

88TH BIRTH ANNIVERSARY OF JAHANARA IMAM

# Her spirit of resistance will live on

NAZMIN TITHI

It was February 27, 2004. I was a resident of Shaheed Janani Jahanara Imam Hall at Jahangirnagar University. It was around 11:30 pm when somebody rushed to my room and said that the eminent writer Dr. Humayun Azad had been attacked by a group of religious extremists just outside Bangla Academy and was critically injured. In protest we decided to bring out a procession. At 12:30am, we started out from Jahanara Imam Hall and students from other residential halls joined us.

When I was a student of JU, politically conscious students of Jahanara Imam Hall would always take the lead in the student movements: against sexual harassment, increased tuition fees, etc. We took great pride being students of the hall named after the Shaheed Janani. In the spirit of Jahanara Imam's legacy, we raised our voice against any oppression that we faced or witnessed on the campus. Our faces would light up as we chanted slogans: *Jahanara Imamer rokto amader dhomonite/ Ei rokto konodin porabhob mane na/ Moulbadider chharbe na ei rokto konodino.* (Jahanara Imam's blood flows through our veins/ This blood knows no defeat/ It will not let the bigots go unpunished.)

When one thinks of Jahanara Imam, it is Ekattorer Dinguli, her son Shaheed Rumi, her fight against cancer that one remembers. But



A portrait of Shaheed Janani Jahanara Imam at the centre of the demonstrations in the capital's Shahbagh in 2013. PHOTO: COURTESY

Eleven years later, on January 19, 1992, under the leadership of Jahanara Imam, the Ekattorer Ghatok Dalal Nirmul Committee (Committee for Realisation of Bangladesh Liberation War Ideals and Trial of War Criminals) resurfaced this demand. Jahanara Imam worked day and night to engage more and more people with the movement. Her efforts saw the support of all political parties who believed in the values of our Liberation War. Jamaat-e-Islami's continuous propaganda could not hamper her indomitable spirit. The committee set up a Gano Adalat on the 21st anniversary of our independence (March 26, 1992) when they tried Ghulam Azam, the chief collaborator of the Pakistani occupation army who planned the systematic killing of innocent Bangalis and the rape of two lakh women in 1971. It was a symbolical trial of the genocide and crimes against humanity.

Before her death on June 26, 1994, Jahanara Imam wrote to her fellow countrymen from her hospital bed: "This movement still has a long way to go.... I know there is no one as trustworthy as the ordinary people.... To realise the ideals of our Liberation War, where there is no place for the war criminals, I am handing over the responsibility to carry on the movement of Ekattorer Ghatok Dalal Nirmul Shomonnay Andolon to the people of Bangladesh. We surely will win."

The people of Bangladesh did not let her down. In March 2010, the International Crimes Tribunal was formed and the trial of war criminals began. In February 2013, when the Ganojagoron Mancha was formed, people from all strata gathered in Shahbagh, chanting the same slogans that we used to chant at any protest rally: *Jahanara Imamer rokto amader dhomonite/ Ei rokto konodino juddhaporadhider chharbe na....*

Jahanara Imam's large portrait hanging over the protestors symbolised the vision which had brought them together. It was her legacy that had been passed down to them. For me, Jahanara Imam lives on in that slogan which united us to fight for our ideals back then as it continues to do today.

The writer is member of the editorial team, The Daily Star. Sources: Tahmida Sayeeda, Jahanara Imam, Bangalee Shamagra Prokashana, 2004; Jahanara Imam, Muldharay Cholechhi: Gano Adaloter Dinilipi, Goddopoddo, 2014; Millat Hossain, Gano Adalat 1992: Phire Dekha O Mullayon, ASK Bulletin, 2008

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for me, her legacy lies in how she and her fellow compatriots made it possible to unite everyone associated with the Liberation War for a single demand for justice: trying the war criminals.

Jahanara Imam became widely known as Shaheed Janani after her wartime diary Ekattorer Dinguli was published in 1986. She had been diagnosed with mouth cancer in 1981. When she had to undergo a major surgery, she knew that she didn't have much time left. So she wanted to write about Rumi, her son whom she had lost in the war. She started writing Ekattorer Dinguli, despite being weighed down by cancer. As her writing progressed, so did the cancer. However, when Ekattorer Dinguli was published, it stirred up the whole country. Although it was her personal account of the war, it spoke to the hearts of people who had lived through the

days of fear, uncertainty and hope.

