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FIFTY FOURTH ANNIVERSARY

On December 10, 1948 the resolution endorsing the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations by a vote of 48-0 with 8 abstentions (6 states of the Soviet bloc, Saudi Arabia and South Africa). Since then every year on December 10 people all over the world celebrate the anniversary of the historic declaration designed to encourage respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. The Declaration is "a statement of goals and aspirations and reflected the vision of many countries of the world as an international community." The Preamble to the Declaration refers to "the inherent dignity and the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family which is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world."

The concept of human rights which is bound up with the development of modern democracy has its origins in the natural rights philosophy. In modern times English political philosopher Thomas Hobbes and theorist John Locke, the latter in particular, provided theoretical inspiration for the growth of such concepts as rights and liberties essential to preserve the society. Locke's formulation of natural rights became a source of inspiration for the two famous declarations of the 18th century — The American Declaration of Independence (1776) and the French Declaration of the Rights of Man (1789). The concept of human rights was expanded in the twentieth century by such famous pronouncements as Wilson's Fourteen Points, Roosevelt's Four Freedoms and the Beveridge Report of 1942.

In 1946 the United Nations appointed a Committee of philosophers, historians and lawyers "to see whether enough agreement could be found among the world's diverse cultures to draw up a list of fundamental human freedoms." The UN Commission of Human Rights composed of 18 member states set up a drafting committee headed by Mrs Eleanor Roosevelt to prepare a draft of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. After two years of hard work the drafting committee submitted the Declaration. Hailed as a Magna Carta for all humanity the Declaration represents 'a milestone in the long struggle for human rights.'

The Declaration which touches governments at their most sensitive point is, however, not legally a binding document. Critics have described it as a document of pious phrases accepted in principle but not in practice. States generally cherish their sovereign prerogatives and evade or ignore these obligations with 'depressing regularity.' The UN's weakness is never more pronounced than in its inability to ensure the enforcement of human rights by its member states. Ironically the worst offenders of human rights violations are members of the Commission on Human Rights.

In a recent article UN Secretary General Kofi Annan says that "the most fundamental rights have too often been sacrificed in the supposed interests of the state. The sovereignty of states must no longer be used as a shield for gross violation of human rights." The Secretary General says that the mission of the United Nations will be defined by a new and more profound awareness of the sanctity and dignity of every human life, regardless of race or religion. He exhorts peoples of all countries "to look beyond the framework of states and beneath the surface of nations or communities." It is to be hoped that the Secretary General will take effective measures for the fulfillment of the noble mission defined by him for the world body.

The accretion of conventions and instruments to the Declaration during the last fifty four years has to some extent enhanced the credibility of the UDHR. On the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the Declaration some important decisions were taken to give strength and substance to human rights. Focus was on empowerment of women, protection of the child and of the environment. The framework has been widened and commitment reiterated. But in a world of persisting poverty and exploitation human rights will remain pious exhortations and platitudes unless the gap between the rich and the poor, and between the developed and less developed countries is bridged. Anniversaries and annual celebrations cannot enhance the utility of the declaration as long as humankind is afflicted with poverty and injustice. Someone aptly remarked that the poor shall inherit the earth but not its mineral resources.

- The Editor

"What we need today is better governance - legitimate, democratic governance that allows each individual to flourish and each state to thrive."

- Kofi Annan

CONG - PDP COMMON PROGRAMMED IN J&K HAILED

The Common Minimum Programme of the Congress-People's Democratic Party combine in Jammu and Kashmir was a step in the right direction that could pave the way for a healthy coalition culture in the country, averred speakers at a seminar on the 'CMP for J and K' here on Thursday.

They also emphasised that it was time the Government and political parties made an earnest effort at implementing the 73rd and the 74th Amendments to the Constitution so that local and regional aspirations were fulfilled.

Participants pointed out that 14 years of militancy witnessed severe damage to the morale of the State's people, with over 30,000 persons including hundreds of soldiers losing their lives; 2,000 custodial deaths; a large number of orphans and widows of shattered families; and 6,000 missing children. Militancy had also led to destruction of 401 bridges, 828 schools and 40 colleges. As many as 350,000 artisans, who were generating a wealth of Rs. 1,000 crores and owners of houseboats, each earning more than Rs. 4,000 a day, were in dire distress unable to have two meals a day.

The discussion centred around the political developments in the State with the Chief Minister, Mufti Mohammed Sayeed, and his daughter, Mehbooba, receiving wide support from all its three regions.

The consensus that emerged was: "The problem in Kashmir is a national problem and all sections of the people should cooperate in the endeavour to restore people's confidence in the Government."

The seminar was organised by the Centre for policy studies of Gayatri Vidya Parishad, and its director, A. Prasanna Kumar, introduced the theme while R. Venkata Rao of Andhra University considered the latest political outcome as a rejection of terrorism, P.N. Rao and C.V. Krishna Rao felt that cautious optimism was justified at the moment.

All speakers were unanimous that Pakistan would go all out to derail the peace process in tandem with the mindless terrorist outfits.

