

# Theses on capitalism and class struggle in Bangladesh

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1. Bangladesh has a population of 152.4 million people (2012). Other sources speak of 161.1 million people. It is the 8<sup>th</sup> most populous country in the world. Its capital city, Dhaka, ranks as the 9<sup>th</sup> largest city in the world with 14.6 Million people. 31.6% of its population lives in cities (2011). (1) Nearly all (98%) people in Bangladesh belong to the Bengali nation. The rest are from tribal ethnic groups. About 89% of Bangladeshis are Muslims, followed by Hindus (8%), Buddhists (1%) and Christians (0.5%).

## Poor Capitalist Semi-Colony with an important Textile Industry

2. Bangladesh is a poor capitalist semi-colony. 43.3% of the population has to live on less than \$1.25 a day. (2) It has a GDP per capita of only PPP \$ 1,568 (3) and is ranked by the IMF as only Number 154 amongst 187 countries around the world. The proportion of urban population living in slum area is nearly two third (61.6%). (4) 43.2% of its adult population is illiterate. (5)

3. It is, however, a highly unevenly developed country. On one hand the country is not only very poor but has also a high proportion of poor peasants. Out of a total Labor Force of 73.9 Millions, 31.97 Millions (=43.3%) are employed in agriculture. (6) 70% of the peasants are landless. Its share of industry in national output is below other countries in South Asia. (See Graph 1). At the same time it has a growing and important manufacturing industry. Its share of manufacturing value added in GDP was 17.3% in 2009. (7) It is the largest manufacturer among the so-called “least developed countries” with a share of world manufacturing exports of 0.11% (2009) which is similar to Bulgaria or Columbia. 91.76% of Bangladesh’s exports are manufactures (2009), (8) of which textiles, clothing, and ready-made garments account for about three fourths of the country’s total exports. (9) Bangladesh is – second only to China – the world’s second-largest apparel exporter of western brands.

4. Bangladesh is a capitalist semi-colony which is highly exploited by the imperialist monopolies. Foreign Direct Investment has grown to over \$7 billion in 2012 (See Table 1). Given the low level of wages, imperialist monopolies can squeeze a rate of return of 22% from Bangladeshi workers. This is one of the highest profit rates in the world for foreign corporations! (See Graph 2)

5. However one of the main forms of imperialist super-exploitation – the value transfer via unequal exchange – is particularly relevant for Bangladesh. (10) Formally, most of the textile production is controlled by local capitalist (only 5% of textile factories are owned by foreign investors). However nearly all of the produced value is appropriated by the imperialist monopolies. Less than 2% of the total value of shirts produced in Bangladesh are received by the direct producers as wages. The profit by local companies is equivalent to about 1% of total value. The rest goes into the pockets of the imperialist capitalists. (11)

6. As nearly all semi-colonial countries in the world, Bangladesh has substantial debts to the imperialist financial institutions. Its external debt stocks are 27 Billion US-Dollar (2011) which is the equivalent of 22.6% of its Gross National Income. As a result 5.5% of its annual income from exports goes as debt service into the pockets of the imperialist banks and financial institutions. (12)

7. Bangladesh is the number one country in the world with the highest risk of the effects of the dramatic climate crisis which is caused by the imperialist states and their monopolies. Their plunder and destruction of the environment is responsible for the climate crisis which increasingly endangers the future of humankind. Bangladesh is particularly at risk of the consequences of warmer and rising sea levels and which inevitably leads to disastrous floods. Such floods have already happened in the past years in increasing frequency. Bangladesh is at risk of losing significant parts of its population and land in the next decades as a result of the rising sea level. This means nothing less than millions of Bangladeshi workers and peasants are threatened with extinction as a result of the capitalist climate crisis!

### **Brief Overview of the Working Class**

8. The Bangladeshi working class is large and growing and at the same time highly super-exploited. About 87% of the labor force is employed in the informal sector (2010). Amongst female workers even 92.3% are employed in the informal sector. About 20% are day laborers, 41% are self-employed without employees and 22% working as unpaid family workers. The informal sector contributes with a low 40% to GDP compared to its employment. The majority of formal jobs are in semi- to high skilled professions, whereas informal jobs are concentrated among the 62% of jobs with low skills and low productivity. (13) (See also Table 2) Only 20% of the total work force are covered by the Labour Law.

9. Unsurprisingly imperialist institutions like the World Bank praise Bangladesh as a paradise for monopolies. According to a recent World Bank report on Bangladesh the country *“has the potential to capture at least 15 million jobs in the next ten years. Recent reports (e.g., McKinsey/USAID) have shown that the productivity of Bangladeshi workers is on par with Chinese workers in well-managed firms with their wages being five times lower than those of their Chinese counterparts (half those in Vietnam). Bangladesh’s unique competitive position comes at a time when China is in the process of outsourcing 80 million jobs from labor-intensive industries.”* (14) (For a comparison of the minimum wages in Asian countries see Graph 3.)

10. The Bangladeshi working class and semi-proletarian layers are mostly working in small enterprises or are self-employed. 88% of those employed in the informal sector work in the enterprises with less than 10 persons (See for more details Table 3 and 4).

11. Women Workers are an important part of the Bangladeshi working class and the oppressed classes. There are about 12.5 million female workers which are 24.54% of the total labor force. (15)

12. Given the extreme poverty many Bangladeshi leave the country to work as migrant workers abroad and to support their families at home. Over 5 million Bangladeshis migrated to work in the Gulf States between 1976 and 2009. About 3.2 million work in India today. Over the past decades the

rate of migration has substantially increased. In 2010 3.5% of the whole population was working as migrants abroad where they are super-exploited as cheap labor forces. Their remittances are essential not only for their families but for the whole economy since it represent 10.8 of the country's GDP. (16)

13. The core of the Bangladeshi working class is without doubt the textile industry with about 4 million employees in 5,000 factories. The textile workers – most of them women – account for 45% of all industrial employed. Their extremely low wages – some earn only \$38 a month – and the well-known horrible working conditions have provoked even someone like Pope Francis to compare them to "slave labor". (17) According to a report, the minimum wage represents only 4.1% of value added per worker (2012) which gives an indication of the huge extra-profits which the capitalists make. (18)

14. The trade union movement is relatively weak in Bangladesh. It is confined mainly to state-owned enterprises, with little presence in the private sector. According to official data, the trade unions had 2.2 million workers in June 2009. (19) There are about 5,242 Basic Unions which organize 4.44% of the employed and 33 National Trade Union Federations. (These National Federations organize 2.83% of the employed, since not all Basic Unions are part of national federations.) (20) At this point it is important to bear in mind that the Bangladeshi labor force has a huge sector of either workers who are formally not waged workers or toilers who are rather semi-proletarians or small petty bourgeois. The trade unions do not organize only waged workers but also these semi-proletarian layers. As a result we have the situation that while the trade unions organize only 3-4% of the labor force, 22 % of the waged workers are trade union members. (21)

15. Women constitute 14.4% of the trade union members (2009). While most trade union federations have a lower share, three unions – the Bangladesh Jatiya Sramik Jote (43%), the Jatiya Sramik Federation (32.9%, this union is close to the Awami League) (22) and the Mukto Sramik Federation (31.7%) – have much higher shares since they are located in female workers dominated sectors like garments, tea garden and manufacturing. (23) In the most important sector both for the working class and the female proletariat – the textile sector – there exist 26 union federations and 5,242 basic trade unions in the garment sector. Out of the 3.5 to 4 million textile workers, mostly young women, only around 63,000 are unionized. (24)

16. The reason for the highly fragmented character of the trade union movement is two-fold. First, as we have shown above, the workers and semi-proletarian layers are mostly employed in small enterprises or self-employed. This strengthens the tendency for fragmentation and local unions. Secondly, the trade unions are highly politicized. Many unions are linked to political parties who use them as pressure groups.

