



VIEWPOINT

Every week in this column, VIEWPOINT, we print opinions of our readers on subjects which we feel are of popular interest and concern. The opinions, however, do not always coincide with those of HOLIDAY's.

Terrorism and strike at Ctg. varsity

By ABDUN NOOR

Now-a-days "terrorism" is a word widely used in politics, both national and international. A few months ago President Reagan had ordered an air attack on the residence of the Libyan leader Muammer Gaddafi for the latter's alleged involvement in terrorism.

But according to what standard one can justify the American military action as an act for peace?

The question is, what does the word terrorism mean? It is reported that even the experts of the SAARC countries in a recent meeting held in Kathmandu, have found it difficult to reach to an agreeable definition of "terrorism". However, in the domestic front, the news of class boycott by a section of Chittagong University (CU) teachers for alleged terrorism on the campus has got prominence in some newspapers.

In early October of this year, a group of CU teachers came out with a complaint that terrorism exists at the varsity and that until the alleged terrorism is completely eliminated, they would go on boycotting their classes.

On the other hand, another group of teachers claimed complete normalcy on the campus and they have been taking their classes regularly. The latter group of teachers have also termed the strike decision of the former group of teachers as illegal as per the constitution of the Teacher's Association (TA) and the existing rules of the country.

A couple of months has already elapsed but no

viable solution to break this stalemate has yet been evolved. The silent sufferers have become the thousands of innocent students of the university and their worried guardians. To have a clear understanding of the situation, one has to go back to the history of teacher's grouping at C.U.

BACKGROUND OF THE PEOPLE

In the early eighties, the teachers of C.U have become sharply divided into two opposite groups over the implementation of the Chittagong University Act, 1973. The Act has introduced the process of electing the Vice-Chancellor, the teacher's representatives in the Academic Council, the Syndicate and the Senate.

In democracy, the inevitable results of election process are the divisions and groupings among the electors. The C.U is not an exception to this process. Each group of teachers has since then become restless in getting the elected posts filled up by their nominated candidates.

Some of the teachers are found more active in group activities than performing their professional duties like doing of research and taking of classes. Hardly anybody cares for this opportunity cost since there is no system of making the teachers accountable for their duties at the university level.

In 1985, Professore Mohammed Ali of English department, after securing the highest member of votes in the Senate had been appointed as the Vice-Chancellor of C.U. for a

term of four years. This naturally disappointed one group of teachers who could not find their group leader as the Vice-Chancellor (V.C.).

Since then, they have started playing the role of opposition by criticizing the policies and actions of Prof. Ali, instigating the students against the V.C., creating obstacles in university administration, etc.

Needless to say that the ongoing strike on the pretext of alleged terrorism on the campus is a part of this process.

TEACHER'S STRIKE

It is alleged by the non-striking teachers that the motive behind the present strike in the name of Teachers Association is more political than the expressed reason. The present strike of teachers is in support of their demand for the punishment of a section of students for their alleged terrorism on the campus and their misbehaviour with some teachers. The question is, how far such allegations provide a good ground for continuous strike by the teachers?

It is to be noted here that like the other universities of Bangladesh, besieging the vice-Chancellors's office and the Syndicate meeting by the demonstrating students are not however uncommon phenomenon in the history of C.U.

In 1977, Mansur, a student of management department was brutally murdered by his opponents in broad daylight. In 1982, some senior teachers of the university were physically

assaulted by a section of unruly students and the campus club of the teachers was also completely burnt by them.

But none of the previous incidents has been made an issue for continuous strike by the Teacher's Association.

It is alleged that the present strike of the teachers is a blueprint of few activists controlling the executive Committee of the Teacher's Association. It was October 8, 1987, when some demonstrating students went to record their protest against the examination scandal of the management department to the ongoing Syndicate meeting of the varsity, two of the teacher representatives of the Syndicate are reported to have threatened to close down the University.

On the following day, the Teachers' Association in an emergency meeting has decided for continuous strike alleging against terrorism on the campus with the presence of only one-tenth of its members. But a large number of teachers has immediately expressed their disagreement with the strike decision of the Association.

They have alleged that the meeting of the Association of 9th October, 1987, was arranged hurriedly on a holiday (Friday) in the town club instead of University campus. Even the notification for the meeting was not served among the general teachers.

They have further claimed that the situation on the campus is quite normal, and ignoring the strike

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decision of the association, they have continued taking their routine classes from October 10, 1987.

On the other hand, the University authority in an official statement has challenged the validity of the strike decision of the Teacher's association since no previous notice was given to the authority before going for continuous strike.

Meanwhile, a leaflet in the name of "Chhatra Andolon Parishad" has alleged that the strike programme in the name of the Teacher's Association has been taken in order to divert the attention of the teachers and students from the issue of examination scandal of the Management department where the President of the Teacher's Association is alleged to have been involved.

(To be continued)