Courtesy: THE HINDU, Sunday, November 10, 2002

(Summary of a Seminar Organized by CPS on November 7, 2002)

WORLD WITHOUT BORDERS

Today's real borders are not between nations, but between powerful and powerless, free and fettered, privileged and humiliated. Today, no walls can separate humanitarian or human rights crises in one part of the world from national security crises in another.

- Kofi Annan (UN Secretary General)

World Bank paints picture of catastrophic global future

- Larry Elliott

(Guardian weekly Aug. 29 - Sept. 4, 2002)

Looking into its crystal ball, the bank sees a world of 9 billion people by mid-century generating a global GDP of \$140 trillion a year. This staggering fourfold increase in the size of the world economy would be enough to guarantee a large-scale reduction in the 1.2 billion people living on less than a dollar a day, but the bank argues that the price will be environmental catastrophe, social breakdown and lower living standards for everyone if policies remain unchanged.

Released to coincide with this week's summit on sustainable development in Johannesburg, the Washington-based institution's annual world development report sounds the alarm bell for global leaders, providing a nightmarish prophecy of what could happen if they fail to turn rhetoric into action.

Unsurprisingly, the bank concludes that these trends cannot continue. "The \$140 trillion would of five

ON HUMAN RIGHTS

"Any serious discussion of human rights", Francis Fukuyama says, "must ultimately be based on some common understanding of human ends or purposes." Depending on what he means by that, it is a tall order. While the UDHR was being created, UNESCO surveyed 150 intellectuals to determine the philosophical basis for human rights. Not surprisingly, those surveyed could not agree and the UN Commission on Human Rights voted not to distribute the UNESCO report. Imagine how attempting to get them to agree on the "ends or purposes" of life would have turned out!

But why should they need to come to consensus on such abstract matters in order to agree that, say, torture is wrong? Any two people can be against torture even if one believes that the purpose of life is to get into Heaven and the other believes it is to avoid being bored. Despite their differences, they can agree that they would rather not live in a world in which torture is commonplace. That is because human rights are not dependent upon our sharing ontologies, teleologies or eschatologies; they are dependent upon our sharing a commitment to what makes for a civilized world, as "civilized" is defined at the moment by the vast majority of the international community. Human rights, as embodied in the UDHR, provide a set of norms or guidelines, "best practices", if you will, by which to set limits to tyranny and organize a decent society.

decades' time simply cannot be sustained on current production and consumption patterns," said Nick Stern, the bank's chief economist.

So what is the bank's blueprint for sustainable development? It says:

Developing countries should act to clean up their governments, promoting participation and democracy, inclusiveness and transparency as they build the institutions needed to manage their resources.

Rich countries need to be less selfish by increasing aid, offering more generous debt relief, opening their markets to developing country exporters and helping transfer technologies needed to prevent diseases, increase energy efficiency and bolster agricultural productivity.

Civil society organisations should be encouraged to serve as a voice for the weak and powerless.

Private firms should be more focused on sustainability and have incentives to pursue profit while advancing environmental objectives.

Given that the average income in the richest 20 countries in the world is 37 times that in the poorest 20, the bank feels that the rich West is in a position to make concessions.

So far, the willingness of the West to abandon protectionist policies has not been much in evidence and, as the bank recognises in four open questions posed in the conclusion to the report, there are potential pitfalls ahead.

The first is the issue of when consumption is overconsumption. Telling consumers in the West that they have to cut back is not relished by politicians. But the bank wonders whether consumption will become the modern equivalent of the cold war arms race; will people in the developing world see the norm as patterns of consumption in the West?

The second vexed issue highlighted by the report is the future of agriculture and of genetically modified organisms. The United States is eager to export GM foods to developing countries, often in the teeth of ferocious local opposition. Should this be encouraged? The bank is not sure.

Third, the bank is concerned about the system of intellectual property rights presided over by the World Trade Organisation. How can the interests of patent holders be balanced against those of the users of products? The system in place has strengthened the hand of Western corporations at the expense of poor countries. The potential for unequal outcomes is "worrisome", the bank says.

Finally, what are the prospects for global migration? The report says that global inequality, combined with demographic trends, will create ever more

pressure for migration. "Dealing with this pressure is a challenge worldwide."

The report concludes that the planet will face predictable challenges that will increase in intensity over the coming decades. But the fact that the World Bank has no pat answers to its four questions suggests that they will take years, if not decades, to resolve. If the bank is right, the most precious resource of all could be time.

COMMUNICATION AND CULTURE

by A. Prasanna Kumar

It might be impetuous on my part to speak on communication and culture at this seminar being organised by experts in the field of development journalism and electronic communication. Communication encompasses a vast field of many subjects including physics, engineering, electronics and almost all social sciences. Social scientists borrow extensively from physical sciences in explaining communication theory and the work of political scientist Karl Deutsch amply illustrates this point. The technological advance in communication has "created vast sources of political power and influence, social control and manifestation, impacting on economy, society and culture." Amartya Sen considers communication as crucially relevant in achieving "the unaccomplished tasks." Sociologists offer the interesting example of folk songs and puppetry in India in strengthening social movements and show how trade unions take to street theatre and music in articulating their demands. Through 'Burrakatha' in Andhra and 'Jatra' in west Bengal, leftists sought to spread their message. Traditional arts are being allied to new technologies in articulating social relations between the individual and the society. There is a growing demand to democratize these technologies to accelerate the process of national development.