17. Irrespective of the weak trade unions, Bangladesh is one of the world's countries with the highest number of mass or general strikes (called *hartals* in South Asia). Leaving aside the national liberation war with numerous hartals in the late 1960s and early 1970s, and the mass uprising in 1990, it saw in the last decade particularly massive strikes in 2002, 2007 and 2010. (25) This year has seen another upswing of strikes. According to the Commerce Ministry, there have been 36 nationwide shutdowns this year, compared with 29 last year and 17 in 2009 to 2011. More than 80 people have died in hartal-related bloodshed since January, while protesters have torched hundreds of buses and cars. *"The strikes have cost the country more than \$7 billion this year, or more than \$200 million for each day of strikes, the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry estimates."* (26)

18. However one has to be aware that such hartals are not necessarily the same as a general strike known in other countries. It is often a shutdown of business by militant demonstrations and street violence by organized supporters of this or that party or union which causes business and schools to close. For example the Awami League – the current government party – called more than 170 days of strikes when it was in opposition from 2001 to 2006 (i.e. about one hartal every one or two weeks in average!). (27)

### **The National Liberation War in 1971 and it's Betrayal by the Bourgeois Nationalist Awami League in alliance with Stalinism**

19. When the Pakistan state was created in 1948 as a result of reactionary communalist war and expulsion of millions of Indian Muslims and Hindus, Bangladesh was part of Pakistan (called East Pakistan). (28) This partition was particularly horrible for the Bengal people because it split them into a Muslim territory (East Pakistan) and a Hindu territory (West-Bengal in India). Two million Bengalis were slaughtered in this reactionary partition war in 1947/48. This was a genocide inspired by the British imperialists and executed by the bourgeois Indian Congress Party and the Muslim League. As a side-note we remark that such a division of the Bengal people was always the desire of the British imperialists. The two previous attempts to achieve this – in 1905 and 1908 – were defeated by the joint Muslim and Hindu Bengal resistance. The hymn “*O amar Sonar Bangla*” – created during this struggles – is the national anthem of Bangladesh today. The British fought the Bengalis particularly strong because there were in the forefront of the anti-colonial liberation struggle. The Indian National Congress was founded there in 1885 and most leaders of the liberation movement were Bengalis.

20. East Pakistan was oppressed in this state from the beginning. Between 1948 and 1951, 130 million Rupees were sanctioned for development. Of this only 22 percent were allocated to East Pakistan despite the fact that it inhabited more than half of the population. For more than 20 years West Pakistani capital extracted Rs 3 billion annually from the east. West Pakistan dominated Eastern Pakistan policy in many ways. For example while East Pakistan could elect an assembly, the more powerful governor was appointing by the West. Furthermore the ruling class tried to eliminate the Bengali language by imposing the dominant language of the West – Urdu – to public life in East Pakistan. As we have explained in our documents on Pakistan, this was the result of the reactionary character of the Pakistani state which was dominated from the beginning by the ethnically Urdu-speaking elite of big land owners, army leaders and capitalists and which ruled the country for most of the time via a military dictatorship.

21. The Bengali people in East Pakistan resisted the West Pakistan “colonialism” from the beginning. This struggle was lead by the *Awami League* led by of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. This was a bourgeois nationalist party with strong roots amongst the popular masses. Whenever the ruling class allowed elections in East Pakistan, the Awami League won with a huge majority of the votes. However as a bourgeois party it tried to contain the mass struggle and use it only as a pressure tool for negotiations. It also developed pro-imperialist positions. As a result opposition grew in the party against Rahman’s policy. Finally the Awami League split in 1957 when a left wing – led by Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani (called the “*Red Maulana*”) – formed the *National Awami Party*. This was a

petty-bourgeois nationalist party with sympathies for Maoist China. In general, Maoism became a strong and popular current at this time. (29)

22. The national liberation struggle of the people of Bangladesh expressed itself in numerous mass demonstrations, hartals, campaign of civil disobedience, etc. When a revolutionary period opened in the whole of Pakistan in 1968, the Bengali struggle culminated in a mass uprising and a guerilla war. The Pakistani ruling class tried to suppress this uprising with the most brutal means. As a side-note we remark that Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and his Pakistan People's Party – which is admired by Alan Wood's and Lal Khan's IMT as a "revolutionary" and "socialist" – supported this reactionary war of oppression against the Bengali people in 1968-1971.

23. During this national liberation struggle – led by the left wing of the *Mukti Bahini* (the Bengali Liberation Army) and the *Jatyo Samajtantrik Dal* (a radical left spit from the National Awami Party) – the masses created *punchayats* (soviets) in the liberated territories. A central force amongst the left wing of the Mukti Bahini was the Maoist *Purba Banglar Sarbahara Party* (Proletarian Party of East Bengal) led by Siraj Sikder. This was the only Maoist force which supported the liberation struggle and indeed played a central and heroic role. After gaining independence the PBSP denounced the "false freedom," led an armed struggle, and called for a "socialist revolution" against the Awami League-led regime. It finally became the most important opposition force against the government and organized a successful two-day hartal in December 1974. Weeks later it was brutally crushed by the regime which had become a one-party dictatorship and Siraj Sikder – who has become a kind of national hero since then – was killed in prison. (30)

24. The National Liberation War led to another traumatic experience for the Bangladeshi people – the second genocide in little more than two decades! . The Pakistani army waged a war of annihilation against the people. It used paramilitary death squads – amongst which the Jamaat-e-Islami played a central role – which organized numerous massacres. As a result three million people were killed, ten million people had to flee to India, and between 200,000 and 400,000 women were raped. According to a UN report, 70% of all villages were destroyed by the Pakistan army and its local death squads. Nevertheless the Pakistani army could not suppress the revolution and – in December 1971 – the Indian army invaded the country and finally defeated the Pakistani army in 13 days. The main reason for the Indian invasion was to pacify the ongoing revolution and to stop the spread of soviets in their neighboring country. This was particularly important for the Indian ruling class also because at the same time – on the other side of the border – a mass rebellion of the peasants in West Bengal was going on. (the *Naxalite movement*). (31) US imperialism, worried by the revolutionary events, sent the Seventh Fleet into the Bay of Bengal. In the end, Bangladesh became independent in December 1971. However, due to this unfinished national liberation war, the country has been since then a capitalist semi-colony, dependent of imperialist powers and India.

25. The Awami League took over power and Sheikh Mujibur Rahman – with the support of the pro-Moscow Stalinists – turned to smash the growing left-wing oppositional forces. The regime allied itself with Moscow. At the same time US imperialism imposed a grain-embargo on Bangladesh which provoked the Bengal famine of 1974 in which 100,000 people died. The regime became more and more unpopular and in 1975 Rahman created the *Bangladesh Krishok Sramik Awami League* (BAKSAL, Bangladesh Farmers and Workers Awami League) which incorporated the Communist Party. All other parties were banned. On 15 August 1975 a sector of the army killed Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and nearly all his family members.

26. The Revolution was defeated because of the betrayal of bourgeois and Stalinist forces. The Awami League always played a hesitant role in the liberation struggle and – after coming to power – defended capitalism and suppressed the working class struggle. The National Awami Party was more radical and *Red Maulana* was a sincere petty-bourgeois leader. But when Mao Tse-tung told him in 1969 not to support the independence struggle, the National Awami Party stopped its active role in the liberation struggle. (Maoist China always had an alliance with the Pakistani military dictatorships against India and instructed its international supporters to subordinate their struggle to its foreign policy calculations.) After independence it became a critical opposition party against the government but refused to launch any serious struggle. The pro-Moscow Stalinists – implementing their treacherous popular front policy – fully supported the Awami Party and its dictatorship and joined the struggle against the left-wing rebellion in 1972-75. (32) The Maoist forces – with the important exception of Siraj Sikder's *Purba Banglar Sarbahara Party* – either supported the Pakistani army or took a neutral stand. And the *Purba Banglar Sarbahara Party* – despite taking the correct side in the national liberation war and against the Awami League government – undermined the struggle by choosing the guerrilla struggle instead of a Bolshevik orientation towards mass work in the enterprises and the cities in order to prepare a general strike and an armed uprising.

#### **Brief History from 1975 until today**

27. After the killing of Rahman several coup d'états and counter-coups were staged and finally Major General Zia-ur Rahman became the new military dictator in November 1975. He founded the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and got himself elected as president in rigged elections in May 1979. He initiated a slow re-orientation towards Western imperialism. He was killed in May 1981. After a brief period in which his deputy president, Abdus Sattar ruled, another military coup d'état in March 1982 brought General Ershad to power who ruled until December 1990. While several elections took place in this period (1979, 1981, 1986 and 1988), they were completely rigged and boycotted by the masses (only about 5-8% of the population participated in them). The highly corrupt regime of General Ershad enforced a policy of opening Bangladesh's economy to imperialist capital (liberalization of trade, privatization of public enterprises, etc.). Finally it was overthrown by a mass uprising in November 1990 in which nearly all parties – from the left-wing parties, the Awami League, and the BNP to the Jamaat-e-Islami – participated.

28. The parliamentary elections in February 1991 resulted in a victory for the conservative BNP led by Khaleda Zia, General Zia-ur Rahman's widow. The BNP had formed an alliance with Jamaat-e-Islami and was also aligned with the army command. Since then Bangladesh has seen a regular switch between a government of Khaleda Zia' BNP and a government of Alawi League led by Sheikh Hasina, the daughter of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Hence the BNP ruled in 1991-1996 and 2001–2006 and the Awami League was in office in 1996 to 2001 as well as from December 2008 until today (see Table 5 for the percentage in votes for the major parties). In 2007 and 2008 another military-led regime usurped power via a coup d'état. Since 1991 these two parties acted in government as semi-colonial lackeys for imperialist capital, they privatized its public enterprises, opened the domestic market for foreign corporations, and built a textile industry which serves imperialism as a cheap resource for extra-profits.

