



# Lutfun Nahar Helen- A teacher and revolutionary

ALI KADAR

The history of Bangladesh's liberation, achieved through the supreme sacrifices made by lakhs of patriotic people and revolutionary leaders in the armed war of 1971, is the history of the greatest achievement of our national life. I am writing this article to reminisce about the struggle and sacrifice of one of the valiant freedom fighters of this soil – those who have written their names in the pages of our history with their blood. She is Shaheed Lutfun Nahar Helen.

Helen was born in Magura in 1947. She was sixth among the five sons and nine daughters of Md. Fazlul Haq, a renowned and honourable man of the town. Helen was a little different than others since her childhood. She had a strong wish to become a renowned personality by achieving higher

education, so she was very attentive to her studies from early childhood. During her school education, she used to stand first in her class every year.

Helen's father as well as other members of the family were politically progressive people. Her father Md. Fazlul Haq was an influential leader of the NAP and the Krishok Samiti of Magura.

Influenced by her father's as well as the entire family's progressive ideology and by her proclivity to fight for justice, Helen started participating in the democratic movements led by the students since her school days. She was in the forefront of the processions chanting slogans during the education movement of 1962 and in the movement against the Ayub regime. When she was a student of Magura College, she became the secretary of the women wing of the college's Chhatra Shangshad. She led



Lutfun Nahar Helen

ing class people from the oppression and deprivation that they were facing. She wrote in her diary:

"Ashwin 5, Friday, 1374 BS, Night

This is to remind myself of the promise I made to myself. Under the circumstances, I must actively participate in the movement to liberate the proletariat... there is no happiness in living a life of luxury and affluence. I thought about it a lot – I don't find any wish in the deepest corners of my mind to live a life that is self-centered and luxurious."

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After passing her BA exams, Helen joined Magura Girls' High School as an assistant teacher in 1968. She earned the reputation in the school as a responsible and sincere teacher. She was also involved in politics and played an important role in the 11-point movement of 1969.

PHOTO: PROTHOM ALO



Training in Azimpur field, before Liberation. Dhaka, Bangladesh. 1971

the student movement as a vice-president of the then East Pakistan Chhatra Union in Magura sub-division.

While she was studying BA, she was enlightened by the idea of Bengali nationalism through participating in the movement against the Pakistani autocratic regime's oppression on the Bengali nation. In 1967, when a ban was imposed on Radio Pakistan, Dhaka, to broadcast Rabindra sangeet, Helen wrote in her diary:

"Ashar 24, 1374 BS

...The government has become active again to suppress the Bengali heritage... Today they have put a ban on Rabindra sangeet, tomorrow they might say that the literary works of Tagore are not in favour of the Muslim traditions... Twenty years after the liberation, they have realised that Rabindranath Tagore is an Indian poet... Rabindranath is not just a poet of West Bengal. He is a poet of the entire Bengal.... He is a poet of the world.

We cannot just disregard the imposition of such a ban by terming it their ignorance. This is essentially an attempt to belittle the Bengali nation, an attempt to trample on the Bengali heritage...

... We are Bengalis, we believe in Bengali heritage. We will preserve our heritage at the cost of our blood ... the way we did in 21st February..."

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Helen and I got married in May, 1965. We were a happily married couple since we shared the same ideology and the same political views. In the same year, after completing our studies, Helen's brother Md. Mahfuzul Haq Niro and I had joined national politics. On the other hand, being a student, Helen was more active in student politics till 1968 and at the same time would assist us in our political activities. Our ancestral home was in Harekrishnopur village, in Mohammadpur thana of Magura. Helen used to go there to work with the NAP, Krishok Samiti and Chhatra Union during her student life. In my absence, she used to maintain communications with the activists.

She was committed to participate and, if needed, sacrifice anything in the fight that had been going on to liberate the work-

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At the beginning of our Liberation War, under the leadership of Awami League, the war was run for some time and then the Awami League leadership took refuge in India. And the Pakistani military slowly took position in the military bases of the big towns. With the assistance of the Al-Badr, Al-Shams and other collaborators, they committed genocide, rape and arson attacks in the villages and towns all across the country. Those of us who were involved with the Jashore zilla unit communist party, got separated from the central leadership.

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