First of all it is necessary to make an attempt to define and explain the concepts of communication and culture. Communication and culture are as old as civilization. Their role in the evolution of human society and development of human personality has been widely recognized. In a way the relationship between communication and culture can be described as symbiotic, each influencing the other in many ways. There is mutual dependence and mutual gain. In tandem they operate for the benefit of the individual and the society in general. Their functions have increased enormously, largely because of awesome technological changes. In social science theory, communication is defined as "a process identified by the passage of information through the transmission of more or less meaningful symbols from one individual to another or from one group to another, from

one group or a representative of a group to another group or representative." (International Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences) A simple but brilliant definition of communication is the one given by the famous political scientist Harold Lasswell. It is: "Who says what to whom with what effect?" Communication is, therefore, a highly complex process of transmitting ideas, information and knowledge and it involves skills, techniques, structures and goals.

From oral communication to electronic communication it has been a long and fascinating journey. Peter Drucker has identified four major changes, which he describes as information revolutions, that have occurred since the birth of civilization. The first revolution, according to him, took place five thousand years ago when man learnt how to write. The second revolution when paper was invented by the Chinese two thousand years ago. The third occurred when Gutenberg invented the printing press in the 15th century and the fourth now when television and computer have greatly altered the mode of communication. Today's internet - triggered revolution is being led by youngsters, mostly under forty years of age. This revolution, unlike the previous technological revolutions, does not give humankind much time to adjust to the change. The Law of Acceleration operates today at a furious pace. In studying the evolution of communication reference to ancient times is relevant and appropriate. Many of our ancient scriptures, including the Vedas, were orally transmitted. The two great epics Ramayana and Mahabharata were gifted to us by great sages, Valmiki and Vyasa, who communicated eternally relevant ideas and truths. From Valmiki's 'soka' (sorrow) emanated 'sloka' (verse) heralding the birth of the great epic. In Hindu philosophy and poetry there are four schools of communication art - 1) alankara (figure) 2) riti (style) 3) rasa (aesthetics) and 4) dhvani (suggestion). Ancient Greeks were famous for the wisdom they transmitted through wise and learned men. Socrates, the father of the spirit of inquiry, awakened the knowledge - seeking youth of Athens through a simple paradox "the only thing I know is I know nothing" (know thyself). Paradox, since then, has been recognised as the source of scientific inquiry. Aristotle used the novel method of communicating through his peripatetic lectures which became famous for the method and manner of instruction he bequeathed to humankind.

Describing the impact of the printing press that arrived in the 15th century Marshall McLuhan said that "print destroyed a synaesthesia that existed before the oral culture was displaced by the Gutenberg galaxy. After the printing press took over the eye displaced every other sense." McLuhan showed how print created in the

United States 'Henry Ford and the assembly line and standardized culture' and how a critical publicity emerged 'analyzing and moulding their culture and their governments.'

Raymond Williams says that radio and television have symbolised the new revolution of 'passing ideas, information, attitudes, images, from person to person in vast audiences and viewers in urban areas.' These two which earlier were monopolised by the elite classes are now reaching out to the illiterate, the ignorant and the poor. Vikram Sarabhai launched in India the project 'Television for Development.' The number of TV transmitters in India increased from one in 1959 to 19 in 1983, 220 in 1988 and 1000 in 2000. Millions of people are now exposed to the impact of modern communication. Globalization of the electronic media has resulted in 'cultural invasion from the skies through channels controlled by foreign countries.' John Bairds argues that television can no longer be dismissed as the idiot box. It has evolved into a cultural form shaping and influencing mass consciousness. It is a form of social communication. It is observed that communication is "a force as much for empowerment and enfranchisement as for disempowerment and disenfranchisement of the ordinary people." (P.C. Sethi - Seminar October 1997)

Culture is defined by Tylor (IESS) as that "complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society." Broadly speaking culture means the totality of ideas, values, customs and achievements of a society of people. Firth explains the concept lucidly when he writes: "If society is taken to be an aggregate of social relations, then culture is the content of those relations. Society emphasises the human component, the aggregate of people and the relations between them. Culture emphasises the component of accumulated resources, immaterial as well as material, which the people inherit, employ, transmute, add to, and transmit." (IESS) The uniqueness of culture lies in the fact that it is superior to knowledge and wealth in providing strength and stability to society. Knowledge and wealth are definite indicators of progress. But by themselves they cannot provide moral strength and vitality to society. Culture helps society in withstanding shock. It is "a body of ready - made solutions to the problems encountered by the group." To understand the culture of people it is necessary to know the manner in which the people communicate. Margaret Mead, the famous anthropologist, observed that "the whole mesh of human social life might logically, and perhaps, in other contexts, fruitfully, be treated as a system of human communication." Ancient Chinese civilization, according to Robert Oliver,

stressed 'communicative speaking as the principal means by which the actions of men might be harmonized.'