29. Both – the Awami League and the Bangladesh Nationalist Party – are bourgeois parties dominated by a family dynasty. While there is no qualitative difference between the two – they both share the same class character as capitalist parties – several differences exist between them. These are related to their different historical formations. The Awami League – founded in 1949 – has its historic roots in the Bengal nationalist movement for more national rights, autonomy and finally independence. This nationalist policy – in opposite to the reactionary Islamist regime of West Pakistan – pushed it towards a secular and verbally socialist agenda. (As a result, by the way, Bangladesh is still called a “*People’s Republic*”). Naturally, this “socialism” was always hypocritical and was dropped for “free-market” rhetoric after 1991. However it was always marked strongly by a middle-class nationalism which was related to a just national liberation struggle. As a result of its more secular character, the Awami League gains particularly strong support amongst the countries minorities. (33) Another result of the Awami League’s history is its traditional alliance with the Communist Party and other petty-bourgeois progressive forces. This is an important reason why the army officer corps – which always hated the liberation struggle – throughout the whole history of the country had an ambivalent relationship towards the Awami League. The army was traditionally dominated by the old Pakistani military bureaucracy: In 1975, out of the 36,000 men in the armed forces, 28,000 were repatriates from West Pakistan. (34) The Awami League leadership also did not really trust the army command so, between 1971 and 1975, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman built his own paramilitary units – the *Jatiya Rakshi Bahini* which were directly under the command of the Prime Minister's Office and trained by the Indian Army. Naturally this annoyed the army command and was an important reason for its coup d’état in August 1975. The Awami League is particularly rooted in the industrial heart of country – the Dhaka region – where it always became the strongest party in the elections even when it lost them nationally.

30. The conservative BNP on the other hand is more closely related to the capitalist class and the army officer corps of the country. (35) This is not surprising since it was created by the military dictator General Zia-ur Rahman. For the same reason it has repeatedly formed – as it also does today – alliances with several right-wing Islamist parties like Jamaat-e-Islami.

31. There are strong similarities between Bangladesh and other South Asian countries. As we noted of the two main bourgeois parties in Bangladesh one (the Awami League) is linked to the liberation struggle and has a history of a left-leaning (in words, at least) militant petty-bourgeois rank and file while the other (the Bangladeshi Nationalist Party) was a conservative reaction against this. This dichotomy has a strong similarity to the situation in Sri Lanka, where there are the *Sri Lankan Freedom Party* – which had a radical nationalist, anti-imperialist rhetoric in the past – and the more conservative *United National Party*. Similar too, to a certain degree, is the situation in India, with the bourgeois Indian National Congress of the Ghandi clan and the right-wing Hindu-chauvinist BJP. Or take, on the one hand, the bourgeois Pakistan Peoples Party of the Bhutto clan, which used some “socialist” populist as well as pro-democracy rhetoric in the past, while on the other hand there is the more conservative *Pakistan Muslim League*. All these parties are bourgeois forces which revolutionaries would never support politically. This however must not make Marxists blind to different histories and different appeals to the masses which such parties can possess.

32. Since the country must be characterized as a poor capitalist semi-colony, it has neither a strong bourgeoisie nor a large and relatively wealthy middle class which could form the basis for a relatively stable bourgeois democracy. Therefore the ruling class has always been in a relatively weak position in relation to the popular classes – which, one must not forget, have gone through a partially

successful liberation war. As a result, the bourgeoisie had to resort repeatedly to the rule via a military dictatorship (1975-1990, 2007-08). Add to this the first years of independence, 1971-75, which were marked by an escalating civil war. In general, the army plays a central role in Bangladesh's politics. It has grown substantially towards nearly half a million personnel if one includes the paramilitary border guards. It has built – similar to the Pakistani, Egyptian, or the Cuban military – a significant economic empire which gives it relative autonomy from the successive governments and increases its power. A study on the Bangladeshi army concludes: *“According to an estimate, SKS’ gross turnover was nearly 2 billion BTK in 1995 when it owned 15 industrial and two commercial units, five sales outlets and 15 real estates. Since then the SKS’ empire has grown significantly, so has its turnover. Today it fully owns nine industries and two commercial units. In addition, it owns four sales promotion offices, 28 real estates ventures and holds shares in three internationally reputed enterprises.”* (36) Even when the country has a parliamentary elected government, the political situation is often very unstable and marked by series of hartals against the ruling party. This makes the army a safety net for the capitalist class, essential as underlined by its recent coup in early 2007 as well as two smaller attempted coups in 2009 and 2012.

33. As noted above the Bangladeshi army has been largely reconstructed via the old state apparatus from the time when the country was part of Pakistan. Only a few liberation fighters of the independence war have been integrated into its ranks (this is similar to South Africa after 1994.) This, however, is an additional factor why the army command and the ruling class have an interest to rebuild and reintegrate pro-Pakistani political forces, Islamists, and reactionary death squads. This is also the reason that the army command and the ruling class have avoided any serious investigations and trials against the reactionary mass murder.

34. Finally, we re-emphasize that Bangladesh has gone through a tumultuous history in the past 130 years or so, replete with liberation struggles, wars, and genocide. Bengal was the heart of the anti-colonial resistance against the British imperialists. When it successfully drove out the British in 1947/48, it paid for the unfinished national democratic revolution with genocide. Two decades later, the Bengali workers and peasants started another liberation struggle – this time against the Punjabi bourgeoisie and army command of West Pakistan. Again, it won independence but it had to pay for it once more with genocide. And after they won independence, the workers and peasants recognized that this was a *“dirty independence”* full of hunger and empty of freedom. Since then the Bangladeshi masses have expressed their revolutionary energy in another mass uprising in 1990 and an innumerable number of hartals. The Bangladeshi working class and poor peasants have a remarkable history of revolution and sacrifice which is equaled only by a very few peoples around the world. As a result there is a strong tradition of *“revolutionary Marxism”* in Bangladesh, unfortunately mostly under the banner of Maoism and Stalinism. (37)

### **The Social and Political Crisis in Bangladesh Today**

35. Since the Awami League retook power in 2008 the social and political crisis has sharpened. The crisis of world capitalism which started in 2008 naturally had massive effects on a country like Bangladesh which is so massively exposed to the iron laws of the imperialist-dominated world market. Even the state bureaucracy has to admit that poverty and unemployment figures have increased in the last years. This social crisis has been combined with the well-known catastrophes in



the textile industry – most tragically the collapse of a garment factory in the Rana Plaza complex on April 24, 2013 in which at least 1,045 textile workers were killed. This was a highly political tragedy since the complacency of the state bureaucracy with the factory owners is well-known and, in this specific case, because the owner of the collapsed textile factory, Sohel Rana, is associated with the ruling Awami League.

36. Against the background of the crisis, the mostly female textile workers have initiated a series of strikes in the past years. Between 19 and 23 June, 2010, 800,000 workers went on strike to demand a wage increase. In July and August, nearly 700 factories were affected by strike waves, again on the question of wages. In December, new mobilizations took place to obtain the payment of the wage increase that had been won in August and had still not been paid by November. Since then there have been a series of strikes. In April 2013, after the collapse of a factory in the Rana Plaza complex, hundreds of thousands of garment workers stopped work. And recently, in September 2013, 200,000 textile workers ceased work and demonstrated on the streets where they fought with the police.

37. It is not surprisingly that the government of Sheikh Hasina has become increasingly unpopular. To counter this trend and in order to avoid defeat at the upcoming parliamentary elections in early 2014, the Awami League tries to present itself as a consistent fighter against those involved in the genocide of 1971 – i.e. the reactionary anti-democratic forces in the army and the extreme right-wing Islamist forces like Jamaat-e-Islami. Soon after it came to power, Hasina's government restored the four fundamental secular principles of the constitution enacted by her father. This provoked many Islamist parties and, in February 2009, the national border guards – a particularly ferocious and notorious paramilitary unit known as the Bangladesh Rifles – staged a mutiny in which some 70 people, including 57 army officers, were killed. Today one of the main issues of the Islamist fundamentalist forces is the change of the constitution and the imposition of Sharia law.

