

A Well-deserved Victory

Governor Bill Clinton has won a well-deserved victory in what was undoubtedly the most closely fought US presidential election in recent times.

Now, all this is history. The gracious speeches made by both Bush and Perot, accepting their defeat and wishing well to Clinton have set the traditional transition process in motion.

There is little doubt Clinton needs the massive support that ensured his victory — and, of course, a smooth transition — to face the formidable problems facing his in-coming administration.

However, the Democratic leader raises a great deal of hopes too. After all, there is a lot going for him. At 46, he is the nation's third youngest president to be elected by his people.

What else the outside world can expect from the new Democratic administration remains to be seen. In several areas, such as in the Middle East peace talks, Bosnia conflict and Somalia, Washington has consistently followed bipartisan policies.

While the outside world can expect from the new Democratic administration remains to be seen. In several areas, such as in the Middle East peace talks, Bosnia conflict and Somalia, Washington has consistently followed bipartisan policies.

Better Late than Never

Thanks to Pope John Paul II, the Vatican or the Roman Catholic Church has last week come to recognise that the earth moves round the sun, thus absolving Galileo Galilei of heresy in the mid-seventeenth century.

The churches of all religions and the theologians they build up are based on faith, frankly enough called dogma by some of them. Dogma implies unchanging immutability of received beliefs. Going against any of these myriad dogmas was rank heresy for which geniuses like Giordano Bruno and numerous others had to pay with their life.

The first exponent in Europe and in the medieval times of the heliocentric arrangement of the solar family was Nicolus Copernicus. Inquisition's long tentacles couldn't reach his cloister far to the east of Vatican.

Now full 359 years after that, the Roman Catholic Church last week, in a sort of counter-recantation, has absolved Galileo of heresy and gathered itself up to say as much as the earth revolved round the sun.

All said and done, the Vatican concession to science is, religiously speaking, a big courageous step that this and other religions should follow up at least in the interest of not confusing the human intellect all too unnecessarily.

THE Maoist slogan "every citizen a soldier" armed nearly half of China at one time or another.

In the 1960s until the 1970s, nearly 300 million citizens passed through the mammoth militia system and, observers say today, badly hampered the nation's economic recovery and reconstruction.

Since 1981, soon after economic reforms were introduced, the militia has been reduced to a more manageable number of about 30 million, or approximately 2.5 per cent of the population.

At the same time China's first reserve troops appeared in 1983 in northeastern Liaoning province. It was followed by a surge in this new form — for China — of military service.

The militia — conscripted from the countryside, factories, mines, etc — is now restricted to men aged 18 to 35 (16 to 45 previously) and women aged 18 to 28 (previously 18 to 35).

Those in government service, in schools and in scientific institutions are exempted from militia training.

The reserve duty system also stipulates that made citizens aged 18 to 35 be organised as militia and placed on reserve duty, except those already enlisted in the regular army.

"It's a good reform," says Li Yanchun, a 28-year-old militia company commander from the Weichang Manchu and Mongol Nationalities Autonomous County, Hebei Province, who has returned from a two-week military course.

Of the 115 militia members out of 1,268 people in Mr Li's village, only 25 core members are required for training. Mr Li is proud to be among those trained, and to have got the

Sun Shoufang and Zheng Chunhua write from Beijing

The militia was a tool for the cultural revolution which left farming lands desolate, factories run down and schools closed

full mark certificate showing he successfully passed all exams.

"During the Cultural Revolution, the village had more than 600 militia, and all had to receive such training as emergency meetings and overnight political studies. It was a headache for the farmers," Mr Li says.

The militia was extensively organised early in the 1950s as a response to the American invasion in the Korean War. The antipathy between China and the breakaway province of Taiwan and the former Soviet Union gave the late Chairman Mao Zedong a further incentive to upgrade the militia.

In retrospect, it is difficult to discern any positive accomplishments wrought by such

inflated numbers, whose time was spent on weak military exercises and endless political training.

The militia for much of this time was a tool of the cultural revolution which left farming lands desolate, factories run down and schools closed.

But the past decade has seen a major restructuring. The vast and flabby armed citizenry has been gradually transformed into a leaner and much more effective military force.

Training, for example, now emphasises state-of-the-art military technology. Courses include lessons in guided missiles, communications, armoured forces, ground ar-

tillery, anti-aircraft gunnery, engineering and war exercises.

The new reserve force will join the regular People's Liberation Army (PLA). "Our primary task is to absorb a high standard military training for speedy mobilisation and strong combat power under modern conditions," says Col Li Gui, commander of the Reserved Duty Infantry Division, in Chengde, northern Hebei province.

There's also a need to enhance the political quality of the troops through studies.