The place of rhetoric in communication has also been stressed. Rhetoric is defined as 'the function of adjusting ideas to people and people to ideas.' Rhetoric is a means of influencing people, how people develop ideas and act upon them depends on their culture. Rhetoric seeks to discover the means of persuasion. The kinds of ideas that influence people and why they accept or reject these ideas depends on their culture. Ancient Greeks emphasised the role rhetoric in discourse. Aristotle described rhetoric as a mode of thinking and means of persuasion. Shakespeare illustrated in his works how rhetoric changed the course of events and caused the downfall of kings and rulers. Rhetoric in modern times has been classified by Robert Moore as : Rhetoric of Romance which seeks to tranquilize, used by demagogues and authoritarians ; Rhetoric of Anger in which high morality is invoked to damn social injustices and Rhetoric of Constructive Passion that offers alternatives. But in the electronic age dominated by television, rhetoric and oratory have also undergone a change. A political scientist called it now visual not verbal eloquence.

For over a decade now there has been an intense debate on the meaning, nature and scope of globalization. It is described as a process that is irreversible, a process by which market economy establishes its hold over the world. Trade and commerce have assumed utmost importance and market has taken control over the forces of production and distribution. Poor and developing countries are exhorted to keep step with the process of globalization. Market economy is inescapable and it is likened to cycling and weather. "Either you keep cycling and move forward or you will fall," it is said. It is like weather, some say. If it is warm go near the air conditioner; if it is cold wear a blanket, it is suggested. But it is also realized that market forces are exerting too much influence on society's culture also. British Prime Minister Tony Blair and German Chancellor Schroeder conceded that while market economy is preferable, market culture is not at all desirable. Market culture is based on ruthless competition and in such a situation the poor and the weak countries collapse because of social and economic Darwinism. As Peter Drucker aptly cautioned: "Competition brings out the best in product and the worst in man." Products are branded and even the state is "branded." Consumerism has affected most areas of human activity including the teaching and medical professions. The Economist has pointed out recently that "Today disease and medicine have great respect for wealth. It will be the next millennium's task to cure that."

This is the age of information technology in which

time and distance have been destroyed. "The marriage of computers and telecommunications has ushered in the information age," writes an expert. Knowledge is the new source of wealth that is not material. It is knowledge applied to work to create value. Television and computer have vastly altered our lifestyle and enlarged our expectations. TV is described as "a relentless agent of change, a revolutionary inflammer of appetites, enlarger of expectations and diminisher of patience." When the expectations of the people are not fulfilled there is bound to be frustration leading to even violence. The following line from Sham Lal's book "A Hundred Encounters" is relevant in the context. "The frantic competition for scarce resources and increasing awareness of generation, gender, and ethnic differences, make the underprivileged and the marginalized assert their cultural identities more aggressively than ever before." Sham Lal writes how "hundreds of television networks proclaim the victory" of consumerism through "beguiling images." Such is the intensity of the impact of electronic media on the minds of the people that the distinction between the false and the real often gets blurred. It is rightly said that "style becomes the essence, reality becomes appearance." Neil Postman is among the first to caution us against some of the baneful effects of television. In his book "Amusing Ourselves to Death" Postman laments that Americans are "the best entertained and quite likely the least well informed people in the western world." His complaint is against the way television reduces everything to a kind of entertainment. "The problem," he writes, "is not that television presents us with entertaining the subject matter but that all subject matter is presented as entertaining." A lively debate over the BBC once raised a valid question: "Shall broadcasters give what the people want or shall they give the people what they ought to give?" Should the criteria of value be objectivity and balance? Should we blame the media or the message? For instance TV, radio and newspapers often become the targets of public wrath. Religious and linguistic groups in many parts of India have launched serious tirades and protest movements against some newspapers and TV channels for comments not palatable to them. Some religious groups in Mumbai threw out the TV sets for telecasting "cultural aggression" by the Hindi songs. Writing on the images the newspapers create Daniel Boorstin summed up how newspapers make and unmake celebrities. "The very agency which first makes the celebrity in the long run inevitably destroys him. The newspapers make and unmake him not by murder but by suffocation or starvation," he said. In developing countries newspapers have considerable influence on the minds of the people. Lately many newspapers have tended to take active interest, if not bias, in the rivalry between political parties

and individuals and in the process have lowered the standards of public discourse.

