

past, they got subsidies; today, they want to get them via the purchase prices.

Chernichenko: This is a political attempt to save the structure, the monopoly.

Litvinov: Yes, precisely a *political* attempt.

Chernichenko: Political salvation. This is not economics as such.

Litvinov: But to the extent that, in what remains of that system at various levels of power, you have ensconced the very people who earlier were in the Communist Party, we have a paradox. Or if not a paradox, then a situation you could describe this way: The top is democratic, but at the base are sitting the former party structures. And they fail to carry out the new laws, and they make the ruckus that puts a brake on all economic processes.

Kiryanov: The only person who could become director of a collective farm or state farm, was someone who had worked in the regional committee of the Communist Party. If he hadn't worked there, he would never become a leader. So the majority of those remaining are leaders who robbed the farmsteads, who went into administration, and who never knew how to lead anything. They carried out instructions that came from the Central Committee in Moscow.

Litvinov: The crux of the matter is that these are people who were trained not to think, but to carry out orders. And landing in a situation where you have to think, to find a way out, make comparisons, analyze something, they are physically incapable of doing this. And so, this political situation, where the upper levels are democratic, but below are the old structures, all these people who do not know how and do not want to think, is the most terrible. It is very difficult to change. Because all cadre questions at the lower levels are being decided by the people who decided them in the past.

EIR: What is the effect of the fact that the problem of the right to own land has not been solved?

Kiryanov: This is fundamental today. As a state farm worker, I can receive 20 hectares of land. But not my family. My wife is a teacher, my son a miller; they and the others supposedly *have* land. It's listed there on paper as part of the state farm land. But they cannot receive the land. This obstruction remains. When he was in Altai, Yeltsin said that he would remove these reservations and that everybody could receive land. But up until now, almost four months later, this question has still not been decided.

Litvinov: And it won't be. Something very clever was done here, which the democratic forces underestimated. A law on local self-management was adopted, on the *soviets*, which gave all power to the lower levels of authority. Remember, I said that we have "democracy" at the top and not at the bottom. And according to this law that was adopted, the top gave all the power to the bottom levels! And this law is now in effect. They are doing whatever they want—they seize land and they decide whether to give land or not.

Bangladeshi migrants are flooding India

by Ramtanu Maitra

India's largest opposition party in the parliaments, the Bharatiya Janata Party, has recently demanded the detection and deportation of illegal Bangladeshis residing in India. Urging the government of Prime Minister Narasimha Rao to take up the issue on a war-footing, the chauvinist Hindu leaders of the BJP claimed that at least 15 million Bangladeshi Muslims have infiltrated into the border districts of the eastern and northeastern states of Assam, West Bengal, Tripura, Bihar, and Manipur, among others.

There is little doubt that the BJP, somewhat weakened politically in recent days due to its failure to make any significant headway on the religious strife at Ayodhya—their bread-and-butter issue in the 1989 and 1991 general elections—is trying to gain some political mileage exploiting the Bangladeshi influx issue. But no one could deny that a large number of Bangladeshis have crossed over into India and made it their home. The Bangladeshi government, ostensibly afraid that an admission of such infiltration would give rise to anti-Bangladesh sentiments in India and elsewhere, has denied the existence of such an influx, while admitting that border-crossing takes place due to a thriving smuggling business.

The presence of Bangladeshis is omnipresent even in Delhi, almost 900 kilometers from the Bangladeshi borders. There are innumerable slums where the Bangladeshis can be found in force and, east of the Yamuna River, the direction in which Delhi is growing by leaps and bounds, an area which is even indentified as "Bangladesh."

An explosive situation

A recent study by journalist Sanjoy Hazarika, sponsored by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and Harvard and Toronto universities, has brought to light the enormity of this migration. According to the study, a little less than the present population of the entire Australian continent had migrated from East Pakistan (1947-71) and Bangladesh (1971-91) to India. Obviously, not all the migrants are illegal residents. Many, particularly in the late 1940s and 1950s, were Hindus leaving the newly formed Islamic Republic of Pakistan. Nonetheless, Hazarika's study points to some important findings which force the question: Can Bangladesh remain a viable economic and political entity, and, if not,

what can be done to ease the human misery evident by large illegal migration? Some of Hazarika's findings are:

- About 14 million East Pakistani/Bangladeshis had left home to settle in India or Pakistan.

- About 200,000 Bangladeshis are infiltrating into the bordering state of West Bengal every year.