38. The Hasina government also banned 12 Islamist fundamentalist organizations with links to terrorist organizations (like Jamaat-ul Mujahideen, which was supposed to have links to the banned Pakistani terrorist group Lashkar-e-Toiba). (38) It initiated the so-called International Crimes Tribunal (it is not international but a tribunal of the Bangladeshi state) and brought a number of politicians and army officers who were involved in the genocide to court. This included a number of army officers who were involved in the slaughter of Sheikh Mujibur and his family in 1975 and which were now executed. It also includes leading politicians of the right wing Jamaat-e-Islami, like its former chief Golam Azam or Abdul Quader Mollah. Recently in September 2013, Mollah was sentenced to death for crimes against humanity during the nation's 1971 independence war against Pakistan. (39) The government is also considering banning Jamaat-e-Islami. In August, the Bangladesh High Court deregistered Jamaat-e-Islami, thereby banning it from participating in future elections. To stop the persecution of army officers, some forces in the army officer corps – which was supposed to have links with the outlawed right-wing Islamist fundamentalist Hizbut-Tahrir –planned a coup d'état in January 2013 which was foiled. Islamist fundamentalist forces like Jamaat-e-Islami have already called the army command to intervene, i.e. to overthrow the Awami League government.

39. Against the background of this growing class polarization and the increasing conflict between a government which supposedly wants to advance the democratic struggle against the reactionary anti-liberation forces and sectors of the army and the Islamist fundamentalist, a new mass movement has emerged – the *Gano Jagaran Mancha* (Mass Awakening Platform) or also called the *Shahbagh Awakening* because of the name of the main square where it assembled. This mass movement emerged

spontaneously in January 2013 and mobilized several hundreds of thousands of people for about one month. Similarly to the Arab Spring, the people occupied the Shahbagh square. Similarly to the Occupy movement, it was spontaneous, without a leadership and dominated by middle class youth and university students. Also similarly, they refused to allow political parties to take the stage. Instead, freedom fighters and activists are invited to speak. The movement protested against the violent offensive of the Islamist fundamentalists who have launched a series of violent attacks against the left and progressive forces. A particular provocation was the murder of the protest activist and blogger, Ahmed Rajib Haider, who was brutally slaughtered outside his home in Dhaka, allegedly by Jamaat activists. The movement opposes the Islamist fundamentalists' offensive for Sharia law and defends the secular constitution. It also demands the death penalty for those who participated in the genocide in 1971 as well as a ban of the Islamist fundamentalist parties. In addition, the Awakening calls for social boycott and government actions against banks, businesses and social service providers linked with Jamaat. While its agenda coincided with the Awami League, the movement was not a government tool (they didn't allow Awami League politicians to speak) but reflected the spontaneous democratic radicalization of the urban middle class youth. (40)

40. In short the Shahbagh movement was a progressive petty-bourgeois democratic movement which insisted on a consistent democratic purge of the army and the political parties against the open counter-revolutionary elements which participated in the genocide of 1971 and which attack the left and workers movement since then. However, the program and the methods of their democratic program are petty-bourgeois and wrong.

41. So let us summarize the situation: the Awami League government defends the capitalist order which – faced with the new crisis period of the world economy – brings more and more misery to the Bangladeshi popular masses. The number of strikes is increasing and the government becomes more and more unpopular. It tries to deflect attention from its political bankruptcy by advancing the democratic issue – in a bourgeois way via state repression – of purging the army and the political life from the counter-revolutionary pro-genocide forces. The Awami League calculates that with such a policy it can on one hand weaken its opponent, the BNP which is allied with the Islamist fundamentalist, and at the same time win some popular support for the incoming elections. Naturally, from the side of the Awami leaders this is nothing but a cynical populist maneuver: Why did they not raise the issue of war tribunals when they were in power in the past, but only now?! In addition, why did they collaborate with Jamaat-e-Islami on several occasions in the past?! However, political issues are not limited to the intentions of one side. What is important is what this or that policy objectively represents and what the masses think.

42. The objective meaning for the class struggle becomes clear if we take into account that Bangladesh is characterized by an unfinished national and democratic revolution. It is unfinished because the country remains a semi-colony of imperialism and because the anti-democratic institutions (the army and the counter-revolutionary Islamist fundamentalists) still play a central role in the political life. In addition to this the workers are still struggling for the 8 hour working day and the poor peasants demand land. The struggle against the army command as well as the reactionary Islamists is therefore a central issue of the class struggle in Bangladesh.

43. However revolutionaries have a different approach than the bourgeois and corrupt Awami politicians as well as that of the honest middle class youth. While they want to defeat the counter-revolution with the help of the bourgeois state machinery, revolutionaries have a different program.

We call for class struggle methods. We call for mass mobilizations and armed workers and poor peasant militias to defeat the reactionary Islamists. We call for Workers and Peasant Tribunals to investigate the crimes of the accused politicians and army officers. We call for the combination of the democratic struggle and the ongoing workers struggles – particularly in the textile industry – in order to advance the struggle.

44. At the same time revolutionaries must warn against the sinister calculations of the ruling Awami League. They want – under the cover of the democratic struggle against the counter-revolutionaries – to limit democratic rights by banning a number of right-wing Islamist parties. We have seen in the 1971-75 period that the Awami League is not at all a democratic party. The class conscious workers and poor would be blinded if they believe that the ban of these parties is a progress for the class struggle. In fact it will only strengthen the state apparatus. We are opposed to such bans as we are opposed to bourgeois courts investigating and ruling on these reactionary army officers and Islamist politicians. We call for Workers and Peasant Tribunals and the smashing of such parties via mass mobilizations and armed workers and peasant militias.

### **History and Class Character of Jamaat-e-Islami**

45. Let us finally elaborate a characterization of Jamaat-e-Islami. Throughout its entire history, this party has always played an active force on the side of the counter-revolution. With the brief exception of the mass uprising in November 1990 (in which *all* parties participated) it never joined the progressive democratic and class struggles but – quite the opposite – it joined the counter-revolutionary side. During the decades of the Pakistani state, it fully supported the military dictatorship in Islamabad and even opposed equal rights of the Bengali language. During the Liberation War it supported the genocide of the Pakistani army and was actively involved in organizing death squads.

46. This concrete history – not the ideology – differentiates Jamaat-e-Islami from several other Islamist parties in the international arena. Irrespective of their Islamist agenda, forces like Hamas have remained for many years at the top of the Palestinian national resistance. Hezbollah has led heroic national liberation wars against Zionism and its agents. The Muslim Brotherhood was suppressed by the dictatorship for decades and when the Revolution started in January 2011 it joined it, albeit belatedly. Al-Nusra in Syria is part of the revolutionary civil war against the Assad dictatorship. Even the reactionary Taliban are different from Jamaat-e-Islami since they have stood at the top of national liberation struggle for more than a decade. Even in Western imperialist countries one can have the situation that Islamists represent important segments of the oppressed migrants. Because of this historic difference, Jamaat-e-Islami never became a mass party, while the other parties mentioned above did. According to a recent opinion poll in January, Jamaat's support was only 1%. It is because of this specific situation when Islamists are involved in a just democratic struggle, revolutionaries will consider the application of the united front tactic. However if an Islamist force is never part of a just struggle, this is neither possible nor desirable.

47. In the 1980s, Jamaat-e-Islami started to remodel itself and become a more respectable parliamentary party. It is a right-wing bourgeois Islamist fundamentalist party. It made tactical

alliance with each major political party in the country in the decades since. In 1991, Jamaat-e-Islami supported the BNP government. By the mid-1990s, the Jamaat-e-Islami collaborated with the Awami League in street protests against the BNP government. It reconciled with BNP ahead of the parliamentary election of 2001 and has kept this alliance since then.

48. Jamaat-e-Islami is a small party which gained at the two elections in the last ten years only about 4.5% of the votes (see Table 6). The party has no support amongst the working class and does not even try to achieve it. According to an observer: *"In the urban seats around Dhaka that usually swings in every election, the Jamaat's support is virtually non-existent."* (41) It always contests a small number of districts at the elections (about 50 of 300). These districts are rural areas close to the border with India where they try to win votes amongst the peasants with a rabid anti-India chauvinist demagoguery. The only two members of parliament it currently holds have been elected in the backward province of Chittagong Division which has a literacy rate is 22.08% and where one can buy and manipulate votes with the help of the state and the big land owners.

49. However despite its small size, Jamaat-e-Islami is an important party in Bangladeshi politics. First it is a king maker for the BNP. Therefore the BNP supports it now and helps it to organize demonstrations against the Awami League government. Secondly, through its support for BNP government's in the past it got access to important positions in the state apparatus and business. During the BNP government in 2001-06 it received the ministry of social welfare which helped the party to substantially finance a number of its social service institutions as well as madrasses. It also brought the Islami Bank under its control which has become the third largest bank in the country. It also receives financial support from several regimes in the Gulf. (42) Like all parties, it has a trade union wing called *"Bangladesh Sramik Kallayan"* but this seems to be very small (it might have some basis amongst the auto-rickshaw drivers.) However, given their financial resources and clear Islamist fundamentalist agenda, it has a large and ideologically motivated cadre base.