The reserve force has proven to be a crack military arm. Last year, in several "fast reaction" maneuvers in Chengde, Jizhou and the Guangxi Zhuang Nationality Autonomous Region, reserve troops were impressive in their army-type massing and mobilisation speed.

An officials survey also shows that from 1979-89 the militia established more than 460,000 enterprises, giving employment to many more.

area is still one of the poorest in China. Even as the commander of the militia company here, my primary concern is how to get the people to shake off poverty and work for prosperity. We all think the government's decision is wise to put the militia at the forefront of the economic construction," says a militia section leader.

"So from time to time I gather our militia to plant trees, fix irrigation and roads, and help families short of farmhands as well as develop local businesses. Of course, we're a powerful emergency squad whenever there's flood or other natural disaster."

Between 1979-89, some 184 million militia participated in more than 80,000 national and local projects. About 45.5 million were involved in relief and rehabilitation during and after floods, earthquakes and typhoons. They saved 2.79 million lives and prevented a 26.3 billion yuan (US\$4.87 billion) economic loss.

Youths Need Guidance to Act to their Benefit

OF late, the thinkers observe that the youths of Bangladesh have been living in a realm of frustration and despair. The observation, though apparently plain, is no doubt a matter of great anxiety.

To find out the real cause of frustration among the younger generation, we have to find out the exact identity and the social status of those about whom we are going to discuss.

A man's life can be divided into six general phases on the yardstick of age cycle: (i) from birth upto the age of 8 — infancy; (ii) from 9 to 14 — childhood; (iii) from 15 to 22 — adolescence; (iv) from 23 to 40 — youth; (v) from 41 to 60 — pre-old age; and (vi) 61 onward — old age.

Everyone has more or less an idea about what frustration is and why it at all comes in our life. Yet there is room for explaining the real source of frustration from which it emerges. The literal significance of frustration indicates the premature death of hopes.

In the language of noted psychologist Mr Tolbock, 'A state of mind arising out of frustration for failure in achieving goal which can alternatively be termed as miscarriage. Of course, there are many who are inclined to draw attention to only political, social, economical and domestic fields as the real cause of frustration.

But in fact there are other reasons too which are not perceptible to all. Everyone now speaks of social decay and the dire absence of social and human values. But has any one

thought of why there is the absence of human values?

It is not at all true that there were no frustration and despair among the youths on the eve of independence. But that was of different nature. The present position is a bit otherwise. It is clear that there had occurred a marked degradation among our youths in the post-independence days. The reasons are manifold. Our youths actively took part in the freedom struggle in 1971. They fought it with a fixed ideal and aim before them. But in the post-independence days their mission remained unfulfilled owing to machination of a limited coterie of self-interested people.

When Bangladesh needed a strong administration on the heels of ruin and destruction caused by nine months' war, the post-war administration failed to grasp the rein with a strong hand and the exploitation continued in some pleas of others.

Many countries of the world have come forward with liberal aids to help Bangladesh to be self-sufficient. But the incoming aids and assistance could not be utilized properly because of the machination of the self-interested class.

The greed for money reached such a degree that the piteous cry of the suffering millions did not come down in spite of massive incoming of foreign aids and assistance. This state of affairs forced one foreign diplomat to make a harsh comment: 'Bangladesh is a bottomless basket'. The youths who won the freedom of Bangladesh at the cost of their sweat and blood cannot but be hot-headed to hear such a teasing comment. There is nothing to be surprised if the youths of Bangladesh fall victim to disappointment and frustration owing to evaporation of their cherished dream.

On a careful study of every movement, it is observed that it has the natural and reasonable causes at its root. In order to expedite a country's development, its political, social and economic structures have to be reconstructed along any

revolutionary movement.

Although every movement has had an ideal of its own, but it cannot be admitted *ex parte* that any particular 'ism' shall remain equally effective everywhere for all times. It also needs to be admitted that the philosophy and method which are regarded to be helpful for a particular object for reaching the highest level of development may turn obsolete in later years and it is obvious. The philosophy which the German Philosopher Karl Marx ushered in the European Revolution in 1948, was seriously criticised by another noted Philosopher Mr Bachunin in 1984. According to Marx, as the labourers are directly associated with production, they should be given greater importance in every development movement.

Some may advocate in favour of political awareness among the youths but it cannot be desirable that the youths damage their education career by active participation in politics. But it is regrettable that even a class of teachers indulge in such games as detrimental to the real interest of the young students who generally become attracted to them. When afterwards they ponder over the thing in their own perspectives and include themselves into conscious class, they cannot maintain their oneness with these teaching class. As a result there grows frustration and disappointment in them and they ultimately lose all interest in the development activities of the country.