About her book, she said, "Numerous young men like Rumi laid down their lives for our country's liberation. Their mothers, families and relatives are far more destitute than me. I was at least able to talk about my experience with the readers. But their stories are not known to people, they are still bleeding."

Ekattorer Dinguli was subsequently translated in Urdu under the title Ek Gharwali Khawateen Ki Kahani so that the people of Pakistan, who had a distorted idea of what happened in Bangladesh in 1971, could at least have a glimpse of the mass murder and war crimes committed by the Pakistan occupation forces and their collaborators.

The last two and a half years of Jahanara Imam's life were the most significant time of her life. She totally dedicated herself to the

cause of ridding this land of the unpunished war criminals.

The initiatives undertaken to try the war criminals after our independence saw little success. Immediately after independence, the very first initiative for war crimes trial was taken not by the government but by citizens' groups. On December 29, 1971, only thirteen days after our victory in the war, Zahir Raihan, a noted writer and filmmaker, had formed a commission to investigate the killing of the intellectuals. After his disappearance on January 30, 1972, the work of the commission stopped. On March 21, 1981, Lt Col (ret'd) Kazi Nuruzzaman, Bir Uttam, a sector commander (sector 7) and the then Chairman of Bangladesh Muktiyoddha Sangsad, declared that the war criminals would be tried in a Gano Adalat (People's Court).

PROJECT SYNDICATE

## Lessons from the anti-globalists



JOSEPH E. STIGLITZ

Europe is not going down the protectionist path that President Donald Trump is forcing the United States to take.

But advocates of globalisation should keep the champagne on ice: protectionists and advocates of "illiberal democracy" are on the rise in many other countries. And the fact that an open bigot and habitual liar could get as many votes as Trump did in the US, and that the far-right Marine Le Pen will be in the run-off vote with Macron on May 7, should be deeply worrying.

Some assume that Trump's poor management and obvious incompetence should be enough to dent enthusiasm for populist nostrums elsewhere. Likewise, the US Rust Belt voters who supported Trump will almost certainly be worse off in four years, and rational voters

surely will understand this.

But it would be a mistake to conclude that discontent with the global economy – at least how it treats large numbers of those in (or formerly in) the middle class – has crested. If the developed liberal democracies maintain status quo policies, displaced workers will continue to be alienated. Many will feel that at least Trump, Le Pen, and their ilk profess to feel their pain. The idea that voters will turn against protectionism and populism of their own accord may be no more than cosmopolitan wishful thinking.

Advocates of liberal market economies need to grasp that many reforms and technological advances may leave some groups – possibly large groups – worse off. In principle, these changes increase economic efficiency, enabling the winners to compensate the losers. But if the losers remain worse off, why should they support globalisation and pro-market policies? Indeed, it is in their self-interest to turn to politicians who oppose these changes.

So the lesson should be obvious: In the absence of progressive policies, including strong social-welfare programs, job retraining, and other forms of assistance for individuals and

communities left behind by globalisation, Trumpian politicians may become a permanent feature of the landscape.

The costs imposed by such politicians are high for all of us, even if they do not fully achieve their



protectionist and nativist ambitions, because they prey on fear, inflame bigotry, and thrive on a dangerously polarised us-versus-them approach to governance. Trump has levelled his Twitter attacks against Mexico, China, Germany, Canada, and many others –

and the list is sure to grow the longer he is in office. Le Pen has targeted Muslims, but her recent comments denying French responsibility for rounding up Jews during World War II revealed her lingering anti-Semitism.



Deep and perhaps irreparable national cleavages may be the result. In the US, Trump has already diminished respect for the presidency and will most likely leave behind a more divided country.

We must not forget that before the

dawn of the Enlightenment, with its embrace of science and freedom, incomes and living standards were stagnant for centuries. But Trump, Le Pen, and the other populists represent the antithesis of Enlightenment values. Without blushing, Trump cites "alternative facts," denies the scientific method, and proposes massive budget cuts for public research, including on climate change, which he believes is a hoax.