50. The reactionary character of the Jamaat-e-Islami and their Islamist allies also becomes visible from the fact that while it ignores the textile workers protests it currently campaigns for the so-called *13 Point Demands*. These demands are a completely reactionary attack against the secular constitution, the democratic rights of women, progressive forces and religious minorities. (See the full list of the 13 demands below.) (43) While this campaign has been initiated by the Islamist fundamentalist group *Hefazate Islam Bangladesh* it has been joined by Jamaat-e-Islami, BNP and Ersahd's Jatiyo Party.

### **Tactics in the Struggle against Jamaat-e-Islami**

51. So let us summarize our conclusions and tactics. In our document *"Thesis on Islamism"* we have explained that Marxist do not judge Islamist forces primarily by its ideology but rather what is their position in a concrete situation of given relations and struggles between the classes. From which classes do they get their support, against which classes are they fighting. Are they involved in a progressive massive struggle (usually these are either anti-imperialist, national liberation, or anti-dictatorship struggles) or are they rather opposing or even oppressing it. (44) With this method we give critical support to those Islamists who are involved in just struggles of the workers, peasants and lower middle classes. At the same time we make clear that their program is a reactionary utopia and

that the workers must fight independently under their own program. Where Islamist forces are not part of a progressive struggle there is no basis for critical support. Where they are part of the active counter-revolution, revolutionaries must call the working class to fight them mercilessly. Of course, we fight them with proletarian methods – mass mobilizations, workers and peasant tribunal, etc. – and not by calling the bourgeois state or even imperialism to intervene.

52. In the concrete case of Bangladesh, we see Jamaat-e-Islami as an extreme right wing, bourgeois Islamist force which has played during its entire history of more than six decades a thoroughly reactionary role as a murderous enemy of the working class and the oppressed. It is not nor has it ever been in the past six decades (with the brief exception of November 1990) part of any just struggle of the popular masses. Quite the opposite, it joined the genocidal war in 1971 and slaughtered many people. It has been a central party to bring the conservative BNP to power. Today it has joined as a central force a vicious campaign to abolish the secular constitution and to suppress the democratic rights of women, youth, etc. It is not with them and their supporters but with the textile workers and the urban middle class and students of the *Shahbagh movement* towards which revolutionaries must align. These forces have to be won for a program of transitional demands which helps them both to fight against the right-wing Islamist threat as well as against the ruling Awami government.

53. But at the same time the RCIT warns against the wrong, bourgeois methods with which the Awami League tries to suppress the right-wing Islamists. We oppose their policy of banning those parties and of putting the war criminals to a bourgeois court. We warn the workers that the Awami government could use the struggle against the Islamist fundamentalist as a pretext for attacking democratic rights and creating an authoritarian regime. We call for Workers and Peasants Tribunals to bring the war criminals to justice. We call for mass mobilizations to smash those Islamist fundamentalist which are a physical threat to the workers movement and democratic rights in general. We call for the transformation of the textile workers strike for higher wages into a general strike and for the combination with the struggle against the right-wing threat of Islamist fundamentalism. The perspective of such a struggle must be the overthrow of the government and the creation of a workers' government with the support of the poor peasants and the urban poor, based on *punchayats* (soviets) and peasant armed workers and peasant militias.

**For Working Class Independence! For a Revolutionary Party as part of the Fifth Workers' International!**

54. Despite all the heroic efforts of the Bangladeshi working class, it still lacks a central precondition to liberate itself and all oppressed: *mass organizations which are independent from the bourgeoisie and its lackeys*. The trade union federations are dominated by corrupt bureaucrats and mostly affiliated with bourgeois parties. There is no mass workers party. The Stalinist Communist Party not only played a shameful role in supporting the bourgeois regime against the popular mass protests in 1971-75, but is until today in a strategic alliance with the bourgeois Awami League in line with the notorious popular front policy. The remaining Maoist groups are trapped in ultra-left adventurism and opportunist maneuvers.

55. The heroic struggle of the female textile workers is an excellent opportunity to overcome the tremendous weakness of the trade unions. It is decisive to overcome the divisions of the union movement in many small unions. For united fronts of the unions in common struggles as a first step towards the formation of *broad, mass unions* which organise the workers in the whole industrial branch! Given the fact that most of the Bangladeshi working class are not unionised, a broad recruitment campaign to build mass unions on a democratic basis is urgent. Defend the unions against state repression! Against all laws which limit and restrict the rights of trade unions.

56. The trade unions must be purged from the grip by the bureaucracy. This bureaucracy is a layer which is connected with the state and capital via jobs and privileges. It is out of touch with the interests and living circumstances of the ordinary members. For a *rank and file movement inside the unions* against the bureaucracy! In each struggle it is important to advance the building of *mass rank and file Action Committees* which strive to integrate all activists and workers independent if they are member of a union or not. The goal of such Action Committees must be to transform themselves into broad, comprehensive combat organizations at the work place. This orientation is not in contradiction to the work within the existing mass organizations (trade unions, etc.), but rather complement to these activities. The regular work within the unions at the grassroots against the bureaucracy improves the possibility of the independent organization of the working class. The support of each opportunity to build broad committees of struggle in turn strengthens a grassroots movement inside the unions.

57. The liberation of the Bangladeshi popular masses can only succeed if the struggle is led by the working class and its vanguard organized in a combat party. However to achieve this, the working class must rally the poor peasants and the urban poor. It must help the poor peasants as well as the urban poor to build militant Action Committees. For a revolutionary peasant movement in alliance with and under the leadership of the working class!

58. Most importantly, the working class lacks its own party. Revolutionary socialists should support practical initiatives from sectors of the working class – in the unions, in other mass organizations etc. – to build a new, *independent Workers' Party*. While they should advocate a revolutionary program they should not make acceptance of it to a pre-condition from participation. They should would rather work inside such a new workers party as a revolutionary wing, fighting for a Marxist program under all circumstances and try to win the majority of the party for it. Such a Workers Party must refuse any political alliance – including electoral support – with bourgeois forces (like the Communist Party had done with the Awami Party).

59. Such a Workers' Party might be a possible but not necessary road to form the one and only instrument which can lead the working class to victory: a *revolutionary combat party*, based on the lessons and experiences of the Bolsheviks who organised under the leadership of Lenin and Trotsky the first successful seizure of power of the workers and peasants. In an article on the tasks of the Revolution in India, Trotsky compared the conditions for the revolutionary struggle with those in Russia in 1917. He concluded that the central difference is the lack of a Bolshevik party: "...all those social peculiarities which made possible and unavoidable the October revolution are present in India in a still sharper form. In this country of poor peasants, the hegemony of the city has no less a clear character than in czarist Russia. The concentration of industrial, commercial and banking power in the hands of the big bourgeoisie, primarily the foreign bourgeoisie, on the one hand; a swift growth of a sharply defined proletariat, on the other, exclude the possibility of an independent role of the petty bourgeoisie of the city and to an extent the intellectual and transform by this the political mechanics of the revolution into a struggle of the proletariat with

*the bourgeoisie for the leadership of the peasant masses. So far there is "only" one condition missing: a Bolshevik Party. And that is where the problem lies now.*" (45) Unfortunately, this is also true in Bangladesh today.

60. As there can be no "socialism in one country", neither can there exist a "revolutionary party in one country". Leon Trotsky emphasised this basic truth repeatedly. In a reply to a critique he elaborated: *"Your conception of internationalism appears to me erroneous. In the final analysis, you take the International as a sum of national sections or as a product of the mutual influence of national sections. This is, at least, a one-sided, undialectical and, therefore, wrong conception of the International. If the Communist Left throughout the world consisted of only five individuals, they would have nonetheless been obliged to build an international organization simultaneously with the building of one or more national organizations. It is wrong to view a national organization as the foundation and the international as a roof. The interrelation here is of an entirely different type. Marx and Engels started the communist movement in 1847 with an international document and with the creation of an international organization. The same thing was repeated in the creation of the First International. The very same path was followed by the Zimmerwald Left in preparation for the Third International. Today this road is dictated far more imperiously than in the days of Marx. It is, of course, possible in the epoch of imperialism for a revolutionary proletarian tendency to arise in one or another country, but it cannot thrive and develop in one isolated country; on the very next day after its formation it must seek for or create international ties, an international platform, an international organization. Because a guarantee of the correctness of the national policy can be found only along this road. A tendency which remains shut-in nationally over a stretch of years, condemns itself irrevocably to degeneration."* (46) A revolutionary party today has to be built in close accordance with building a revolutionary world party, the *Fifth Workers' International*. As long as such a Bolshevik party does not exist, the heroic struggles of the masses can not successfully win liberation. This is why the RCIT urges revolutionaries in Bangladesh to form a revolutionary Bolshevik organization as part of building a revolutionary international tendency to advance the formation of such a party based on a program for socialist revolution. The RCIT is looking forward to collaborate with Bangladeshi revolutionaries in this historic mission.