In a thought-provoking essay on culture and tradition, Jawaharlal Nehru said that "culture must be a live and growing thing responsive to new conditions and flexible enough to adapt itself to them." Culture implies a process of adjustment to change. It is dynamic and capable of solving existing problems and meeting new challenges. Culture is a shock-absorber. Its purpose is to harmonise the various and at times conflicting interests and demands. Nani Palkhivala rightly said that while illiteracy is dangerous, cultural illiteracy is more dangerous. Culture makes the development process smooth and development in turn "represents continuity in terms of basic civilizational principles." Harvard President Rudenstein, after modernizing the university library with internet and latest technology, conceded that "In the end education is fundamentally a human process. It is a matter of values and significant action, not simply information or knowledgehow to create a just and humane society." Communication provides knowledge which in turn creates wealth and material progress. It is culture that provides the direction and moral strength necessary for development on right lines and eventually for human wellbeing. Communication which is vital for human progress and happiness cannot be the preserve of any particular power or class of people. Nor can it impose the culture of a state or society on other societies or people of other areas. It should not be used to accentuate human misery and widen the gap between the rich and the poor and the haves and have nots. It is here that culture harmonises while communication disseminates ideas and knowledge. The relationship between the two is going to be crucial and sensitive in the 21st century.

A country that had the distinction of disseminating knowledge in ancient times and that embarked upon the noble mission of spreading peace and universal goodwill in the 3rd century B.C., during Ashoka's rule, can be a trendsetter in the new millennium in striking a perfect balance between increasing technological power and decreasing social wisdom. The great sage of Arunachala, Ramana Maharshi, whose silence and benign gaze enlightened millions of people more than books, studies and research at reputed centers of learning, once said: "The most astounding discoveries will come when our scientists turn away for a while from metal and stone and electricity to examine and explore the nature of self within the laboratory of Man." It is in that laboratory of the human mind that the roots of communication and culture lie.

(Keynote address delivered at a seminar on Communication and Culture at Utkal University on September 8, 2002)

Remembering A Teacher

by Prof. V. Bhanoji Rao,

Honorary Research Professor, GITAM Institute of Foreign Trade, Visakhapatnam and Visiting Faculty, Centre for Public Policy, Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore.

Education is one unique factor on which depend the quality of public policy, enterprise and efficiency, social harmony, and all else that constitutes true development. Quality education, in turn, depends to the largest extent on one single instrument - the quality of the teacher.¹ Her skills, attitude and a beautiful balance of strict discipline combined with profound compassion towards the student are the hall mark of a great teacher who could make the raw pupil she receives into a polished and educated human being.

This article is a personal account of the transformation of a willing pupil achieved in the hands of an able teacher.

As a student at the Municipal High School, Vizianagaram, I was getting just about a pass mark² in mathematics in the school examinations right through grade 9. In 1953 I was promoted to grade 10 and within days I gathered that a mere pass in mathematics would not take me very far, more so if I were to seek admission into "MPC" at Inter (grades 11 and 12) at the local college. A kind classmate advised me that if I really wanted to improve my grade in mathematics, I should approach a particular teacher in the school, Sri Y. Seshachalam Pantulu (YSP) and get tuition from him. My friend told me that many students over the years benefited from his instruction.

Though I was not in his class in the school, I trusted the wisdom of my friend and approached YSP on one fateful day requesting him to instruct me in mathematics and help me improve my grade. His straight question to me was what grade I would like to aim for. I had to do some quick mental calculation: I should have a decent 50 or better still 60 per cent; that would not be realized unless I aimed for say, 70 or 80 per cent; and I settled for a target of 80. As I blurted out that number, he began probing a little into my previous achievements. Looking into my modest silence and observing my discomfort, he kindly abandoned that exercise. For a

¹ These are days when governments in low-income countries freely and routinely borrow for education sector from the multilateral lending institutions such as the World Bank. Obviously loans are seldom available to reward teaching excellence; instead, they go for buildings, administrative machinery, teaching aids and so on. True, these are important and may not be underemphasized. Yet, as this article will show, a good teacher knows fully well how to collect the right teaching materials and aids. As long as the teacher is not right, all other assets hardly help bring about quality education.

² It varied those days from 30 to 40 depending on how the class fared and how tough or easy the paper was in the estimation of the teacher and the Head Master.

second, I thought that the session ended and I would be accepted for tuition - perhaps for an hour or so in the morning and perhaps for a few days in a week. The gentle and soft-spoken teacher had a different plan.

He was thinking aloud that getting 80 per cent might not at be feasible unless I spent each and every night at his home studying under his supervision and care. He felt, however, that such a plan might be unacceptable for me since my home just then graduated from kerosene lamps to electric lights, parents were making arrangements for a small study room with furniture, and so on - facts he seemed to know. If I agreed to study at his home, it would involve using a mat for study and sleep and the use of a kerosene lamp (the teacher could not afford electric connection at that time). Despite the predictable relative discomfort I agreed to his terms and within days got ready with a mat and a lamp.

Night after night YSP would spend time discussing problems in mathematics. The kind and benevolent teacher found a simple mechanism to prolong the study time. Whenever I was seen to be dozing off a little, he would ask me to go to the nearby well and lift a bucket of water. Thus would end the doze. Off and on, he would entertain me with a story - usually about a past student who had received instruction from him in the same surroundings and who now occupied a high position in the country. At times, he would tell us about some great mathematician or a scientist or about a devotee of the divine who by sheer penance achieved knowledge and wisdom later to enter into books for others to read. YSP also was ensuring that in addition to mathematics instruction he directly provided, the student was paying attention to other subjects as well.

