, Paris, France--died Nov. 23, 1976, Paris) was a French novelist, art historian, and statesman. He was an active supporter of Bangladesh's Liberation War.

Avijit is not "Bangladesh's Charlie Hebdo"

Don't tarnish his legacy

NAHELA NOWSHIN

EVEN with all our differences, the nation is united in mourning the merciless killing of 42 year-old free thinker, prominent writer, engineer, humanist and blogger, Avijit Roy. Avijit, author of at least seven books, wrote extensively on promoting secular freedom and spoke openly about his religious beliefs. While returning home from Boi Mela Thursday night, Avijit was hacked to death with machetes and his wife, Rafida Ahmed, was seriously injured by unidentified assailants. Photos of Rafida Ahmed, soaked in blood as Avijit's motionless body lay on the ground, have widely been circulating the internet. Horrifyingly, her cries for help fell on deaf ears as bystanders simply stood still near his body. Describing what was an unbelievable moment of inaction, a witness confessed that "no one came forward" to help.

Social media has been abuzz for the past few days with the news of Avijit's senseless killing. While most news organisations in Bangladesh have blamed growing religious extremism for the attack, some in the western media were quick to liken Avijit's

death to the Charlie Hebdo massacre. On February 27, a headline on Vox read "Bangladesh's Charlie Hebdo? American atheist blogger murdered in Dhaka." International Business Times UK also termed Avijit as "Bangladesh's Charlie Hebdo." Many news sources have drawn similar conclusions.

These comparisons are problematic and disturbing, to say the least. A deeper look into the broader context surrounding the two events reveals the flaws of equating the Paris attack with Avijit's murder. We cannot let the media use his killing to propagate their oversimplified, convenient and bigoted narrative that further fuels Islamophobia.

DIFFERENT CONTEXTS
This is not to justify the horrific attack on Charlie Hebdo but let's get one thing straight. Unlike Charlie Hebdo, it is not a matter of debate whether or not Avijit's beliefs and thoughts were borderline hate speech, or if he was anti-Islam. Avijit did not draw desecrating cartoons of a religious figure revered by a marginalised and oppressed minority (Muslims in France) unlike Charlie Hebdo.

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Hebdo. Avijit was a scientist, rationalist and humanist who wanted the people of his country to think critically. He had strong opinions about all religions; he did not have a bone to pick with Islam particularly. It is imperative that we take the different sociopolitical contexts of Bangladesh and France into account, because drawing identical parallels between Avijit and Charlie Hebdo is erroneous and dangerous.

Despite the meshed and complex roles of religion and secularism in our country, Bangladesh is known to be a moderate and tolerant Muslim majority state; our past (and current) governments even boast about being so. However, religious extremism in Bangladesh is increasingly becoming a challenging problem and is being recognised as a growing threat. This is largely a result of the failure of our political "democratic" institutions that have created a space for Islam to be distorted and catered as a political tool to the masses by religious militants.

Ansar Bangla-7's (the militant outfit that claimed responsibility for Avijit's death) condemnable actions should be seen in the context of the current volatile political situation. The climate of uncertainty and fear also provided

the militant outfits with a favourable atmosphere for carrying out such a brutal act given the current state of law and order in the country. The act of terror unleashed on Avijit does not speak for the majority of peaceful and tolerant Bangladeshis.

DON'T TAINT AVIJIT'S LEGACY
As Muslims from all walks of life vehemently condemned the Charlie Hebdo massacre, many distanced themselves from the "Je suis Charlie" slogan because of what they considered an outright attack on their religion by the satirical magazine. However, Bangladeshis are largely united in their grief for Avijit's senseless murder as protesters of multiple faiths took to the streets and social media (#IAMAvijit) to call for justice. Avijit's views on religion, often supported by scientific claims, must not be prioritised over his humanism; he held people of all faiths in the same esteem and respect. His views on religion must not be interpreted as his dislike for people who adhere to a certain religion. Avijit's beliefs were not extreme; being killed for them was extreme.

Avijit loved Bangladesh, his homeland. His friend Michael De Dora revealed that despite receiving threats,

Avijit frequently returned to Bangladesh to attend the book fairs. Avijit refused to be held back in fear; he wanted to speak with other bloggers and activists in Bangladesh. De Dora described Avijit as idealistic; Avijit believed that even if anyone wanted to hurt him, they could at least have a dialogue.

Although most in the western media have been kind enough to attribute the hyphenated identity of "Bangladeshi-American" to Avijit, some in the media have been headlining Avijit's death by stripping him of his Bangladeshi identity. The Guardian's headline, for instance, reads, "American atheist blogger hacked to death in Bangladesh." CNN's headline reads, "American writer hacked to death in Bangladesh spoke out against extremists." Avijit being robbed of his Bangladeshi identity is not okay.

The news media must stop painting Avijit's death as just another "American" soldier fallen victim to religious extremism. Avijit is Bangladeshi first. He is a victim of hate and cruelty. Avijit is one of ours, and he is not Charlie Hebdo.

The writer is a graduate of University of California, Los Angeles.

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QUOTABLE Quote
The difference between genius and stupidity is; genius has its limits.
Alexandre Dumas-fils

CROSSWORD by Thomas Joseph
ACROSS
1 Jack of rhyme
6 Small nail
10 "de Lune"
11 Madrid museum
12 Rosy-cheeked
13 Inform against
14 Fancy flower
15 Moolah
16 Buddy
17 Add up
18 Filming site
19 Flower boxes
22 Wow'em at the comedy club
23 Cry from a sty
26 Bandages, to Brits
29 Argon or xenon
32 Motel freebie
33 Flower visitor
34 Gallery star
36 Heart, essentially
37 Minimum amount
38 Lily variety
39 Queen - lace
40 Benefit
41 Benefit
42 Prom crowd
DOWN
1 Be frugal
2 Mice and men, e.g.
3 Extreme
4 Helps out
5 Attempt
6 Muffin makeup
7 Billing info
8 Find darling
9 Words of prohibition
11 Snowbell's cousin
15 Expected
17 Salon staffers
20 Snooze
21 Canine command
24 Interstellar clouds
25 Cold War citadel
27 Do something
28 Flower parts
29 Fancy events
30 Fight site
31 Was malodorous
35 "Got it"
36 Make streets
38 Purr producer

Yesterday's answer
RAISE SPACE
ESSEN ORLON
UP AND AROUND
SEA OPT NFL
ENCORES SIE
USS LENS
SHORE BARES
PENS MOM
ALL CARPALS
TIE ARR SUE
UP AND COMING
LAVIE WEDGE
ADEPT STEER

CRYPTOQUOTE
RDQDF CKW TYY KRWZI WBTFTE EALW NTK XLR BRLUD WT EFZUUD TKW TY WTHLN.
- HTKU ILFVTR
Yesterday's CRYPTOQUOTE:
WHILE THERE IS A LOWER CLASS, I AM IN IT; WHILE THERE IS A CRIMINAL ELEMENT, I AM OF IT; AND WHILE THERE IS A SOUL IN PRISON, I AM NOT FREE.
- EUGENE DEBS

BEETLE BAILEY by Mort Walker
WOW! THIS STEW IS REALLY GOOD
GREAT! MORT WALKER
QUIET, ZERO! I HOPE COOKIE DIDN'T HEAR YOU!
IF HE DID, WE'D HAVE STEW EVERY DAY
WE WANT HIM TO TRY HARD TO PLEASE US
NOTHING IS EVER GOOD
OKAY... THIS STEW STINKS!

HENRY by Don Trachte
DON'T BLOW BUBBLES IN THE HOUSE, HENRY!
7-26