### **For a Program of Socialist Revolution!**

61. The RCIT considers the elaboration of a revolutionary Action Program as a necessary precondition for the formation of a Bolshevik organization in Bangladesh. Such a program has to be based on the Marxist scientific understanding that there can be no liberation of the working class and the oppressed without the overthrow of capitalism. Such a revolution will take place neither peacefully nor gradually or via the parliament but only by an armed insurrection of the working class in alliance with the poor peasants and the urban poor and under the leadership of a revolutionary party. Such a revolution will combine the democratic tasks – minimum economic demands for workers, distribution of the land to the peasants, struggle against the authoritarian state apparatus, liberation of women and youth, etc. – with the socialist tasks of the expropriation of the bourgeoisie and the nationalization of the banks and industry under workers control. This is only possible via the proletarian conquest of power and the smashing of the bourgeois state machinery and its replacement with the organs of the working class' dictatorship. At the same time the revolutionary struggle in Bangladesh must be understood as part of the international struggle for socialism in South Asia and worldwide. In short, the program of the revolution in Bangladesh is the program of *Permanent*

*Revolution* which links the democratic tasks with the goal of socialist revolution and the national with the international class struggle.

### **Defend the workers' rights through consistent struggle against the capitalists!**

*\* Support the textile workers demand for higher minimum wages! For an obligatory minimum wage for all workers set by the trade unions and worker representatives! For coordinated campaigns of the unions in all branches for substantial wage increases for all workers!*

*\* To protect workers' wages against inflation a sliding scale of wages linked to a workers and poor people's cost of living index is needed! Build price control committees to stop the inflation!*

*\* Jobs for all! For a public employment program financed by higher taxes for the rich!*

*\* Full support for the Bangladeshi migrant workers abroad! For international trade union solidarity to fight against the discrimination of migrants!*

*\* Open the books of the enterprises so that people can control the accounts of the capitalists and land owners and see their huge wealth!*

*\* Stop all privatisation of public enterprises! Re-nationalisation of the enterprises privatised in the past decades!*

*\* Workers control in the enterprises so that workers can veto the management's decisions!*

*\* No payment of any interests to the banks! Cancellation of all debts – both to domestic and foreign financial institutions!*

*\* Nationalisation of all banks and fusion to one central state bank under workers control!*

*\* Expropriation of the big business capitalists and big landowners! Nationalisation of their property under control of the producers, i.e. the workers and peasants!*

### **Liberate the poor peasants!**

*\* Expropriate the Joteder (big land owners)! The land must be in the hands of the state under the control of workers and poor peasants! The land to those who cultivate it! The local democratic actions council representatives of the poor and landless peasants have to decide the question of the allocation and use of the land! Promotion of voluntary agricultural cooperatives and the formation of larger state production units!*

*\* Cancel all debts of the peasants! For interest-free loans for small peasants!*

*\* For a program of agricultural development elaborated under the control of the workers and the poor peasants! For a radical change of direction in the agricultural economy! Away from the monoculture! For sustainable cultivation methods in agriculture! As much international transport of agricultural product as necessary to supply the world's population as necessary and as much supplies of locally produced agricultural goods as possible!*



## **International Emergency Plan against the capitalist Climate Crisis!**

*\* For an international emergency plan against the climate crisis! For a plan to convert the energy and transport system and for a global phasing out of fossil fuels and nuclear energy production connected to a public employment programme! For the massive exploration and use of alternative forms of energy such as wind, tidal and solar power! For a global reforestation program of the woods! Radical expansion of public transport to push back individual car traffic!*

*\* Nationalization under workers' control of all energy companies and all companies that are responsible for basic supplies such as water, agriculture and airlines, ship and rail facilities!*

*\* Force the imperialist corporations and states to pay compensation to the semi-colonial countries for the environmental destruction caused by them! No emissions trade and "ecological points" system!*

## **Fight oppression of women and youth!**

*\* Equal pay for equal work! Abolish child labour!*

*\* For a public employment program to create the conditions for the socialization of housework and simultaneously eliminate unemployment among women! For the massive construction of free, well-equipped 24-hour child-care facilities! For a wide range supply of affordable and high-quality public restaurants and laundry facilities!*

*\* Free access to free contraception and for the right of abortion!*

*\* Fight against violence against women! For the expansion of public women safe houses, controlled by women's organizations! For the formation of self-defence units by the workers' and women's movement against sexist violence!*

*\* Public education for all youth financed by taxes on the rich! For a massive public investment program to build schools close to the villages and plantation where the people live! For massive recruitment of more teachers to reduce the number of school students in each class!*

*\* For the building of a revolutionary women's movement! For the right to caucus for women in the mass organizations of workers and oppressed! For a revolutionary youth movement!*

## **Revolutionary Struggle for Democracy! Down with the all-powerful military!**

*\* Down with all-powerful Military! For a radical purge of the state apparatus! For the complete screening of all state officials and their actions - especially police, army, intelligence, administration, legal, enterprise directors, etc. - under the control of workers and peasants councils! Abolish the presidency!*

*\* No to police and surveillance state! Against expanding the powers of police and courts! For the replacement of the apparatus of repression by workers' and people's militia!*

*\* Defence of the right to strike, freedom of speech and assembly, freedom of political and union organizing, as well as the freedom to make use of all communication and information media!*

*\* Radical democratization of the administration and jurisdiction: election and possibility to recall of the entire administrative apparatus by the people!*

*\* For Workers and Peasants Tribunals to bring the war criminals to justice!*

*\* For the separation of state and religion! No privileges for religious institutions (taxes, religious education at schools etc.)! For the transfer of the property of the clergy into the public hands to serve the needs of the people!*

*\* For a revolutionary Constitutional Assembly! Such an assembly must not be convened by the ruling class but by the workers, poor peasants and urban poor! It will emerge as a result of an armed uprising and be protected by workers and peasants armed units! In such a Constitutional Assembly Marxists will fight for a revolutionary program.*

### **For a workers' government, based on the poor peasants and the urban poor**

The working class and the oppressed will never get anything if they are not fighting for it themselves. This is why they must resort to mass actions like strikes, demonstrations, occupations, general strikes and armed insurrection. For this they must organise themselves in action councils and workers' and peoples' militias.

The goal of the struggle is the creation of a workers' government, based on the poor peasants and the urban poor. Such a government must make a decisive break with the capitalist class.

*\* Nationalization of banks and fusion into a single central bank, nationalization of large companies, large wholesale trade and transport, social, health, education and communication sector without compensation and under workers' control! Introduction of a foreign trade monopoly!*

*\* Expropriation of the capitalist class and especially the banks, corporations and speculators!*

*\* For a workers' government, based on the poor peasants and the urban poor, on the basis of councils in the enterprises and neighbourhoods as well as armed militias! Their representatives are under the direct election and recall-ability by the workers and receive not more than an average skilled workers salary!*

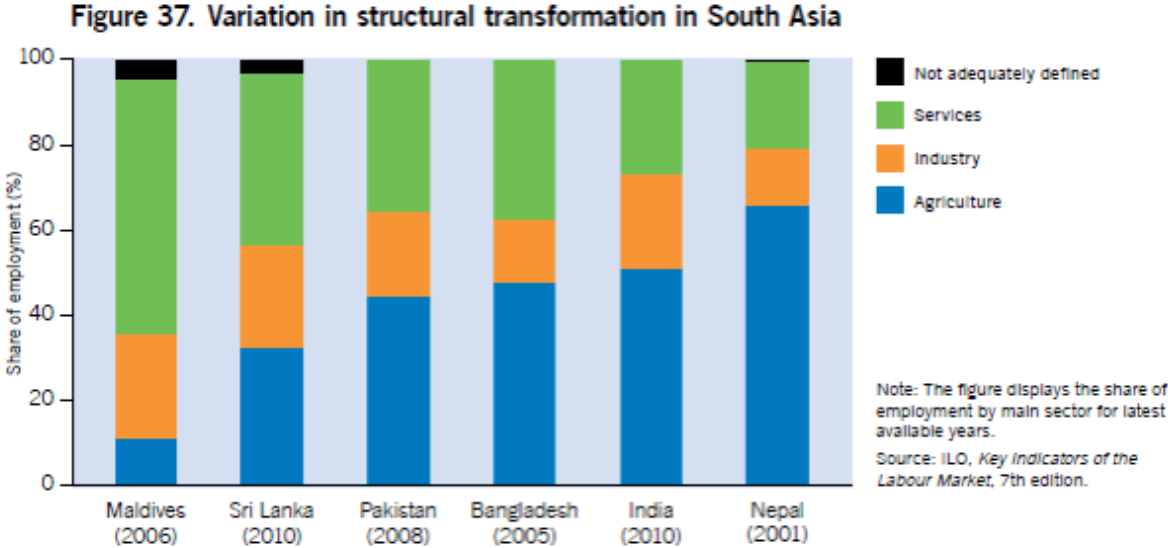
*\* For a socialist federation of workers and peasant republics in South Asia and beyond!*

