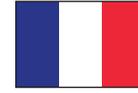


# AWAKENING

Journal 10 ● February 2021

A multilingual online journal of  
the Humanists of the world

Please click on the flag for your language



About Us

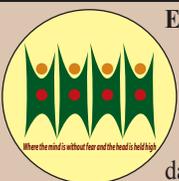


Archive



Watercolour on International Mother Language Day by Hashem Khan

**Contents:** Poignant memories of 'Ekushey' 1972 –*Julian Francis/ 3*, Speech of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on January 7, 2021/ 4, Our language movement: The death knell on communal divide –*Shahriar Kabir/ 10*, Bangabandhu's message on February 21, 1972/ 16, 'BENGALI'— A language, survived by blood –*Sabbir Khan/ 19*, In memory of the language movement and Bangabandhu –*Shamsul Huda/ 21*, Contribution of women in the language movement –*Selina Hossain/ 23*, From the language movement to the war of liberation –*Atiur Rahman/ 27*, The language movement: Bangabandhu and the strike that started it all –*Shibabrata Barman/ 31*, Impact of International Mother Language Day on world culture –*Ferdoushi Begum/ 33*, International Mother Language Day— its significance & glory –*Forqan Uddin Ahmed/ 35*, A return to Cox's Bazar –*Julian Francis/ 40*, No justice for the freedom of thought –*Trisha Ahmed and Avijit Roy/ 42*, Joe Biden's burden –*Hiranmay Karlekar/ 46*, Investigation of an "investigation": An open letter to Devid Bergman –*Rayhan Rashid/ 49*, Vaccine Bandhan – nursing the neighbourhood –*Priyajit Debsarkar/ 53*, My journey into Bangladesh –*Wera Sæther/ 55*, No encounter is by chance –*Hakan Mengüç/ 57*, **French Section/ 71**, **Arabic Section/ 75**, **Hindi Section/ 97**, **Swedish Section/ 103**, **Norwegian Section/ 115 & Bengali Section/ 125**



**Editor:** Kazi Mukul ● **Joint Editor:** Ansar Ahmed Ullah, Dr. Nuzhat Choudhury, Sabbir Khan, Asif Munier, Maruf Rosul & Tanvir Haider Chaudhury ● **Assistant Editor:** Sheikh Ali Shahnewaz, Saiff Uddin, Dibendu Dwip, Saif Raihan & Susil Malakar  
**Section Editor:** Julian Francis (English), Prokash Roy (French), Tapas Das (Hindi), Shakil Reja Efti (Turkish) Mohsen Arishie (Arabic), Dr. Mojibur Doftori (Finnish), Tarun Kanti Chowdhury (Swedish) & Khorshed Ahmed (Norwegian)  
**Advisory Editor:** Shahriar Kabir ● **Editorial Board E-mail:** karmukul@yahoo.com, nirmul.committee@gmail.com danaprnt2@gmail.com ● **Publisher:** International Forum for Secular Bangladesh, Ga-16 Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212, Bangladesh

News from the 'NEVER AGAIN' Association\*

## Holocaust Commemoration and countering genocide denial in Southeast Asia

To mark the International Holocaust Remembrance Day, emphasise its universal significance and oppose its distortion, the NEVER AGAIN Association, together with its civil society partners and members in Southeast Asia, has co-organised a special online session on 27th January 2021. It brought together Jews, Buddhists, Muslims and Christians, intellectuals, faith leaders, human rights activists, educators and students from different countries and continents, with a special focus on the Southeast Asian region. The online round table featured Jeremy Jones, the Director of Community and of

International Affairs of the Australia/Israel & Jewish Affairs Council (Australia); Venerable Lablu Barua, Wat Phrmarangsi Buddhist Monastery in Bangkok (Thailand); Sayana Ser, the translator of 'The Diary of Anne Frank' in Khmer language, Peace Institute (Cambodia); Nickey Diamond, a scholar and human rights specialist at Fortify Rights (Myanmar); and Prof. Rafal Pankowski of the 'NEVER AGAIN' Association (Poland). It was moderated by a member of 'NEVER AGAIN', Natalia Sineaeva, a Holocaust scholar and Rotary Peace Fellow alumna (Chulalongkorn University Bangkok 2018) and Dr Sanjoy Barua Chowdhury of the International Buddhist College (IBC) in Thailand.

