

Apprehensions at C.U.: a rejoinder

By MD. MUNIRUDDIN

Our attention has been drawn to an article published in HOLIDAY on March 11, 1988 under the title 'Apprehensions at Chittagong University' by Mr. Abdun Noor, Chairman of the Dept. of Public Administration, Chittagong University.

He also wrote a two-installment series headlined 'Terrorism and Strike at Chittagong Varsity' in December last year but since we do not take him seriously and his writings are enough to show what he is, a reply did not merit our consideration. But since some of his irresponsible comments, particularly in the 11th March issue may cause misgivings about the C.U. Teachers' Association some clarifications as well as relevant information about the writer himself have become unavoidable.

Mr. Abdun Noor tried to link the CU Teachers' Association with the students who stormed the campus and occupied Alaol Hall on 6th January and even went to the extent of claiming that CUTA withdrew its strike only one day after that, on 7th Jan. '88.

These are nothing but figments of his imagination far from the reality because the CUTA decided to call off its strike from 10th January, the day after the re-opening of the University, in response to a request by the Syndicate meeting held on 31st December and on the assurance that the culprits who assaulted teachers would be punished.

It is, however, true that the overwhelming majority of the students and teachers had some sympathy for these boys who entered the campus on 6th January and had to leave by the 6th February, 1988 because these boys were not allowed to enter the University ever since a fundamentalist group of students captured the entire campus with arms on 26th Nov. '88 having seriously wounded other

party leaders and supporters.

Even the university authority had to admit in a press statement that Islami Chhatra Shibir was responsible for it. Who doesn't know that since then, for the last sixteen months, there has been a "reign of terror" in Chittagong University.

Four teachers, including a provost, two officers including the president of their Association and countless students have been assaulted by these armed terrorists some of whom had criminal cases and warrants of arrests against them although they lived in the dormitories and moved freely on the campus.

The law and order situation on the campus deteriorated so much so, that the Teachers' Association, having failed to get any help or redress from the Varsity authority, had to go on strike from the 10th of October '88 demanding an end to campus terrorism and action against the students who assaulted teachers.

At least on some issues we always expected that all teachers would be united no matter how strongly pro-establishment some of them may be. But it was so shocking to see that a handful of teachers including Mr. Noor would fail to show an sympathy for their colleagues who were assaulted by miscreants and instead float a new organisation called Chattagram Vishbhiddalaya Shiykkak Parishad to oppose the programme of the CUTA.

Can this be expected from any self-respecting teachers and should he expect others' sympathy if he himself ever falls victim to such gangsterism?

Mr. Noor had reasons to be extremely grateful to the present V.C. and his administration for showering him with so many undue benefits including promotion in the recent years but is it

the right way to give a return for those benefits? How can a teacher openly take side with the gangsters and encourage terrorism?

Mr. Noor initiated the formation of the so-called C.U. Shiykkak Parishad and became its joint convenor although he never won in any election he contested in this university. He could not even collect 25 signatures to oppose the CUTA programme.

What a shame it is that when they first opposed the CUTA programme with a statement of 75 teachers, nearly sixty of them were later found to be false. Only after that they formed the so-called C.U.S. Parishad so that they could give statements in the name of the convenor and joint convenor instead of collecting signatures which became so difficult for them.

For persons not enjoying the support and confidence of the general teachers this may be a good strategy but where do they stand morally?

Mr. Noor gave a detailed description of the damages caused by the students between Jan. '6 and Feb. '6, 1988 (476 rooms out of 777 damaged etc.) and also collected a photograph of one of the damaged rooms. Since the PRO of the University is now undergoing treatment in a Dhaka hospital it's nice to see that Mr. Noor is volunteering his services.

He is, of course, doing a bit more than that by circulating or distributing the paper-cutting of the Holiday report of 17th March in the teachers buses, the lounge, club and may be also in the students dormitories considering it one of his great achievements for which, we hope, the authority will give him more rewards.

But if he was so happy describing the damages of this one month (Jan. 6-Feb. 6) why did he not mention

anything about the one year before that when so many of his colleagues were insulted or assaulted and when armed miscreants of the worst variety kept the varsity under siege. Does he not know that he, PRO of the University and President, C.U. Officers Association, Mr. Abe Hena Mohsin who himself was assaulted by those terrorists and yet he had to give a press release claiming normalcy on the campus.

Mr. Noor appears to be very happy as the fundamentalists have regained their control of the campus but apprehends a fresh strike call by the CUTA which he hopes will be 'nullified' by the general students and teachers.

What a shameless statement it is for a teacher to say that the miscreants who assaulted teachers should not be punished and any attempt at that will be resisted or nullified. But has he forgotten the fact that all the student organisations except Islami Chhatra Shibir supported the stand taken by the CUTA.

Mr. Noor and his handful of colleagues also made a farce of themselves by bringing out a procession in town in the name of CU Shiyakkak Parishad in order to defend the CU administration and the terrorists who beat up the teachers. The procession mostly consisting of outsiders including madrasa students, it is reported, also demanded expulsion of three teachers of the University who as syndicate members were putting pressure on the authority for stern action against the miscreants.

It is really funny to note that some teachers who could never win a election for want of support and confidence of their colleagues were demanding expulsion of three most popular teachers who were elected to both Senate and syndicate of the University by the teachers.