The obvious result is that there comes a stagnancy in the field of production. The majority of

our youths in educational institutions hail from rural areas. Through these youths the dependency and frustration cast their shadow over the rural people and there also grows a sense of frustration among them.

In the light of the past experience it can be told that self-seeking elements of the country took full advantage of the chaotic and uncertain situation of the just liberated war devastated country and employed all means to mislead our youths to gain their self-interest. Section of youths, so misled, began indulging in immoral and illegal activities and played as lackeys in the hand of the self-seekers. They reached such a stage as has made them utterly frustrated and in the process they even looked for the way of self-destruction and self-betrayal. None can deny that for this sordid condition of our youths, the social causes are not in any way less responsible than the political.

Besides political and social reasons, the economic condition is no less responsible for creating frustration among our youths. As the inputs of aids and assistance could not be utilized properly for administrative bottlenecks, the economic condition of the country got from bad to worse. The saddest and greatest wastage of our society is the wastage of youth. Now the youths are not able to play

their roles in the process of production. It is true that thousands of your youths are unemployed. In case of failure in finding jobs they remain frustrated and cannot understand what to do to their benefit.

The youths can play an important role in changing the production system. In the past, they played the dominant role in all the mass-movements. In the liberation war of 1971 they played the glorious role. The youths are no doubt very much eager to play their role in bringing about the coveted change. But the only thing that are lacking are true leadership and organisation. No organisations and as such no leadership have emerged as can engage our youths in building up effective new production mechanism in place of the obsolete ones. The youths are always creative and our main defect is our failure to offer them scopes to create.

The youths were frustrated for various reasons. One major among them was the failure of our older generation to provide them inspiration by instance. They were frustrated finding nothing worthy to perform. Some, however, made progress but the success was not due to merit but privilege. The displeasure in the minds of the educated youths continued to be acute because they dreamt of a developed world but witnessed instead a miserable prison around them. The crying need of the hour was such a leadership as might

command hopes and respect of the youths. But such a leadership would never emerge if there is no suitable organisation to create it.

The younger generation of today is much more conscious and outspoken than that of the past. It is a veritable sign of hope. If this awareness is taken into consideration and harnessed to build a new social order, the process is sure to yield better result. In fact, it has no alternative because no progressive society can be built on obsolete and old social structures.

The role of the younger generation, more particularly the educated section, should be given preference in development activities. They have the positive awareness and agility and above all the gut to rise above all self-interest. Thus, to sum up, the entire society has a moral obligation for salvaging our younger generation from the darkness of frustration. It is, however, heartening to note that the present government is keen to spot out the causes of frustration among our youths. Let us hope for the better and let the younger generation realise their position is the context of social, political and economic conditions and act as the situation demands, to their as well as the society's real benefit.

(The writer is Deputy Secretary, National Curriculum and Text Book Board.)

Remembering Dr Quadrat-e-Khuda

by Jamayet Ali

EMINENT scientist and educationist of the sub-continent Dr Mohammad Quadrat-e-Khuda was born in the village Margrans of Rampur hat subdivision under Birbhum district in West Bengal, India in May 1900 in his grandfather's house. His father's name was Syed Shah Sufi Khondkar Abdul Mukit. A University Graduate, he was popularly known as 'Peer' because of his piety.

The appellation of dr Khuda's family was Seydus Sadat. Once when he asked his father about his family status, the latter said in reply, "If you can build a happy and prosperous life, it will be the best appellation of your family." Undoubtedly those inspired words from his father contributed to attaining his goal in life.

Dr Khuda started his primary education in Margram High School. He stood first in the Matriculation examination in 1918. Then he got admission to the Presidency College, Calcutta. He got first division in both I. Sc and B. Sc examination and was awarded gold medals for brilliant results. He then took admission to M. Sc in the Department of Chemistry, Calcutta University. When he was the student of second year, M Sc, his father died. In spite of having too much shock at the death of his father, he did not lose heart. He stood first class first in the m Sc examination by dint of his merit and sharp memory.

Dr Khuda then engaged himself in research work at the Imperial College of Science and Technology in London having an opportunity of state scholarship from the then Indian Government. There he completed D Sc course under Prof. Thorp. Thorp commented in praise of Quadrat-e-Khuda, "Quadrat-e-Khuda did so many works — only one fourth of which was sufficient for D Sc degree." Thus he obtained DIC and D Sc degree with credit from the Imperial College under the University of London in 1929. Then he returned home despite requests from the professor for doing further research in the London University.

Dr Quadrat-e-Khuda wanted to serve the nation and carried on his researches in all

spheres of national life. He wrote 27 books of science in Bengali making them suitable for text books at school, college and university levels.