Once the entire mathematics syllabus was covered (months before classes ended in the school), the rest of the time was used to answer questions from the examination papers from the past years, from several examination boards in India, UK and US. Thanks to the regimentation, there was not a single problem that I could not answer within the framework of the syllabus.

When the day of reckoning arrived and I was in the examination hall for the mathematics paper, it was as if my right hand had its own intellect and did not need the help of any other agency at all: all problems, excluding some questions outside the syllabus which none could even think of attempting, were cleared in less than half the allocated time. When I gave an account of my performance, YSP was quite happy and asked me not to worry about the questions none could attempt.

A couple of months later, the results were declared and the so-called SSLC register was handed over to each and every student. In my register against mathematics, there was the number 80, the exact number targeted, achieved despite the fact that none in my school had any role in either the setting or marking of the

examination paper. YSP was very happy and never for a minute wondered how the mark was so exact. He just knew how much I had to prepare and that was what he ensured.

YSP was a fine instrument in the hands of the divine to change the course of a life - a life that owed a lot to him but with no formal mechanism to repay. He was content to take a token honorarium - after the result - and lovingly accepted (when my family and I forced him) a new dhoti some three decades later.

The issue is not what difference a teacher could make - the *teacher alone makes all the difference*. The issue is what makes a teacher like YSP. A rented house, children to raise, meagre pay, inadequate clothing, broken furniture and so on - none of these deterred him from his mission, a mission to create intellectuals from out of under-achievers, perhaps taking pride in defying the accepted doctrines on natural abilities, latent genius and hereditary capabilities.¹ Years on, I continued to derive inspiration by touching his feet and taking his blessings.

As I grew up, it became clear to me that the divine had all along been orchestrating the whole of my life drama, using YSP and many more as His instruments to lift me up, not as a reward for some great penance I had done, but as His duty towards one who cared to totally depend on Him - even that as willed by Him.

¹ It is perhaps an insult to the human heart (though not to the head) to accept such doctrines, just to use them to accept away all the social failings.

TRAVAIL OF THE MIDDLE CLASS

BY: Sri T. HANUMANTHA RAO,
Retd. Lecturer, Anakapalli

The fifty-fifth anniversary of freedom was celebrated all over the country with a fanfare of trumpets and colourful ceremonies, but the fact remains that popular enthusiasm was at a low ebb in the celebrations. The predominant feeling among the middle class which forms the bulk of the country's intelligentsia, was one of frustration and disappointment. It is a pity that the lot of the middle class has become worse in recent times and indeed its disenchantment with politics is an extraordinary feature of post - independence politics. The highly complex and numerically burgeoning Indian middle class population ranging from 150 to 300 millions which formed the bulwark of democracy, the backbone of society and the "ballast of the ship of state" not only groans under financial disabilities, but suffers under the tyranny of social customs and in various other ways now.

Though much has been written about the qualitative aspects of this class by various social scientists and political philosophers, an exact definition of the term "middle class" is not available as it is a very fuzzy social category. This unique class is born not out of historical

class conflict but as the result of various political experimentations and economic considerations. It is a curious fact of social psychology that most people identify easily with this class without being able to say exactly how they fit into this stratum. As one writer put it, this class is given the name "middle class" because it is sandwiched between the landed traditional aristocratic elite on the top and the largely uneducated toiling masses below.

In a country like India where the social structure is based on hierarchal tradition and stratification becomes a complex affair, a class such as the middle class can only be identified by certain criteria on the basis of which it is commonly distinguished. The distinctness that places these people in a class by themselves exists in terms of specific economic habits, the kinds of occupations they are commonly involved in, a particular income range and the values they hold which affect their life styles and levels of prestige. As class is often linked to a person's economic position in society, occupation serves as an important index. Indian middle class occupational structure, like that anywhere in the world, consists of those engaged in professions like teaching, medicine, low engineering, the business group with small entrepreneurs, shop keepers and the entire range of salaried people.

With the spread of education on a mass scale and with the impact of urban culture on living there is a change in the function and composition of middle class. A new middle class began to emerge in India in the middle of the 19th century which was very big mass of white collared workers and a variety of professionals connected with management, administration, planning, new technologies of production etc. Prof. J.K. Galbraith has aptly described the class as technocrats.

It can safely be said that the way of living of middle class is peculiar and is out of keeping with their mean. Plebian tastes are not for them and pleasurable comforts are beyond their reach. Beggary is an affront to their social status and they endure the vagaries of destiny with patience but will not expose the severity of their hardships to public gaze. Even in the most trying circumstances, they keep up appearances and sail under false colours. The number of middle class people who are unable to balance their family budgets is increasing by leaps and bounds and 15 to 20 per cent of this class suffer from one disease or the other due to lack of balanced diet which they cannot afford, resulting in mounting medical expenses. The fiscal policies of the Government add fuel to fire in the living conditions of this class. It is only this class that undergoes the sufferings of additional taxation and pays for the development process. The Government treats this class as guinea pigs for its experimentation on national planning and the union budgets have become a nightmare to them. The "most unkindest" cut of all is that the draft report of the Kelkar committee submitted to the Government recently has driven a nail in the coffin

of middle class by recommending the withdrawal of almost all savings related income tax exemptions hitherto enjoyed by them. Today this class has remained as a despoiled and dispossessed group.