The protectionism advocated by Trump, Le Pen, and others poses a similar threat to the world economy. For three-quarters of a century, there has been an attempt to create a rules-based global economic order, in which goods, services, people, and ideas could move more freely across borders. To the applause from his fellow populists, Trump has thrown a hand grenade into that structure.

Given the insistence of Trump and his acolytes that borders do matter, businesses will think twice as they construct global supply chains. The resulting uncertainty will discourage investment, especially cross-border investment, which will diminish the momentum for a global rules-based system. With less invested in the system, advocates for such a system will have less

incentive to push for it.

This will be troublesome for the entire world. Like it or not, humanity will remain globally connected, facing common problems like climate change and the threat of terrorism. The ability and incentive to work cooperatively to solve these problems must be strengthened, not weakened.

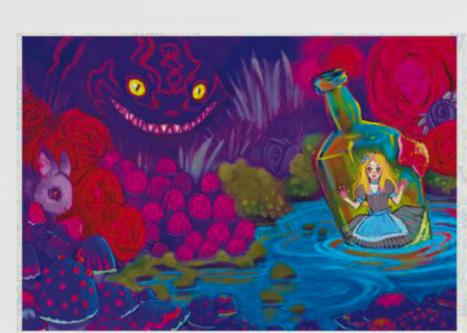
The lesson of all of this is something that Scandinavian countries learned long ago. The region's small countries understood that openness was the key to rapid economic growth and prosperity. But if they were to remain open and democratic, their citizens had to be convinced that significant segments of society would not be left behind.

The welfare state thus became integral to the success of the Scandinavian countries. They understood that the only sustainable prosperity is shared prosperity. It is a lesson that the US and the rest of Europe must now learn.

The writer, a Nobel laureate in economics, is University Professor at Columbia University and Chief Economist at the Roosevelt Institute. His most recent book is *The Euro: How a Common Currency Threatens the Future of Europe*.

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### A WORD A DAY

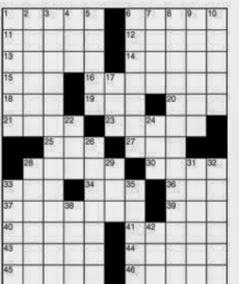


### PHANTASMAGORIA

A sequence of real or imaginary images like those seen in a dream.

### CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

- |                        |                               |                               |
|------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>ACROSS</b>          | 28 Showy flower               | 5 Real bargain                |
| 1 Smackers             | 30 Pull along                 | 6 Site of some silt           |
| 6 Tree parts           | 33 Be decisive                | 7 Clickable picture           |
| 11 Cove                | 34 Belly                      | 8 "Million Dollar Baby" actor |
| 12 Future oak          | 36 Important time             | 9 Kennel club categories      |
| 13 Salty mixture       | 37 Less well behaved          | 10 Trap                       |
| 14 "M*A*S*H" setting   | 39 Make mistakes              | 17 Dyeing tub                 |
| 15 Cariou of Broadway  | 40 Darkness                   | 22 Humorist                   |
| 16 Wrongdoer pursuer   | 41 Let in                     | 24 Spectrum end               |
| 18 Have dinner         | 43 Unaccompanied              | 26 Authoritarian governments  |
| 19 Research setting    | 44 Head out                   | 28 Bemoan                     |
| 20 Sports drink suffix | 45 Vertices                   | 31 Show up                    |
| 21 Large number        | 46 Dogpatch boy               | 32 Stocking supporter         |
| 23 Shorebirds          | <b>DOWN</b>                   | 1 Church volumes              |
| 25 Vacuum lack         | 1 Church volumes              | 2 Fantastic                   |
| 27 Excellent, in slang | 3 "Million Dollar Baby" actor | 35 Refrain, e.g.              |
|                        | 4 Writer Follett              | 38 Finished                   |
|                        | 5 Real bargain                | 42 Ball girl                  |



### YESTERDAY'S ANSWER

COWS GRAIL  
ALEC FRANCE  
RENO RAINED  
POTR OAST  
PITSTOPS  
ROBINS VIE  
EBOOK PEACE  
AIL DALLAS  
PETSTORE  
PATSAJAK  
PUTOUT NOKE  
ONTONY OKAY  
LEANT REPS

### BEETLE BAILEY BY MORT WALKER



### BABY BLUES BY KIRKMAN & SCOTT

