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Bangladesh

Bangladesh left slams Islamist murder of Avijit Roy

- IV Online magazine - 2015 - IV483 - April 2015 -

Publication date: Thursday 16 April 2015

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Badrul Alam from the Communist Party of Bangladesh (Marxist-Leninist) spoke to Solidarity [Britain] about the murder on the streets of Dhaka of the US writer of Bangladeshi background, Avijit Roy.

It is clear that Roy was killed by fundamentalists because there were similar cases in 2004, when a professor from Dhaka University, Humayun Azad, was murdered.

Extremist groups admitted killing Azad, because they held him to be an atheist.

Roy came from a rationalist family. His father was a teacher of physics at Dhaka university; it was a family tradition to be scientific-minded.

Roy was considered by the extremists to be an atheist because on his blog he posted articles about atheism. Extremist groups followed his blog and targeted him for a long time.

People who are rationalists and free thinkers attend book fairs in Bangladesh. The extremists target these book fairs as well.

Secular people think that Roy should have had a right to write anything and publish any books he likes, and should not have been treated like this. As a human being, he has a life to lead, whether he is an atheist or religious-minded or whatever. What the extremists did is completely illegal and it is an expression of their extremist mentality.

Students at Dhaka University, where the incident took place, protested on the streets.

There are some people who think that it is not rational to prod religious-minded people. Better, they think, to approach the matter more carefully. There are a lot of fundamentalist groups in the country who can block radical progress. There is only a small minority which is atheist. So, better to go slow.

On the other hand many people in the country are criticising the religious fundamentalist group for their actions. On the whole it is against the fundamentalists.

Things are moving for the free thinkers in this country, but progress is very slow. Although there is a strong secular culture in Bangladesh, there are millions in the rural areas who are religious-minded. They love religion. But they are not fundamentalist-minded.

Fanatics are few in number. But they are on the rise because of promotional efforts, such as madrassa education or mosque education. The increase in fundamentalist attitudes in this country is alarming.

The CPB-ML are against the murder. Atheists should not be killed by extremists. They have a right to live and express their opinions. After this incident we strongly criticised religious extremists.

We also asked the government to take action against the murderers. We didn't get much hostility.

18 March 2015

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