The participants came from Australia, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Germany, India, Israel, Malaysia, Myanmar, Norway, Poland, Singapore, South Korea, Thailand, UK, USA, and Vietnam. They discussed the legacy of the Holocaust, challenges for its commemoration and the possible meaning of its commemoration in the region of Southeast Asia in relation to the region's history and experiences of

**International Day  
of Commemoration in Memory  
of the Victims of the Holocaust  
for Southeast Asia**

**27th of January 2021**

4:00-5:30 p.m. ICT (Bangkok)  
8:00-9:30 p.m. AEDT (Sydney)  
10:00-11:30 a.m. CET (Warsaw)

**VENUE: VIRTUAL**

**NEVER AGAIN ASSOCIATION**

genocide and mass atrocities. The United Nations General Assembly designated the International Holocaust Remembrance Day or International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust in 2005. The 27th of January marks the anniversary of the liberation of the Nazi German concentration and extermination camp Auschwitz-Birkenau in Poland in 1945. Natalia Sineaeva noted in her introductory remarks: - 'Jews and Roma were mainly targeted for genocide by Nazi Germany during the Second World War, but its significance is universal.

Today, when very few Holocaust survivors are left, we need to preserve this memory, and not let it be trivialised, banalised, or even worse, distorted and denied. How can we use and apply the universal lessons of the Holocaust which happened in Europe in a non-European context, where the experiences of the Second World War were different, for example in Southeast Asia? There is often a lack of knowledge of Holocaust history, but there are local histories of conflicts and instances of genocide, and various forms of genocide distortion exist, too.'

The online round table was the first in the series of further events to be organised for the project 'Identifying and Countering Holocaust Distortion. Lessons for Southeast Asia' implemented by the 'NEVER AGAIN' Association together with its partners in the countries of Southeast Asia. The project deals with various forms of Holocaust distortion and denial spread in the region of Southeast Asia, e.g., the usage of Nazi imagery, normalisation of the image of Hitler and Nazi Germany in popular culture; conspiracy theories

scapegoating minorities and blaming the victims (including the Jews) for past crimes and historical conflicts; the dangerous globalisation of genocide denial, including the rise of ‘multi-deniers’ who distort both the Nazi crimes and other cases of genocide, such as the crimes of the Khmer Rouge or anti-Rohingya violence. Importantly, the project draws on the regional experiences of the Second World War and further instances of genocide in Cambodia, Myanmar, and Thailand to inspire critical memory discourses and develop capacities to counter Holocaust and genocide distortion in the region. It

has been supported by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA).

The ‘NEVER AGAIN’ Association is an independent anti-racist organization founded in Warsaw in 1996. It has campaigned against antisemitism, racism and xenophobia, for peace, intercultural dialogue and human rights both in Poland and internationally.

*Courtesy: The Never Again Association, January 27, 2021*

\* *The ‘NEVER AGAIN’ Association is an independent organization established in Warsaw in 1996. ‘NEVER AGAIN’ is campaigning against racism, antisemitism, and xenophobia, both in Poland and internationally.*

## Facebook Made \$32 Billion Wrecking Democracy in 2020

***“We’re going to focus even more on being a force for bringing people closer together,” said the CEO of a platform where the Capitol riots were organized.***

Having spent the last 12 months helping to fuel conspiracy theories, undermine public health, and weaken democracy, all while pocketing \$86 billion in revenue,

Facebook’s CEO said on Wednesday night that he now just wants his platform to be “fun.”

2020 certainly was a big year for Facebook. It helped promote QAnon from a fringe conspiracy movement to a mainstream extremist group; it helped anti-vaxxers spread misinformation about the coronavirus vaccine; it allowed pro-Trump groups to try to deter millions of Black Americans from voting; it gave Donald Trump a platform to spread election fraud disinformation; it helped the “Stop the Steal” movement recruit and organize online; and it helped incite the Capitol riot — despite Facebook COO Sheryl Sandberg’s insistence otherwise.

Despite all that—or maybe because of it—Facebook also raked in a record \$86 billion in revenue and \$32 billion in profit, the company announced Wednesday



*President Donald Trump shared a photo on Facebook of a meeting with Mark Zuckerberg on September 19, 2019. Courtesy: Donald Trump/Facebook*

evening.

But now that he’s created or exacerbated many of society’s problems, and gotten rich doing it, Mark Zuckerberg wants things to change and wants Facebook to be a place where people “just have fun.” To do that, Zuckerberg says he’ll get rid of the thing that makes Facebook a not-fun place to be: politics.

“We’re going to focus even more on being a force for bringing people closer together,” Zuckerberg told investors on an earnings call Wednesday evening. He continued: “One of the top pieces of feedback that we’re hearing from our community right now is that people don’t want politics and fighting to take over their experience on our services.”

For some reason, the Facebook CEO failed to mention that the company’s algorithm, and its entire business model, incentivizes the type of hyper-partisan political content that currently dominates the platform.

To transform Facebook from the toxic swamp it is today into a magical paradise of bliss, wonder, and photos of your second cousin’s third baby, Zuckerberg said Facebook’s algorithm would no