It is a different matter that the crushing sweep of globalisation is metamorphosing the middle class character from a morally prudish, culturally conservative, and fiscally prudent set of close knit people into a morally profligate, culturally hybrid, fiscally reckless class of people caught in the grip of compulsive consumerism.

The immediate problem of the middle class is three fold. Apart from the problem of finding suitable employment to keep the pot boiling, middle class people are confronted with the difficulty of securing habitable accommodation and the means of educating their progeny who generally form the intellectual potential of the next generation. Middle class unemployment, which in economic parlance has come to be known since Keynes published his "General theory" as involuntary unemployment has become aggravated in recent years because of the unrealistic industrial policy of the Government. We had enough of privatisation and globalisation and the un-employment is on the increase. Mr. Surendra Mohan, the veteran socialist leader, while addressing the centre for policy studies recently at Visakhapatnam struck the right note that the unemployment was going to be a serious problem to the powers that be, if it was to apply brakes to privatisation for some time and go in for industries which absorb more of human labour power instead of running after IT revolution etc.

Middle class people are also seriously handicapped by their limited means in educating their children especially as far as college courses are concerned. It will be a tragedy if promising pupils are disabled in pursuing higher learning for financial reasons. There are innumerable instances of middle class parents being compelled to withdraw their children from schools, and colleges in the middle of their careers and yoke them to some petty jobs to fetch a pittance to supplement their meagre incomes. If the cream of the country's talent is to be brought into play, state aid to the long-suffering middle class is essential by way of provision of educational facilities. The schemes of Merit scholarships. National Loan scholarships and other types of scholarships for the socially backward that are in vogue touch only the fringe of the problem as they are all linked with the parent's income fixed at a low level. The Government would do well to overhaul the scheme and raise the level of parent's income for the award of scholarship and increase the number of scholarships as well so as to benefit as many people as possible. It is also equally necessary to liberalise the rules of educational loans being sanctioned by the banks to the middle class pupils.

Lastly, the middle class housing has not received the attention it deserves at the hands of the authorities.

More than any other class of people, it is the middle class that has suffered at the hands of rapacious landlords in towns and cities. It is disheartening to note that after fifty years of independence, only 11 percent of the citizens could own a house for themselves. The Government would well to encourage the Real Estate Investment Trust of American model so as to accelerate the house building activity, bearing in mind the interests of the middle class. The priority accorded to house building sector in the tenth plan is a step in the right direction and it must not remain as mere paper plan. The time has now come for the Government to consider earnestly the proposal, once mooted by late Ramaswamy Mudaliar to create a separate Ministry to look after the interests of middle class which has done so much to the country and which has received so little from it.

BAPU - II

Shri Challa Sivasankaram

Bapu made no secret of his derivation of thought from Tolstoy. To Bapu Leon Tolstoy of Russia was the unforgettable model of independent thinking, profound morality and truthfulness. It was through him that he was first able to command, as from a high mountain, the panorama of universal love. The colony he formed in South Africa was named after Tolstoy. His home bore the name "Tolstoy Ashram." His autobiography had a Christian Confessional tinge. Sir Edwin Arnold's *Light of Asia* revealed to him the sublime smile of the Buddha. Bapu got acquainted with Indian theology and metaphysics and Vedanta through the gates of Western translations of Indian Epics and scriptures. At the age of eighteen, two English Theosophists revealed to him through Arnold's translation of 'The Gita' which to Bapu was a supreme book of truth. Madame Blavatsky made him study Hinduism. Anne Besant a staunch Nationalist, Theosophist and fellow patriot infused her dose of Indian philosophy in him. He read the *Upanishads* in the Theosophical Society's translations. The book by Ruskin "Unto This Last" had galvanizing effect on his still groping mind. In this book he discovered some of his deepest convictions.

From all points of view, Bapu was a personification of the best and superb of world thought. When great and high minded Christians came to India, they usually visited Bapu and paid their homage. Their earnest desire was to learn from a Hindu how to lead a true Christian life. Bapu's admirable peace of mind and infectious smile used to charm the visitors towards him. Desirelessness, renunciation and detachment were the central features of Bapu's spartan character. To him detachment means "absence of hankering after fruit". To Bapu quiet time is toil un - severed from tranquility. Since he learnt that the poor could not afford mosquito net he discarded it and like the poor he used to besmear his face with kerosene oil to dispel mosquitoes.