Dr Khuda was also a member of the Executive Council of the Dhaka University. He was appointed Scientific Adviser to the Ministry of Defence of the Government of Pakistan. In 1949 and 1951, he attended different conferences organised by UNESCO and Commonwealth. Dr Khuda was the Chairman of the secondary Education Council from 1952-1955. In 1952, he was also one of the members of Pakistan delegation at the conference of Commonwealth DSIR in Australia. By this time the East Regional Laboratories of the Pakistan Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (PCSIR) was established in Dhaka and he was appointed as its first Director in 1955.

Dr Khuda did a lot to expand, East Regional Laboratories which started functioning under his leadership at the Dhaka Polytechnic Institute, Tejgaon in 1955. It was Dr Khuda who took the utmost initiative to build new laboratory building by the side of the Elephant Road. These are now commonly known as Science Laboratory.

It may be mentioned that the land for the laboratories was acquired by his own efforts. So, he is called the founder-Director of the Dhaka Laboratories. He rendered valuable services till his retirement in 1966. After retirement, he joined the Bangla Unnayan Board as its Chairman where he tried to publish books of science in Bengali.

Dr Quadrat-e-Khuda was actively engaged as the Chairman of Bangladesh Education Commission since 1972. In this period he took initiative in preparing a report with a view to improving the education system in the country. The report is known as Quadrat-e-Khuda Education Commission Report. He submitted recommendation of this report to the Government in 1975. He was appointed as the visiting Professor of the Department of Chemistry of Dhaka University in 1975 and served there until his death on November 3, 1977.

Let his memory rejuvenate us

To the Editor...

Letters for publication in these columns should be addressed to the Editor and legibly written or typed with double space. For reasons of space, short letters are preferred, and all are subject to editing and cuts. Pseudonyms are accepted. However, all communications must bear the writer's real name, signature and address.

Quest for a nationhood

Sir, With respect to the feature titled "Georgia-Nostalgia for Stalin," published in The Daily Star issue of Oct. 6, '92, I would say that it is highly evocative and calls up many glimpses of history.

I wonder if the present Abkhazians are the descendants of fiery Tartars who once swept across the plains of Europe under legendary Batu Khan and ruled Russia from the mid 1200's to the mid 1500's. Their capital Sari stood on the lower Volga. Areas north of Caucasus are said to be the ancestral home of the tartars. They were war like nation and once formed the 'flower of cavalry' during the period in point.

Present Abkhazians are said to be also Muslims and form a confederation of north Caucasian mountain peoples. The caucasus is mineraly very resourceful. As such it was one of the prime targets of Nazi Germany during World War II. The Tartars, it is alleged, have collaborated with Nazi forces. As a punishment, Joseph Stalin, the Ironman of now-defunct Soviet Union dispersed a segment of them to Russia and the Central Asian republics.

Russians in the Caucasus, as such. If the Abkhazians are really Tartars, their struggle for national independence is legitimate. After all, they were victims of communist vendetta and their land was unjustly joined with Georgia by carving up Abkhazia out of the north Caucasian region.

Golan Nabi MES College, Zakir Hussain Road, Chittagong.

Reasons to believe

Sir, Allow me to share with your readers my recent experience in the GPO-based T&T Billing Office. Imagine, a gentleman, say a bank official, came with four phone bills. A boss told the billing clerk that the gentleman was known to him etc. etc. The clerk with a smiling face took the bills and promptly slashed down the total figures. For example, one bill had a total of Tk. 4,000-plus! With a stroke of pen, it came down to Tk. 900-plus! The rates of decrease in all the four bills were more or less the same!

After making the deductions the clerk promptly attested the changes and handed over the bills to the smiling and satisfied official. Imagine, everything happened in front of you, just naturally. No quail of conscience or anything. Only

Currency notes

Sir, We usually dodge others by handing over patchedup currency notes instead of taking proper step. It is not only as duty of the authority concerned or the bank to give special attention to bad currency notes we should also upgrade our habit of handling the currency notes. We scratch or wrap them for nothing. We write poetical verse, dialogue and address on their surface inviting someone to write letters! Drawing some mathematical figures on them, we sometimes settle up accounts. Should our conscience permit us to do so? Kamrul Islam Siragany

Result of examination

Sir, In spite of abnormal situation on campus, the examinees of Dhaka University appeared at the examination which began on August 29. However, following the bloody clash between two rival factions of a student organisation, the examination of some departments were shifted to be held after the Pujya vacation. In this unexpected and boring situation, here is an humble request to concerned authority to take necessary steps in order to prepare and publish the result of the examinations as early as possible. Farid Ahmed S M Hall, Dhaka University