# Appendix:

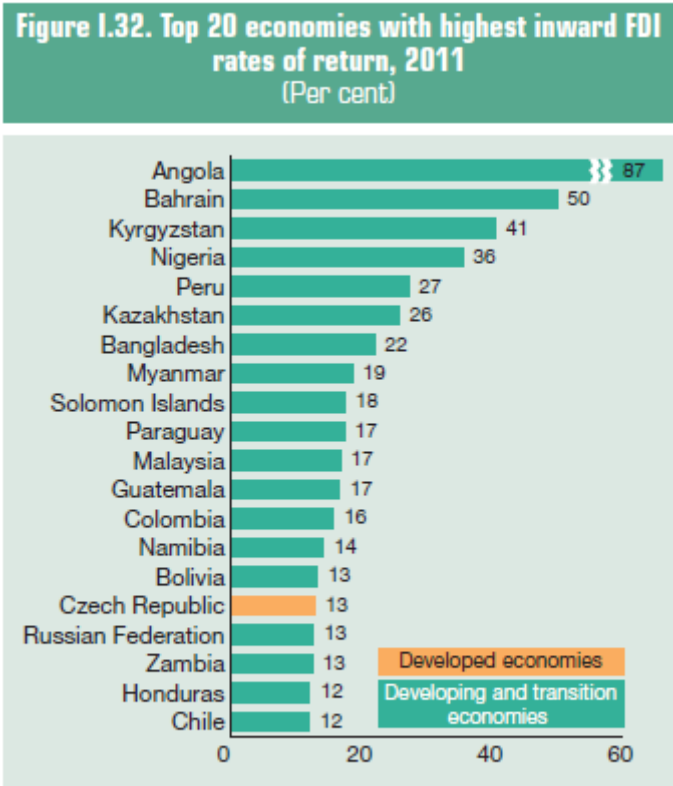
**Table1: Bangladesh FDI stock (Millions of dollars) (47)**

	1990	2000	2012
FDI stock	477	2.162	7.156

**Graph 1: Share of employment in South Asia (48)**

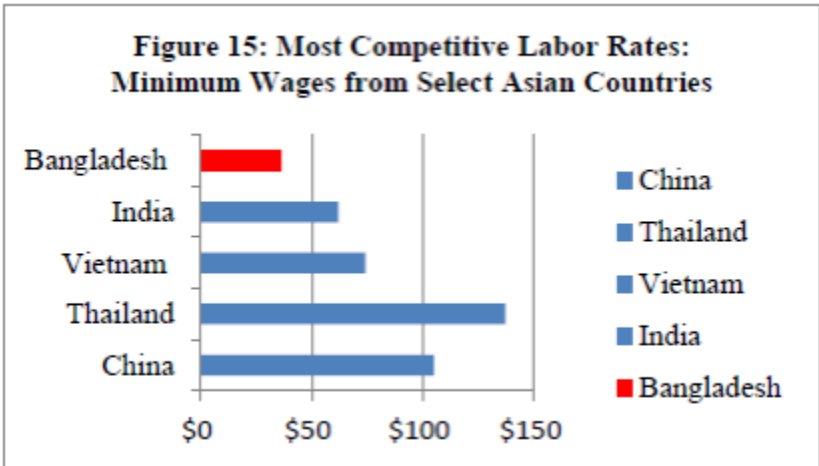


Graph 2: Top 20 economies with highest inward FDI rates of return, 2011 (in percent): (49)



Source: UNCTAD, based on data from the IMF Balance of Payments database.

Graph 3: Minimum Wages in Selected Asian Countries (in US-Dollar): (50)



**Table 2: Shift in Status of Employment 2002-03 to 2010 (in millions) (51)**

<b>Employment status</b>	<b>2002-03</b>	<b>2005-06</b>	<b>2010</b>
Self employed	19.8	19.9	22.0
Employer	0.2	0.1	0.1
Employee	6.1	6.6	9.4
Unpaid family helper	8.1	10.3	11.8
Day labourers	8.9	8.6	10.6
Household aid	1.2	1.9	1.4
Total	44.3	47.4	54.1

**Table 3: Employment by Employment Status and Type of Production Unit (in percent) (52)**

<i>Type of Worker</i>	<i>Formal Enterprise</i>	<i>Informal Enterprise</i>	<i>Household</i>
<i>Employee</i>	84.4	11.8	0.0
<i>Employer</i>	1.1	0.1	0.5
<i>Self-employed in agriculture</i>	2.3	8.9	57.2
<i>Self-employed in non-agriculture</i>	4.0	12.5	26.4
<i>Unpaid family worker</i>	0.0	31.7	0.0
<i>Casual/irregular paid worker</i>	4.5	3.7	0.0
<i>Day labor in agriculture</i>	1.3	17.0	0.0
<i>Day labor in non-agriculture</i>	2.3	14.3	0.0
<i>Domestic worker in private household</i>	0.0	0.0	15.9
<i>All</i>	100.0	100.0	100.0

**Table 4: Employment by Employment Size of Establishment and Type of Production Unit (in percent) (53)**

<i>Employment Size</i>	<i>Formal Enterprise</i>	<i>Informal Enterprise</i>	<i>Household</i>
<i>Less than 10 workers</i>	37.1	88.4	95.1
<i>10-49</i>	26.4	5.6	3.7
<i>50-149</i>	12.9	2.8	0.0
<i>150 and more</i>	23.6	3.3	0.0
<i>All</i>	100.0	100.0	100.0

**Table 5: Electoral Performance of Major Political Parties (1991-2008) (54)**

	1991		1996		2001		2008*	
	% Vote	Polled seats	% Vote	Polled seats	% Vote	Polled seats	% Vote	Polled
<i>seats</i>								
<i>Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP)</i>	30.8	140	33.6	116	42.7	198	32.74	30
<i>Awami League (AL)</i>	30.1	88	37.4	146	40.2	62	49.02	230
<i>Jatiya Party (JP)</i>	11.9	35	16.4	32	6.99	14	6.65	27
<i>Jamaat-e-Islami (JI)</i>	12.1	18	8.61	03	4.62	18	4.55	2
<i>Total Number of Seats</i>	-	300	-	299	-	300	-	299

**Table 6: Jamaat-e-Islami at parliamentary Elections 1970-2008 (55)**

<i>Election</i>	<i>% of Votes</i>	<i>Number of Seats (of 300)</i>
1970*	6	1
1979**	4	6
1986	5	10
1991	12	18
1996	8	3
2001***	4	17
2008***	4	2

(Note: \*Provincial assembly, Jamaat failed to win any of 162 East Pakistan seats in the national assembly. \*\*As Islamic Democratic League. \*\*\*In alliance with BNP.)

## Footnotes:

- (1) UNCTAD: Handbook of Statistics 2012, p. 462
- (2) UNDP: Human Development Report 2013, p. 160
- (3) UNDP: Human Development Report 2013, p. 164
- (4) UN-HABITAT: State of the World's Cities 2012/2013, p. 124
- (5) UNDP: Human Development Report 2013, p. 172
- (6) UNCTAD: Handbook of Statistics 2012, p. 462
- (7) UNIDO: Industrial Development Report 2011, p. 192-193
- (8) UNIDO: Industrial Development Report 2011, p. 169
- (9) UNCTAD: World Investment Report 2013, pp. 50-51
- (10) On the issue of value transfer via unequal exchange see the RCIT's book by Michael Pröbsting: The Great Robbery of the South, chapter 6-8, <http://www.great-robbery-of-the-south.net>
- (11) Herbert Jauch: Globalisation and Labour, Labour Resource and Research Institute (LaRRI), Prepared for the Regional Labour Symposium, Windhoek, 6.12.2005, p. 5
- (12) See The World Bank: International Debt Statistics 2013, p. 66
- (13) Ulanddsekretariatet LO/FTF: Bangladesh Labour Market Profile 2013, p. 12
- (14) World Bank: Bangladesh Development Update, April 2013, p. 24
- (15) Abu Ahsanul Habib and Rafiqul Islam: Country Report –Bangladesh, 2013
- (16) See World Bank: World Development Report 2013, p. 372; Nazli Kibria: Working Hard for the Money: Bangladesh Faces Challenges of Large-Scale Labor Migration, Boston University, August 2011, <http://www.migrationinformation.org/Profiles/display.cfm?ID=848>;
- (17) Ruma Paul and Serajul Quadir: Bangladesh urges no harsh EU measures over factory deaths, May 4, 2013, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/05/04/us-bangladesh-factory-idUSBRE94304420130504>
- (18) Ulanddsekretariatet LO/FTF: Bangladesh Labour Market Profile 2013, p. 8
- (19) International Labour Organization: Bangladesh Country Report: Trade and Employment, 2013, p. 50
- (20) Abu Ahsanul Habib and Rafiqul Islam: Country Report –Bangladesh, 2013
- (21) Ulanddsekretariatet LO/FTF: Bangladesh Labour Market Profile 2013, p. 3
- (22) Balasundaram Nimalathasan and Abu Taher: Situation Analysis of Trade Unions and Industrial Relations in Bangladesh: A Country Profile
- (23) Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies: Women's Participation in Trade Unions in Bangladesh: Status, Barriers and Overcoming Strategies, 2009, p. 8
- (24) Ulanddsekretariatet LO/FTF: Bangladesh Labour Market Profile 2013, p. 3
- (25) Strike wave signals global shift, October 21, 2010, <http://newunionism.wordpress.com/2010/10/21/strikes/>
- (26) Patrick Barta and Syed Zain Al-Mahmood: Culture of Mass Strikes Suffocates Bangladesh's Economy. 'Hartals' occurring at a time when Bangladesh is already struggling to rebuild its reputation with apparel companies, Wall Street Journal, August 4, 2013, <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887323971204578628043063823914.html>
- (27) Patrick Barta and Syed Zain Al-Mahmood: Culture of Mass Strikes Suffocates Bangladesh's Economy. 'Hartals' occurring at a time when Bangladesh is already struggling to rebuild its reputation with apparel companies, Wall Street Journal, August 4, 2013, <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887323971204578628043063823914.html>