To be unfettered and free to devote time and dedicate himself to the cause of amelioration and emancipation of the South African godforsaken people he felt it correct to be celibate for the rest of his life. It was the turbulent time of Zulu revolt in 1906. At the age of 37, Bapu decided to observe the tough task of celibacy (Brahmacharya). For 24 years Bapu was a family man and 41 years a Brahmachari. Continence, self control were vigorously practised by Bapu. "Life without Brahmacharya appears to me to be insipid and animal like. Man is man because he is capable of self restraint." He feels self-realization was possible through the religion of service to mankind. There was never a breach in his vow.

Bapu fought relentlessly for the emancipation and empowerment of women. India's freedom was partial as long as her women were under serfdom. He abhorred to look on woman as a play-thing of man's lust. His utterances during the course of the long and chequered struggles for freedom under his mystic leadership attracted the attention of the women and quietly forced them to come out of their harems and hearths. A stickler for unadulterated moral build up and ethical basis in the nonviolent brigade he could convince the families of respectable houses to come and join the mass struggle. He paved a throughfare for woman's freedom with their own sacrifices. He saw and treated his wife as equal. He instructed the women not to bedeck and adorn their bodies to attract men's attention. No jewellery should find its place on their person. Attempts at decoration to captivate their own husbands too was forbidden by Bapu. Equals are always equal. Nowhere in the world women got emancipation as the kind India peacefully attained. Women held equally the position that were previously of the male prerogative. Ambassadors, Governors, Chief Ministers, Presidents and so on and so forth. Within a few decades they achieved this phenomenal transformation in the male - woman order under Bapu's stewardship. To him marriage of girls before 15 was an unforgivable error and was an impeachable crime against humanity and God. His heart bled to see youthful widows. Bapu courageously advocated the remarriage of willing young widows. *Purdah*

A fine gesture by the American Consulate General

Centre for Policy Studies offers its grateful thanks to the American Consulate General, Chennai for sending a collection of books on democracy and related subjects to the CPS library through Dr Ms Meena Reddy of the American Library on November 23. Ms Helen LaFave the Acting Consul for Public Affairs has sent a letter through Ms Meena Reddy about the gift of books. To the US Consulate, in particular to Ms LaFave and Ms Meena Reddy, the Centre is indebted for this kind gesture.

system was abhorrent to him. Bapu was rebellious in his advocacy of abrogation of this unnatural stone - age system. Bapu said "To call woman the weaker sex is a libel. Invidious discrimination against the female was an anachronism. Woman is an incarnation of Ahimsa. Ahimsa means infinite love, which again means infinite capacity for suffering."

He held the view that a woman's grace lay in her character and modesty. Woman must cease to consider herself the object of man's lust. He wanted women to be as simple as his wife. Bapu cleared the road for women never to launch a separate struggle to secure their rights. No leader, no organisation had been match to Bapu's social uplift of woman.

In India's glorious struggle Bapu practised very eminently and surprisingly the Vedantic principle "detachment in attachment". All the major upheavals in the Country and in the Congress Party happened when he detached himself from party work. (He ceased to be a four anna member of the party since 1935 if I am not incorrect.) He was the *Yudhistira* of the Bharat battle. Seldom there were decisions major or minor taken without his knowledge in the Pandava camp. *Srikrishna* respected him and *Yudhistira* held the former as the Divine dispenser. We can easily draw a comparison between these two non - violent truth - based leaders (Bapu and *Yudhistira*) who ably discharged their duties while cent percent following the principle of detachment in attachment.

Bapu visualized a Government for New awakened India which would be like Ramarajya. By the cardinal virtues and religious tenets Bapu had subscribed to Buddha and his philosophy was akin to that of the Buddha. Like the Buddha, Bapu dreamt of founding a kingdom of earth. If we take a lion's view of the other principal Avatars of Indian pantheon the greatest of them could not be universal or global. Buddha stepped down

to the level of the underdog like the Mahatma to be like them in speech, dialect and standard of living. Bapu was and is a 2500 old Buddha. Buddha must have been contented that he was resurrected in the form of Bapu.

Bhagawan Sri Satya Baba apportioned a conspicuous place in his museum in Prashanti Nilayam for Bapu's image. The lines inscribed beneath are : "He did what he said," (no divorce between precept and practice).

The awakened Africa, recalling the services of Bapu to their country, opened in Nairobi the Gandhi Memorial Academy and installed a statue of Bapu. The inauguration of the Academy and unveiling of the statue were ceremonially done by India's Philosopher statesman Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnam on July 12, 1956. In Dr. S. Radhakrishnan's words Bapu does not belong to one Nation. Bapu united the destiny of India to that of the world The ideal for which Bapu lived and died is the reconciliation of peoples and the building of a fraternal world.

May the ideal incarnated for us, serenity of spirit, love of men, harmony among races and religions flourish forever!

(Concluded)

AWARD FOR GVP DEGREE COLLEGE

The NCC unit of Gayatri Vidya Parishad Degree College has been adjudged as the 'Best NCC Unit' in north Andhra for the second time. Shri D. Dakshinamurthy, Principal of the GVP Degree College received a rolling trophy from Police Commissioner Shri B. Prasada Rao on Nov. 27 at a function at Police Parade grounds.

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