- According to a confidential central government estimate, at least 56 state assembly constituencies along the borders have undergone a demographic change. The illegal migrants can now exercise significant electoral muscle and can decide the outcome of any election.

- Of the 22.38 million inhabitants centered in Assam, according to the 1991 nationwide demographic census, about one-third were immigrants and their descendants from East Pakistan/Bangladesh. Native Assamese are unlikely to be more than 40%. The present instability in Assam has its roots in this lop-sided infiltration.

In the 1980s, Hazarika points out, outraged by years of land-grabbing and manipulation of voters' lists, thousands of migrants and their descendants were massacred in Nelli, Lakhpathar, and Sawaul Khua Sapori. The Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) government which came to state power in Assam, ousting the traditional Congress Party in the 1980s, had the deportation of millions of illegal immigrants as its main electoral plank. Although the AGP did not succeed in meeting its promise, the campaign gave birth later to a radicalized, violent movement in Assam.

- In Delhi, there are at least 400,000 Bangladeshi illegals. This figure is almost four times greater than the government admits.

The Bangladeshi influx has also been addressed by the government officials of Manipur, a northeastern state bordering Assam and the country of Burma (Myanmar).

In Tripura, where at least 60,000 Chakma refugees of the Buddhist faith have taken shelter in protest against the Bangladeshi government for settling Muslims in the tribal areas, among other grievances, the Bangladeshi influx has been noted with alarm by local political leaders. According to the Calcutta daily *The Statesman*, the official sources point out that the incursion of Bangladeshis in 1990 has raised the state's population by 14,900. In 1989, infiltration figures showed 10,000 illegal immigrants.

The dangers

Such large-scale migration from Bangladesh has the potential to create serious instability in the eastern and north-eastern states. But Bangladeshis are leaving in such large numbers because they are finding it impossible to make a living at home any longer. The country is being steadily pauperized. The country's agriculture, which improved significantly during the 1970s and the first part of the 1980s, is now stagnating. Bangladesh has little to show in the industrial area, barring textiles and jute.

The country continues to remain almost fully dependent

on foreign aid and grants in order to import what it consumes. The inability of the governments, guided by a handful of corrupt and indifferent bureaucrats, to raise the minimal amount of resources from the country's domestic sources is a case in point.

Beside the Bangladeshi workers in the Persian Gulf and, of course, in Pakistan, the Hong Kong-based weekly *Far Eastern Economic Review* reported recently that already 200,000 Bangladeshis are working in Malaysia. In coming years, unless measures are taken, the educated and skilled Bangladeshis will leave their own country in droves, seeking a greener pasture. Such migration of qualified individuals will be spread all over the world, although it will be concentrated in the Persian Gulf and other Islamic countries.

While the educated and skilled Bangladeshis will try to find a temporary, or even permanent, legitimate home, where their skills can be translated into a decent living, such an option does not exist for the tens of millions of illiterate and unskilled Bangladeshis. For them, the only choice is to cross over to economically poor India, living in misery and causing increasing frictions. Located at the bottom of the totem pole, beside being illegal immigrants, these Bangladeshis, competing successfully for the lowliest jobs, have already started to generate enemies among the poor Indians living in border districts.

There is no question that the BJP and their ilk will exploit such conflicts to gain politically, which means increasing provocations targeted toward the Bangladeshi poor. One of the front groups of the BJP, the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP), has become extremely active in the Bangladesh-West Bengal-Bihar border districts. The ABVP alleges that the infiltration of Bangladeshi Muslims is guided by a grand design hatched in the Bangladesh capital of Dhaka. The ABVP claims that in the border districts of West Bengal and Bihar, under the leadership of a Muslim, a demand for a separate state, Purvanchal State, has been voiced. The goal of these "conspirators" is to make these border areas a part of Bangladesh, the ABVP claims.

While the ABVP's claims verge on the ludicrous, the Dhaka elites must note that talk of a "new demographic order" will only feed paranoia.

For example, the influential Dhaka-based journal *Holiday* carried an article recently by Sadiq Khan, a scion of a political family. The article, "The Question of *Lebensraum*," called for a "world demographic order" to plan and implement "population movements and settlements to avoid critical demographic pressures in pockets of high concentration." The author continued: "A natural outflow of population pressure [in Bangladesh] is very much in the cards and will not be restrainable by barbed wires or border patrol measures. The natural trend of population overflow from Bangladesh is toward sparsely populated lands of the southeast in the Arabian side and of the northeast in the Seven Sisters of the Indian subcontinent."