- (28) For the RCIT's assessment of the creation of Pakistan see Chapter 2 of the Pakistani Sections' Action Program in Revolutionary Communism No. 3 or [www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/asia/pakistan-is-a-prison-house](http://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/asia/pakistan-is-a-prison-house).
- (29) For a general analysis of Maoism see Michael Pröbsting: Theses on Maoism, in: Revolutionary Communism No. 5, <http://www.thecommunists.net/theory/thesis-on-maoism/>
- (30) See e.g. Naeem Mohaiemen: "Kothai Aj Shei Shiraj Sikder (Where Today Is that Shiraj Sikder)?" Terrorists or Guerrillas in the Mist; in: Sarai Reader 2006: Turbulence, Delhi 2006, pp. 302-303
- (31) By the way: this is another example of a liberation war with a contradictory character as we outlined in our document Michael Pröbsting: "*Liberation struggles and imperialist interference*" (Revolutionary Communism No. 5, <http://www.thecommunists.net/theory/liberation-struggle-and-imperialism/>). While communists naturally supported the national liberation war, they opposed the Indian army's intervention. This reactionary intervention however did not lead communists to drop their support for the liberation struggle.
- (32) See on this e.g. Gonotantrik Mazdur Party: Anatomy of the Communist Party of Bangladesh, 1 August 2001, [www.marxist.com/communist-party-bangladesh110801.htm](http://www.marxist.com/communist-party-bangladesh110801.htm)
- (33) Joyeeta Bhattacharjee: Bangladesh: Political Trends and Key Players; in: Strategic Trends, South Asia Series Volume 1 Issue 2, November 2011, pp. 9-11
- (34) Joyeeta Bhattacharjee: The Bangladesh Army: Documenting its Corporate Interests, Observer Research Foundation, Occasional Paper #17, October 2010, p. 3
- (35) Joyeeta Bhattacharjee: Bangladesh: Political Trends and Key Players; in: Strategic Trends, South Asia Series Volume 1 Issue 2, November 2011, p. 15
- (36) Joyeeta Bhattacharjee: The Bangladesh Army: Documenting its Corporate Interests, Observer Research Foundation, Occasional Paper #17, October 2010, p. 19
- (37) Leaving aside the old Communist Party and its splits – who usually ally themselves with the Awami League – a number of centrist organizations are undertaking mass work. The Communist Party of Bangladesh (Marxist-Leninist) – which comes from a Maoist background but has now become a permanent observer within the Mandelite "Fourth International" – claims: "*On the ground, in spite of its divisions and its numerical weakness, the radical Bangladeshi left remains strong. Thanks to a long tradition of struggle, it has won mass support among workers and peasants. Most of the political parties of the radical left have built mass organizations which have made possible the development of spectacular struggles, with significant results. For example, the CPB-ML leads the Krishok and Kishani Sabha federations, two peasant organizations which represent Via Campesina in Bangladesh and have two million members. Several political parties, such as the Revolutionary Workers' Party and the Revolutionary Democratic Party, have built trade unions in the textile industry. The parties of the radical Left have also developed work and built mass organizations aimed at students and women.*" (Danielle Sabai: The left and social movement struggles in Bangladesh, 9 November 2011, <http://www.internationalviewpoint.org/spip.php?article2372>)
- (38) Naimul Haq: Coup bid reveals extremism within, 26 February 2012, <http://www.internationalviewpoint.org/spip.php?article2504>
- (39) Mohammad Hossain: A travesty of justice in Bangladesh, 20.9.2013, [http://atimes.com/atimes/South\\_Asia/SOU-03-200913.html](http://atimes.com/atimes/South_Asia/SOU-03-200913.html)
- (40) See e.g. Tahmima Anam: Shahbag protesters versus the Butcher of Mirpur, The Guardian, 13 February 2013 <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/feb/13/shahbag-protest-bangladesh-quader-mollah> and Nazmul Sultan: Situating the Shahbag Movement: Re-founding the National?, Radical Notes, February 22, 2013, <http://radicalnotes.com/tag/bangladesh/>
- (41) See Jyoti Rehman: The Jamaat factor in Bangladesh politics, March 13, 2013, <http://kafila.org/2013/03/13/the-jamaat-factor-in-bangladesh-politics-jyoti-rehman/>



(42) See Jyoti Rehman: The Jamaat factor in Bangladesh politics, March 13, 2013, <http://kafila.org/2013/03/13/the-jamaat-factor-in-bangladesh-politics-jyoti-rehman/>

(43) The 13 points:

\* *Reinstating the phrase "Absolute trust and faith in the Almighty Allah" in the constitution as one of the fundamental principles of state policy.*

\* *Law providing death penalty for blasphemy.*

\* *Punish the 'atheist' leaders of Shahbagh, bloggers and anti-Islamists who make "derogatory comments" about Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).*

\* *Stop killing, attacking and shooting scholars and Madrassa students.*

\* *Lift restrictions on mosques and remove obstacles to holding religious programmes*

\* *Free all arrested Islamic scholars and Madrasa students.*

\* *Stop threatening teachers and students of Qawmi Madrassas, Islamic scholars, imams and khatibs.*

\* *Stop creating hatred against Muslims among young generation by misrepresentation of Islamic culture in the media.*

\* *Qadiyanis (Ahmadiyahs) be declared non-Muslims.*

\* *Ban all foreign culture including free mixing between members of opposite gender and candle light vigils.*

\* *Stop setting up sculptures at intersections, colleges and universities across the country.*

\* *Make Islamic education mandatory from primary to higher secondary levels; scrap education and women' policies.*

\* *Stop anti-Islam activities by NGOs, 'evil attempts' by Qadiyanis and conversion by Christian missionaries in CHT and elsewhere in country. (See What The World Needs To Know About Hefazate Islam, April 7, 2013 <http://bdlawpolgov.wordpress.com/2013/04/07/what-the-world-needs-to-know-about-hefazate-islam/>)*

(44) See Michael Pröbsting and Simon Hardy: Theses on Islamism (2011), <http://www.thecommunists.net/theory/theses-on-islamism/>

(45) Leon Trotsky: The Revolution in India. Its Tasks and its Dangers (1930), in Trotsky Writings 1930, p. 246, <http://marxists.org/archive/trotsky/1930/05/india.htm>

(46) Leo Trotzki: To the Editorial Board of Prometeo (1930); in: Writings 1930, S. 285f.

(47) UNCTAD: World Investment Report 2013, p. 218

(48) ILO: Global Employment Trends 2013, p. 78

(49) UNCTAD: World Investment Report 2013, p. 33

(50) World Bank: Bangladesh Development Update, April 2013, p. 24

(51) International Labour Organization: Bangladesh Country Report: Trade and Employment, 2013, p. 43

(52) Asian Development Bank: The Informal Sector and Informal Employment in Bangladesh, 2012, p. 20

(53) Asian Development Bank: The Informal Sector and Informal Employment in Bangladesh, 2012, p. 20

(54) Joyeeta Bhattacharjee: Bangladesh: Political Trends and Key Players; in: Strategic Trends, South Asia Series Volume 1 Issue 2, November 2011, p. 18

(55) Jyoti Rehman: The Jamaat factor in Bangladesh politics, March 13, 2013, <http://kafila.org/2013/03/13/the-jamaat-factor-in-bangladesh-politics-jyoti-rehman/>