

<https://internationalviewpoint.org/spip.php?article9076>



Bangladesh

On the present left political situation in Bangladesh

- IV Online magazine - 2025 - IVP606 - July 2025 -

Publication date: Sunday 6 July 2025

Copyright © International Viewpoint - online socialist magazine - All rights reserved

The 5 August 2024 uprising marked not just a moment of student protest—it ignited a political process whose consequences are still unfolding. What began as outrage over education reform and police repression quickly evolved into a mass resistance movement that tore open the tightly sealed lid of authoritarian stability. In the days and weeks that followed, slogans once thought obsolete—socialism, revolution, land to the tiller—began to echo again in campuses, slums, and workers’ quarters. For the first time in years, the radical left—both legal and underground—moved from the margins toward the center of political contention in Bangladesh.

For decades, the left had been fragmented and driven underground or into irrelevance. The parliamentary left—parties like the Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB), the Socialist Party (BASAD), and the Revolutionary Workers Party—had suffered from electoral defeats, leadership stagnation, and co-optation. Their younger generations were largely disengaged, and their base among workers and peasants had eroded under neoliberal reforms and NGO encroachments. On the other hand, the underground and semi-underground left—Maoist and Marxist-Leninist formations like the communist Party of Bangladesh (ML), the Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP), Sarbohara Party- Bangladesh, the Communist of Bangladesh (Red Flag) and the New Communist Party—had been hunted by security forces, weakened by infighting, and disconnected from emerging social movements.

The August uprising began to reverse that tide. The brutal crackdown by the state, especially the use of the Digital Security Act and physical assaults on students, delegitimized the ruling regime in the eyes of a new generation. Legal left parties, for all their weakness, were among the first to respond with political clarity. They mobilized legal aid, formed protest committees, and called for a national student-worker alliance. What set them apart was not just their history, but their ideological vocabulary. They named the system—capitalism, authoritarianism, imperialism—when others were still calling for “reform.” For many students, this was their first encounter with structured Marxist thought.

At the same time, the underground left sensed that the conditions for renewed activity were emerging. Many had been preparing quietly in villages and border districts, particularly in Meherpur, Chuadanga, Jhenaidah, and parts of Mymensingh. These groups, long inspired by Maoist and Naxalite movements, saw the uprising as a signal to increase cadre recruitment and reestablish communication with disaffected youth. Their actions were cautious but deliberate: distributing leaflets at night, training new members in ideological texts, and supporting landless peasants in resisting eviction.

What unfolded over the next several months was not a single unified movement, but a series of overlapping insurgencies—intellectual, political, and at times, material. In Dhaka, Chattogram, and Rajshahi, Marxist student fronts began to form new reading circles and publishing initiatives. Small Marxist publishing houses began circulating Bengali editions of Lenin, Rosa Luxemburg, and Charu Mazumdar. In Gazipur and Narayanganj, radical trade unionists supported by underground networks organized wildcat strikes and defied factory shutdowns. Rural organizers aligned with underground Maoist groups began supporting peasant resistance against land grabs by corporate agribusinesses and the military.

Meanwhile, within the legal left, a debate was intensifying. Should they continue to push for parliamentary representation in a system increasingly seen as hollow and authoritarian? Or should they move toward building a revolutionary front outside of elections, in coordination with militant labor and youth forces? This tension came to a head in December 2024, when a new left coalition—*Gonotantrik Bam Jote (Democratic Left Alliance)*—was declared. While it included the CPB, BASAD, and the Revolutionary Workers Party and others, it was met with skepticism by more militant youth who saw it as an attempt to co-opt the moment back into the parliamentary framework.

Still, this coalition organized significant protests, particularly on International Workers' Day 2025 and on the anniversary of the uprising. It published manifestos that addressed not only economic grievances but also called for systemic transformation—democratic control over land and factories, decentralization of power, abolition of the repressive state apparatus, and a halt to foreign debt dependency. Yet the lack of a coherent revolutionary strategy continued to haunt them. While they offered critique, they lacked a clear path toward seizure of power or construction of dual power structures.

It was precisely this vacuum that the underground left tried to fill. Groups like the PBCP and CPB(ML) began advocating for the creation of *People's Committees* at village and neighborhood levels. In some areas, particularly in parts of the southwest, these committees started functioning informally—resolving land disputes, organizing self-defense patrols, and offering basic services. Their vision, while still marginal, began to resonate with communities abandoned by the state.

A notable shift also occurred in how underground groups used technology. The younger generation within these formations began adopting secure messaging platforms and digital encryption to avoid surveillance. They released communiqués and political essays anonymously on underground forums, some of which were circulated via Telegram and even on obscure pages of social media. Through these methods, they were able to establish links with urban activists, tech-savvy students, and even sections of the diaspora.

But the challenges remain immense. Repression has intensified—dozens of activists have been detained, tortured, or disappeared. NGOs and donor-funded initiatives continue to dilute radical agendas by absorbing grassroots leadership into service-based programming. Sectarianism still plagues many left formations, both legal and underground. And despite the gains made since August 2024, the broader public remains cautious—fearful of violence, uncertain about revolutionary alternatives, and often caught between survival and skepticism.

Nonetheless, the political ground has shifted. What once seemed impossible—the return of Marxist politics, the reorganization of underground parties, the convergence of student and worker struggles—is now a living process. The left in Bangladesh, both visible and clandestine, is no longer passive. It is thinking, organizing, preparing. Whether this renewed momentum will mature into a revolutionary project depends not just on ideological commitment, but on strategic vision, unity in diversity, and the capacity to root politics in everyday life. The uprising did not end in 2024. It began something deeper—a historical current that continues to swell beneath the surface, gathering strength for what may yet come.

1 July 2025

Source [ESSF](#).

PS:

If you like this article or have found it useful, please consider donating towards the work of International Viewpoint. Simply follow this link: [Donate](#) then enter an amount of your choice. One-off donations are very welcome. But regular donations by standing order are also vital to our continuing functioning. See the last paragraph of [this article](#) for our bank account details and take out a standing order. Thanks.